Association for Information Systems
AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

ECIS 2009 Proceedings | European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS)

2009

The effect of information and communication technologies, workplace re-organization and trade on the demand for employees' skills: A comparative analysis of Greek and Swiss enterprises

Monthathip Srikes
University of Sorrey, m.srikes@surrey.ac.uk

Panos Louvieris
University of Surrey, panos.louvieris@surrey.ac.uk

Catherine Collins
University of Surrey, c.collins@surrey.ac.uk

Follow this and additional works at: http://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2009

Recommended Citation

Srikes, Monthathip; Louvieris, Panos; and Collins, Catherine, "The effect of information and communication technologies, workplace re-organization and trade on the demand for employees' skills: A comparative analysis of Greek and Swiss enterprises" (2009). *ECIS 2009 Proceedings*. 123.
http://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2009/123

This material is brought to you by the European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in ECIS 2009 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON MOBILE PHONE PURCHASING: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THAI AND BRITISH CONSUMERS

Srikes, Monthathip, School of Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK, m.srikes@surrey.ac.uk

Louvieris, Panos, School of Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK, panos.louvieris@surrey.ac.uk

Collins, Catherine, School of Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK, c.collins@surrey.ac.uk

Abstract

The aim of this research is to determine and evaluate whether differences in national culture impact on the buyer behaviour of Thai and British consumers when purchasing a mobile phone. Furthermore, the research was conducted in order to identify and compare key cultural attributes that influence mobile phone purchasing between Thai and British consumers. An empirical study was based on the concept of Hofstede's dimension of Individualism /Collectivism and Power Distance and Schwartz's values dimension of Power, Achievement, Hedonism and Self-Direction. The data was collected from 140 questionnaires using students at the University of Surrey. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference between Thai and British consumers in terms of mobile phone purchasing behaviour as far as Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Schwartz's cultural values are concerned. The findings also recommend that managers in mobile phone organizations should be concerned with the cultural dynamics of consumers as part of their going re-segmentation, communication and promotion strategies within their overall marketing strategie. Additionally, the cultural factors will assist managers to guide the specifications required for the development of online customer decision support systems.

Keywords: Impact of Culture, Mobile Phone, Culture

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Mobile phones have become an integral part of human daily life and personal communication across the globe. By the end of 2007, there were approximately 3.3 billion mobile phone users worldwide which is equivalent to a penetration rate of 49% of the last year (International Telecommunication Union, 2008). Thailand and the UK were chosen for this research for several reasons. According to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (2008), the mobile phone penetration rate in Thailand increased its growth rate to over 50% in 2006 in comparison to 35% in 2005. In the UK, Ofcom (2007) reported that the mobile phone market grew by 41.3% between 2003 and 2007.Within this competitive market, it is essential for mobile phone companies to better understand purchasing behaviour to enable them to acquire new customers and retain existing ones. Blackwell et al., (2001) demonstrated that culture has a profound influence on 'how' and 'why' consumers purchase a range products and services. Furthermore, Foxall *et al*., (1994) stated that the consumer's motivation of product and service choices as well as lifestyle could be shaped by cultural dimensions. As a consequence, culture can influence an individual's interaction with a product and ultimately the purchase. The cross – cultural comparison of mobile phone purchasing behaviour between the Thai

and UK markets will provide an insight to the overall East and West cultural divide. Therefore, it is imperative that cultural attributes need to be taken into consideration for marketing managers when investigating mobile phone purchasing behaviour.

The objectives of this research were to: (i) Determine and evaluate whether differences in national culture impact on the buyer behaviour of Thai and British consumers when purchasing a mobile phone; (ii) Identify and compare key cultural attributes that influence mobile phone purchasing between Thai and British consumers; (iii) Develop a framework for determining the cultural information requirements of a customer decision support system that will assist a marketing manager when addressing a culture sensitive market place ; and (iiii) Evaluate the management implications of the above objectives. In the following sections a definition and brief review of culture is presented. Secondly, Hofstedes cultural dimensions and Schwartz's cultural values are reviewed and their relevance to the research is presented herein.

2 MOBILE PHONES

Srivastava (2005) stated that the mobile phone has shifted from being a 'technological object' to a key 'social object' as communication with others is the main purpose for mobile phone purchasing. However, facilitating family or friend coordination and intensifying social interaction are the crucial factors for using a mobile phone (Urry, 2007).According to Castells *et al., (*2007, p.85), "obtaining a mobile phone is a milestone that indicates success, not only financially but also culturally in term of the integration within society". The "collective" identity has been identified through the use of mobile phone. Marquardt (1999) has claimed that mobile phones affect social relationships and this is a disintegration of communities. Mobile phone usage has resulted in greater electronic interactions between friends and family at the expense of face to face interaction which have been dramatically reduced. Consequently, it could be proposed that mobile phones are changing individual cultural norms and values (Rauch, 2005).

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The concept of culture

There are numerous definitions of culture but for the purpose of this paper, culture is identified as the "collective mental programming" of people in an environment (Hofstede, 1980). Hall (1976) stated that culture is not genetically inherited, and cannot exist on its own, but is always shared by members of a society and is identified as a societal level construct. However, it certainly has implications for individual behaviour (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede (1997) has also stated that culture influences an individual's behaviour through the manifestations of values, heroes, rituals and symbols. Hence, an individual's behavior is a result of that individual's cultural value system for a particular context which are changed and developed over time (Luna and Gupta, 2001).

3.2 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Schwartz's Cultural Values

The description and analysis of Hofstede's and Schwartz's theory are provided in this section. Hofstede (2001) stated that the cultural values research conducted by Schwartz (1994) was more appropriate to use in a cross cultural research project. However, Smith *et al.,* (2002) argue that Hofstede's cultural dimension remains the significant framework to apply in international research. Therefore, a study that combined Hofstede's dimension and Schwartz's theory was used in order to be more valid.

3.2.1 Hofstede Cultural Dimensions

In this research, the "*power distance*" and "*individualism*" dimensions are considered. As these two dimensions have been found to be valid across several other studies (Blodgett *et al.,* 2001; Gregory and Munch 1997). Hofstede (2001) found that "individualism" and "power distance" where the two main attributes that characterized the difference between Thai and UK cultures. *"High power distance"* cultures (Thai) tend to be *"low on individualism"*, whereas *"low power distance"* societies (UK) tend to be *"high on individualism"*.

Dimensions	**Content**
Power Distance	The degree of inequality among people within a society.
Uncertainty Avoidance	The member of a cultural feel endangered by uncertain, ambiguous, risk or undefined situations
Masculinity vs. Femininity	The sex role characteristics or attitude or norm or perception
Long – Term Orientation	The extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic, future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term perspective
	Sources: Adapted from Usunie and Lee (2005) and Hofstede (1991)

Table 1. Hofstede Cultural Dimensions

Power Distance

"Power Distance" is the extent to which people accept that power is distributed unequally, and is related to conservatism and maintaining status (Yeniyurt and Townsend, 2003). In high power distance societies, the individuals are associated with acceptance of one's positioning society (Hofstede, 1984) and a social value exists where everyone has his or her own rightful place in the society (Morsini, 1998). On the contrary, the low power distance societies are much more concerned about society values independence and competition. The powerful members seek to look less powerful and they believed that there are an equal rights and opportunities for everyone (Greg *et al.*, 1995). The research form Hofstede (1980) has illustrated that Thai societies are considered as a "high power distance" society which is relatively high in comparison to the UK society. On the other hand, the UK is implied as "low power distance". Thus, relative to the UK; Thai culture is more acceptable of societal inequities.

Individualism / Collectivism

According to Hofstede (2001), "Individualism" refers to the society where the ties between individuals are very loose. In contrast, "collectivism" is defined as a society where individuals are integrated into strong and cohesive in-groups. In individualist cultures, people tend to be motivated by their own preferences, needs and rights in order to achieve their personal goals (Lee and Kacen, 2008). On the side of "collectivist culture", societies have a significant attitude toward building long-term relationships and the role of trust. Members of societies are often motivated by duties and norms of societies (Usunier, 2000) .Triandis (2004) also demonstrated that collectivist societies" are more concerned with 'interpersonal relationship' than an individualist culture. With reference to Hofstede's work (1980), the UK scored high in individualism which is relatively high compared to Thai society. Thus, it can be implied that the UK societies can be defined as "Individualism", whereas Thai societies are considered as "Collectivism" ones. Hence, it is possible that customer social values and reference groups have a greater degree of influence in Thai societies than the UK society when purchasing a mobile phone and this is a point that deserves further investigation.

3.2.2 Schwartz's Cultural Values

Schwartz's value theory is primarily concerned with the basic values of individual recognized across culture (Schwartz, 1992). There are ten key cultural values that were defined by the motivational goal it serves namely; Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-Direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity and Security. In accordance with Lee *et al*., (2002) and Ros *et al.,* (1999), a more parsimonious of Schwartz's cultural value are employed which fit in well with the social used mobile phone (See Table 2).

Power	Status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (authority, social power, wealth, preserving the public image)
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrated competence according to social standards (sense of accomplishment ,successful, ambitious, capable)
Hedonism	Pleasure or sensuous gratification for one self /Self –Satisfaction
Self-Direction	Independent through and action –choosing ,creating and exploring (creativity, independent, imaginative, intellectual ,logical)
Source: Rickman et al., (2003), *Lee et al., (2002*) *and Ros et al.,(1999*)	

Table 2. Schwartz's cultural values

3.3 Limitations of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Schwartz's Cultural Values

There are many researchers who have argued that Hofstede's work may not be absolutely correct (Koveo and Tang, 2008; Smith et al., 2002 and Shenkar, 2001). First of all, Hofstede's framework has become outdated as the data is forty years old. Kirkman *et al.,* (2006) stated that Hofstede's dimensions fails to capture the change of culture over time in which viewed culture as "static". Indeed, Hofstede's theory appears to perceive time as linear and ignores the profound influence of the substantial modernization such as travel, media and technology (Usunier and Lee, 2005). Also, Hofstede's principle assigns to be "standard theory resistance when new work on culture distinction is substantiated (Kock *et al.,* 2008). Additionally, Yoo *et al.*, (2002) noted that Hofstede's model lacks individual level analysis and maintain that Hofstede's scores were calculated by total scores of the country thus, ignoring the individual difference within cultures. Finally, Hofsteded's theory is assumed to be homogeneous and devoid of subcultures as the data was collected using only a single organization (David *et al.,* 2008). However, as most of the dimensions are independent, Beckmann et al (2007) argued that Hofstede's dimensions led to useful explanations of cross-cultural differences in consumer behaviour.

Schwartz's Cultural Values

There are significant drawbacks associated with Schwartz's cultural values that should be considered. The first limitation is caused by the obsolete information as the data was gathered fourteen years ago (Schwartz, 1999). Secondly, Schwartz's cultural values scale focused on the research of an initial group set of basic human values (Schwartz 1994, 1999), which ignored the fact that individual actions are complex, reflexive and contingent on the context (Burroughts and Rindfleisch, 2002) which may create value conflicts. Nevertheless, from a psychology perspective, they have been shown to be valid and sufficient (Marcus and Baumgartner, 2004).

3.4 Buyer Behaviour Factors

Research conducted by Kimberly *et al.,* (1995) using the Hofstede theory, indicated that cultural differences are seen as especially important for consumers' choice of products and services. Roth (1995) discovered that the services that place emphasis on variety and hedonistic experiences can

generate value to an individualist society. Also, Strabub *et al.,* (1997) found that high power distance and collectivist societies would reject the communication media which do not support the social pressures. According to Heine and Lehman (1997), self concept of independent corresponds to the cultural concept of individualism, whereby people express themselves as inherently separate and distinct. Conversely, the cultural concept of collectivism is related with the interdependent self concept which concerned on contextual, relational, and socially situated. Further, Lee and Kacen (2008) discovered that subjective cultures tend to influence the buying intention of consumers. The study from Choi and Geistfeld (2004) showed that functionality design, feature images and brand images are highly positive correlated with cultural characteristics of the users. Whilst, Page (2005) stated that promotional appeals have played an important role for international business practice

4 HYPOTHESIZED MODEL

The main variables have been identified and are presented as a hypothesized model in Figure 1. The research has investigated the strong correlation between cultural attributes and buyer behaviour attributes

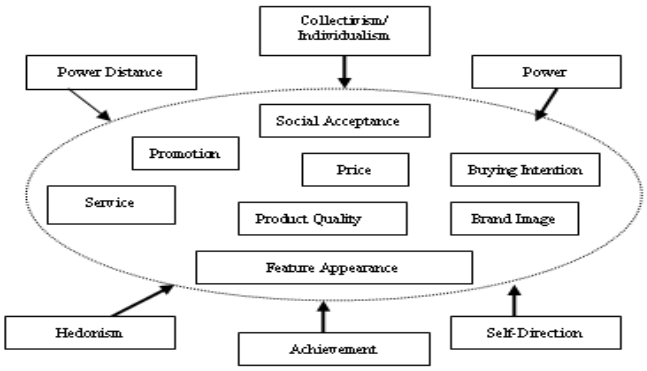


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model of the main variables of cultural attributes & buyer behaviour

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives, the hypothesis formulation, data collection method, sampling method, sample size, the questionnaire design, pilot study, reliability and validity are presented below.

5.1 Hypothesis Formulation

Based on the research objectives and literature review, the hypotheses are stated below:

H a: *There is no difference between Thai and British consumers when purchasing a mobile phone.*

H b: *There is no difference in Hofstede's cultural dimension of Individualism /Collectivism between Thai and British consume.*

H c: *There is no difference in Hofstede's cultural dimension of power distance between Thai and British consumers.*

H d: *There is no difference between Thai and British consumers in term of Schwartz value."(Power, Achievement, Hedonism and Self-direction)*

H e: *There is no relationship between Hofstede's dimension and mobile phone choice criteria.*

H f: *There is no relationship between Schwartz value and mobile phone choice criteria.*

5.2 Data Collection

A self- administered questionnaire was used to obtain the primary data and consisted of 11 questions divided into four sections. The objectives of the four sections were to: (i) collect demographic data and the mobile phone purchasing experience; (ii) identify whether Schwartz's cultural values (Power, Achievement, Hedonism and Self-direction) had an impact on Thai and British consumers; (iii) examine to which extent values of "Individualism and Collectivism" and "Power Distance" influence Thai and British consumers ; and (iiii) identify the mobile phone buying decision factors and its relationship with cultural attributes.

A non-probability sampling method by using quota sampling was conducted in this research. The sampling units were both male and female students who had mobile phones. As students are the social economic groups and future business people, plus professional, therefore these students were representative for the population of British and Thai people. The sample frame for this research was the University of Surrey in UK. The questionnaires were measured on a five-point Likert –Scale in accordance with cross cultural research conducted by Richardson and Smith (2007). In their research, the five-point Likert scales are adopted to examine the cultural constructs; high and low context, power distance and the media choice behaviour of two nationalities. Hence, the five point likert scale was suitable for this study. For the "Individualism/Collectivism" and "Power Distance" measurement, a score of less than 3 indicated that the respondent could be classified as "Individualist" and "High Power Distance". Conversely, scores more than 3 illustrated that respondents could be classified as "Collectivism" and "Low Power Distance".

5.3 Pilot Study

In order to determine the *reliability* of the research, a pilot study was undertaken to minimize the research error by testing the reliability of questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted for two weeks amongst 16 students at the University of Surrey. The variables used to develop the questionnaire are drawn from figure 1. The reliability of this research was measured using the Crobach alpha coefficient which indicates the level of inters –item consistency. The consistency alphas met the acceptable rate which was **0.723**; thus, the scale used for this study is considered to be reliable. On the scale validity, the standard deviation (26.161) of the population was used to calculate the sample size by the formula: $\mathbf{N= (z*SD)^2 / (E)^2}$ where N represents the minimum sample size, Z is the degree of confidence required, SD is the standard deviation of population and E represents the range of error around the sample estimate acceptable. Using the formula, the sample size was calculated using a 95 % confidence interval which Z value equals 1.96, within plus or minus 5% of the population mean. Hence, the minimum sample size should be: $N= (1.96 *26.161)^{2 / (}86.6250*0.05)^2 =$**140**. Therefore, a minimum of 140 questionnaires should be issued in order to achieve reliability. The questionnaire was distributed to Thai students (70 sets) and for British (70 sets) students in the University of Surrey. After checking and collecting the final data, Independents- samples t test and Pearson Correlation Test were employed to further analyse the data.

6 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the first four hypotheses are shown in the following tables.

6.1 Hypothesis Testing - Independent Sample-test

Hypothesis Ha								
Factors	Mean (British)	Mean (Thai)	Sig. 2-tailed		Factors	Mean (British)	Mean (Thai)	Sig. 2-tailed
Buying Intention	3.56	3.96	0.003*		Price	3.79	3.84	0.687

Social Acceptance	2.53	3.62	0.000*		Feature Image	4.01	4.04	0.843
Service	3.57	3.86	0.053*		Promotion	3.60	4.06	0.000*
Brand Image	3.20	4.06	0.000*		Product Quality	4.61	4.09	0.000*

Table 3. Independent Sample t –test of Hypothesis H_a

Hypothesis Ha aimed to test whether differences in national culture impact on consumer buyer behaviour. The results indicated that "Buying Intention", "Social Acceptance", "Service", "Brand Image", "Promotion" and "Product Quality" show significant differences between Thai and British consumers (Sig.values <0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected; there is a significant difference between Thai and British consumers for these six variables. Table 3 shows that "Product Quality" and "Feature / Appearance Image" are the important elements for British consumers. However, the "Product Quality" "Promotion" and "Brand Image" are found as the important variables for the Thai consumers. Hypothesis Hb HC and Hd are aimed at testing whether any differences exist between Thai and British consumers in terms of Hofstede cultural dimensions and Schwartz's cultural values.

Hypothesis Hb and Hc							
Hofstede Cultural Dimensions		Hypothesis Hb			Hypothesis Hc		
Collectivism /Individualism (Hb)	Power Distance (Hc)	Mean (British)	Mean (Thai)	Sig.t-test 2-tailed	Mean (British)	Mean (Thai)	Sig.t-test 2-tailed
Team Work	Prestige	2.91	4.07	0.000	3.69	3.76	0.651
Being Accepted	Impress Other people	2.97	3.68	0.000*	2.71	3.36	0.000*
Reference Group Influence	Successful	2.21	2.90	0.000*	2.53	3.81	0.000*
Group Opinion	Present Arguments	2.47	2.70	0.182	3.91	3.54	0.008
Family /Friend Discuss	Express Disagreement	2.76	3.99	0.000*	4.14	3.64	0.001*
Increase Interaction	Status	3.69	4.09	0.000*	2.28	3.61	0.000*

Table 4. Independent Sample t –test of Hypothesis Hb and Hc

The findings of Hypothesis Hb indicated that there is a difference between Thai and British consumers for five questions *"Being accepted", "Reference Group Influence", "Family / Friend Discuss", and "Increases Interaction*"(Sig.values<0.05). Referring to the mean values (Table 4); *there are some results that go against the assumption of Hofstede that Thais tend to be a collectivist culture*. The calculated mean in the questions "Reference Group Influence" (2.9) and "Group Opinion" (2.7) indicates that Thai consumers responded as an "*individualist society*". Conversely, Hofstede predicted that that the British consumer is a "*high individualism*" one. The calculated means shows that the question of "*Increase Interaction"* has high scores (3.69). As the full statement of the question is "mobile phone has increased the frequency of interactions with family and friends. *Hence, it is logic to explain that mobile phones tend to activate the collectivism attribute.* For the Hypothesis Hc, the Sig. values for the four questions *"Impress other people", "Successful", "Present Arguments" and "Status"* are less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected; there is a significant difference in the mean scores between Thai and British consumers.

Hypothesis Hd			
Schwartz Cultural Values	Mean (British)	Mean (Thai)	Sig. t-test (2-tailed)
Power	3.27	3.76	0.002*

Achievement	4.21	3.85	0.001*
Hedonism	3.99	3.94	0.765
Self direction	3.64	4.21	0.000*

Table 5. Independent Sample t –test of Hypothesis of Hypothesis Hd

As shown in Table 5, in the three elements: "*Pow*er", "*Achievement"* and *"Self Direction"*, the mean values of Thai respondents was greater than that of British ones. The Sig.-values of three variables: *"Power", "Achievement" and "Self –Direction"* was less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying a difference in Schwartz values in terms of Power, Achievement and Self-direction between Thai and British consumers. The results of hypotheses He and Hf are shown in the following tables.

6.2 Hypothesis Testing - Pearson Correlation Test

Hypothesis He							
Individualism				Power Distance			
Thai		British		Thai		British	
Factors	R	Factors	R	Factors	R	Factors	R
Social Acceptance	0.733	Promotion	0.694	Service	0.936	Social Acceptance	0.4
Buying Intention	0.725	Service	0.313	Social Acceptance	0.602	Brand Image	0.339
Promotion	0.633	Social Acceptance	0.306	Feature Image	0.285	Product Quality	0.335

*Table 6. Pearson Correlation Test of Mobile Phone Buying Decision factors that were highly positive correlated with cultural attributes of Individualism and Power Distance * (R= Pearson Correlation)*

With reference to Table 6, all three variables: *"Social Acceptance", "Buying Intention"* and *"Promotion"* are strongly correlated with the cultural attributes of *"Individualism"*. As the correlation coefficient R = 0.733, 0.725 and 0.633. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation with the cultural elements of "*Power distance"* which was observed through the *"Service"* and "*Social Acceptance"*, the correlation coefficient was r = 0.936 and 0.602, these outcomes demonstrate a strong relationship between two continuous variables. Thus, Thai consumers are extremely influenced by their culture in these four purchase decision factors. For British consumers, the results (Table 6) show that there is a strong relationship between *"Promotions"* and the cultural dimension of "I*ndividualism*" in which the correlation (r) was scored at 0.694. Moreover; there is a medium relationship between the *"Social Acceptance"," Brand Image", "Product Quality"* and *"Power Distance"* cultural dimension. Hence, it can be assumed that British consumers are more likely to be influenced by their cultural element in these four criteria.

Hypothesis Hf				
Thai Respondents			British Respondents	
Decision Factors	R		Decision Factors	Correlation
Feature/Appearance Image	0.535		Buying Intention	0.567
Social Acceptance	0.51		Price	0.529

Brand Image	0.484		Product Quality	0.433

*Table 7. Pearson Correlation Test of Mobile phone factors that were highly positive correlated with cultural attributes (Schwartz's Cultural Values) * (R= Pearson Correlation)*

The findings have indicated that Thai's have strong correlation scores amongst *"Feature/Appearance Image –Hedonism*" and *"Social Acceptance –Power"*. Thus, Schwartz's cultural values of "*Hedonism" and "Power"* are more influenced in these two buying decision variables. For British consumers, the strong correlation exists where the correlation is between *"Buying Intention- Self-Direction"* and *"Price –Hedonism"*. Hence British consumer's cultural values in the Schwarz dimension are highly influenced by "*Buying intention*" and *"Price*".

In this section, Consumer decision factors and cultural impact framework developed for the marketing of mobile phones in Thailand and the UK

Figure2: Framework developed for the marketing of mobile phone in Thailand

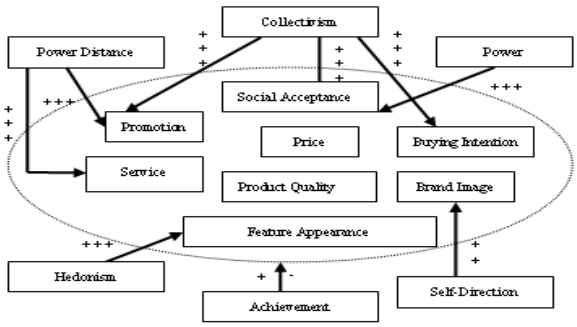
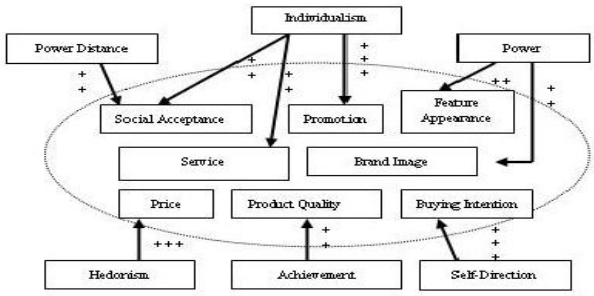


Figure3: Framework developed for the marketing of mobile phone in the United Kingdom



*Positive relationship (+), Negative relationship (-)
Strong correlation → (+ + +, - - -), Moderate correlation → (+ +, - -), Weak correlation → (+,-)

Two frameworks were developed for marketing mobile phones in Thailand and the UK in relation to consumer decision factors and cultural impacts of consumers of these two cultures. Figure 2 is a diagrammatic representation of the results and findings that illustrate the key consumer decision factors and cultural attributes that influence Thai consumers when purchasing mobile phones. This framework (figure 2) can assist marketing managers dealing with Thailand's mobile phone market. The findings also indicate that the "*collectivism*" cultural dimension is strongly correlated with "*social acceptance"*, "*promotion*" and "*buying intention"* variables (this is indicated by the + + + symbol on the diagram). Also, the strong correlation with "*power distance*" cultural dimension was observed through the "*service*" and "*social acceptance*" criterion. Furthermore, a strong correlation exists between "*hedonism-feature/appearance image*" and "*power –social acceptance*". Thus, "*collectivism", "power distance", "power"* and *"hedonism"* represents important cultural attributes. The most important dimension has been found to be *"collectivism"* as this cultural element influences three variables (social acceptance, promotion and buying intention). Similarity, the results indicate that "*social acceptance*" factor is mainly influenced by "*collectivism*", "*power distance"* and "*hedonism"* cultural elements of Thai consumers. Hence, managers have to be aware of *"collectivism*", "*power distance*"," *power*" and "*hedonism*" cultural dimension when dealing with Thai consumers purchasing mobile phones, especially "*social acceptance", " promotion" ,"service"," buying intention" and "feature/appearance image factors.*

Figure 3 is a diagrammatic representation of the results and findings for UK consumers and indicates that *"individualism*", *"hedonism"* and *"self-direction"* are the major important cultural attributes that influence mobile phone purchasing. The framework (Figure 3) shows that a strong correlation exists

amongst "*individualism -promotion"*, "*hedonism- price"*, "*self-direction – buying intention"* and this is indicated by the + + + symbol on the diagram. Marketers should therefore consider the *"individualism /collectivism"*, "*hedonism*" and "*self-direction*" cultural dimensions carefully because they have a high impact on British consumers. Further, marketers need to take "*promotion", "price"* and "*buying intention"* factors into consideration for British consumers alongside their cultural attributes.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this research was to determine and evaluate whether differences in national culture impact on the buyer behaviour of Thai and British consumers when purchasing a mobile phone. By addressing the Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Schwartz's cultural values with respect to mobile phone buying decision factors, the findings indicate that there is a significant difference between Thai and British consumers. From the findings, "*promotion"* is the important element for both Thai and British nationalities as the results showed high correlation with the cultural attributes of "*collectivism*" and "*individualism*". For Thai consumers, it is important to note that "*social acceptance*" acts as the main buying decision factor alongside their cultural attributes. The most important cultural dimension has been found to be *"collectivism"* as this cultural element influences three variables (See Figure2). In contrast, a strong correlation occurred between "*buying Intention-self-direction*" and "*price –hedonism"* with British consumers. Furthermore, *"individualism"* is found as the one of the cultural values that has a high degree of influence of mobile phone's price criterion (See figure 3). This knowledge may then be exploited for the development of a culturally informed customer interface design.

The implications of the findings are valuable for mobile phone marketing managers to understand better the cultural attributes of consumer behaviour when purchasing mobile phones. From the findings, it shown that Thai consumers purchase a mobile phone which enables them to have social connection and relates them to their peer groups. Indeed, Thai consumers are likely to be sensitive to the influence of their group orientation and reference groups such as families and friends. Triandis, (2004) stated that the concern of interpersonal relationships tends to be in collectivist societies rather than in individualist ones. Hence, it is advisable that promotion and communication strategies should send 'collective' messages which are group-oriented based and appeal to families. Conversely, British customers have a greater degree of influence and are a more individualist oriented culture as opposed to the Thai culture. According to Roth (1995), services that place emphasis on variety and hedonistic experiences are suitable in a high individualist culture. Thus, it is recommended that mobile phone companies offer a variety of mobile phones that can be personalized to the individual customer. Additionally, the research has shown that not all Thai's behave as "*collectivism"* and not all British consumers are characterized as *"individualists*". The model developed by Hofstede's (1984), viewed culture as static, however the contribution that study provides is that *culture is dynamic* and can be interchangeable over time. An individual's behaviour could be influenced and dominated by the dynamics of culture, technology, and in particular mobile phones. Therefore, it is recommended that marketing managers address these cultural dynamics as part of their ongoing re-segmentation, communication and promotion strategies.

An understanding of the different cultural dimensions on buyer behaviours will assist managers in the management of customer decision support systems. The findings of the research have shown how culture can inform the design and functions of the information system in order to create a more effective customer decision support system. Hence, managers should be able to tailor online communications and the design of the system to target the customer more effectively, which in turn will lead to improved customer relationship management (CRM). An appreciation of the cultural factors will provide managers with insights into how to develop marketing information systems, especially the promotional and communication strategies. In addition the results of the study suggests that collective messages which are group-based should be targeted towards the Thai culture, whereas

the individualist oriented messages such as personalized messages are more appropriate to the UK culture. The research instrument and analytical tools employed in this research will help marketing managers to track culture changes in their chosen markets. Moreover, managers can use the frameworks developed in Figure 2 and Figure 3 to guide what information features should be included and emphasized in order to create an effective decision support system that takes culture into account and accommodates cultural differences within an international setting.

References

Beckmann, D., Menkhoff , L., and Suto M. (2007) , "Does culture influence asset manager's views and behaviour ?", Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization

Blackwell, R.D., Miniard, P.W. and Engel, J.F. (2001), Consumer Behaviour, 9ed, South –Western

Blodgett, J.G., Lu, L.C., Rose, G.M. and Vitell, S.J. (2001). "Ethical Sensitivity to Stakeholder Interests: A Cross-Cultural Comparison." Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 29 (2), pp90-202

Castells, M., Fernandez- Ardevol, M., Qui, and J.L. and Sey, A., (2007) Mobile Communication and Society: A Global Perspective, England, the MIT Press

Choi, J., and Geistfeld, L.V., (2004) "A cross-cultural investigation of consumer e-shopping adoption" , Journal of Economic Psychology, pp821-838

David, G.C., Chand, D., Newell S., and Santos J.R., (2008) " Integrated collaboration across distributed sites: the perils of process and the promise of practice" , Journal of Information Technology , 23 ,pp44-45

Foxall , G.R. and Goldsmith ,R.E. (1994), Consumer Behaviour : A Practical Giude ,London, Groom Helm Ltd.

Gregory, G.D. and Munch, J.M. (1997), "Cultural Values in International Advertising: An Examination of Familial Norms and Roles in Mexico," Psychology and Marketing, 14 (2), pp99-119

Greg, M. A. , Neeraj , A. and James , L.G (1995) " Incorporating Prior Knowledge into the Analysis of Conjoint Studies" , Journal of Marketing Research, 32 (2) , pp152 -162

Hall, E.T. (1976), Beyond Culture. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday

Heine, S. J., and Lehman, D. R., (1997), "The cultural construction of self-enhancement: An examination of group-serving biases", Journal of personality and social psychology, 72, pp1268-1283

Hofstede, G and Hofstede, G.J (2005), Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, New York, McGraw-Hill USA.

Hofstede, G.(2001), Culture's consequences, 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications

Hofstede, G.(1997), Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, New York ,McGraw-Hill,

Hofstede, G .(1980) " Culture's consequence International Differnces in Work –Related Values" , Beverly Hills ,CA : Sage

International Telecommunication Union (2008) , "Cell users top 3.3 billion" , Retrieved June 5 ,2008 from http://technology.iafrica.com/news/technology/338556.htm

Kirkman, B., Lowe, K., and Gibson. C., (2006), "A review of empirical research incorporating Hofstede's cultural values framework", Journal of International Business Studies, 37(3), pp285-320

Kimberly , A.B., Susan D.A., Roger G.S. and William T.M., (1995) " The Crucial Interrelationship between Manufacturing Strategy and Organizational Culture", Management Science, 41(10) ,pp1565-1580

Kock ,N , Ronaldo P. and Verville (2008), " Can Hofstede's Model Explain National Differences in Perceived Information Overload? : A Look at Data From the US and New Zealand", IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 51(1)

Koveos P.E. and Tang L.(2008), " A framework to update Hofstede's cultural value indices : economic dynamics and institutional stability", Journal of International Business Studies

Lee , J.A. and Kacen, J.J. (2008) " Cultural influences on consumer satisfaction with impulse and planned purchase decisions" ,Journal of Business Research, 66(3), pp265-272
Lee, Y., Kim, J., Lee, I. and Kim H. (2002), A Cross-Cultural Study on the Value Structure of Mobile Internet Usage: A Comparison between Korea and Japan, Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, 3(4)
Luna, D. and Gupta, S.F. (2001), An integrative framework for cross-cultural consumer behavior, International Marketing Review, 18(1), 45-69
Marquardt, M.J. (1999), The Global Advantage: How World –Class Organizations Improve Performance Through Globalization, United States of America, Gulf Publishing Company.
Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (2008), "Telecommunication to Thailand", Retrieved June 5,2008 from
http://www.austrade.gov.au/Telecommunications-to-Thailand/default.aspx
Mooij, M.D. (2000) "The future is predictable for international marketers: Converging incomes lead to diverging consumer behaviour", International Marketing Review, 17 (2), pp103-113
Morosini, P. (1998), Managing cultural differences, Pergamon
McCort, D.J. and Malhotra, N.K. (1993), ``Culture and consumer behavior: toward an understanding of cross-cultural consumer behavior in international marketing", Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 6(2), pp91-127
Office of Communications, "Media and Analyze", Retrieved June 5, 2008 from
http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2007/04/nr_20070403
Page, C. (2005), Mobile research strategies for a global market, Communication of the ACM, 48(7), pp42-48
Richardson R.M. and Smith S.W. (2007), "The influence of high/low – context culture and power distance on choice of communication media: students' media choice to communicate with professors in Japan and American, International Journal of Intercultural Relations 31, pp479-501
Rauch, B. (2005), "Cell Phone Culture" Retrieved June 30, 2008 from
http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/forums/cell_phone_culture.htm
Ros, M., Schwartz S.H and Surkiss , S. (1999),"Basic individual values, work values, and the meaning of work" Apply Psychology International Review , 48(1),pp49– 71
Roth, M.S. (1995), The effects of culture and socioeconomics on the performance of global brand image strategies, Journal of Marketing Research, 32(2), pp163-176
Schwartz, S.H., (1999), "A theory of cultural values and some implications for work", Apply Psychology, 48(1), pp23-47
Schwartz, S.H. (1994), "Beyond individualism/collectivism: new cultural dimensions of values, Thousand Oaks , Sage Publication
Shenkar, O. (2001), Cultural distance revisited: Towards a more rigorous conceptualization and measurement of cultural differences. Journal of International Business Studies, 32(3), pp519–536
Shields, R. (1996), Cultures of Internet: Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living Bodies, London, Sage Publication
Smith, P. B., Peterson, M., & Schwartz, S. (2002), "Cultural values, sources of guidance, and their relevance to managerial behavior: A 47-nation study", Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 33(1), pp188–208
Srivastava, L. (2005), "Mobile Phones and the evolution of social behaviour", Behaviour and Information Technology, 24(2), pp111-129
Straub, D., Keil, M., and Brenner, W., (1997), Testing the technology acceptance model across cultures: A three country study, Information and Management, 33(1), pp1-11
Urry , J. (2007) , Motilities, Cambridge , Polity Press
Usunier, J.C., and Lee, A. (2005), "Marketing across cultures", New York, Prentice Hall
Yeniyurt S. and Townsend J.D. (2003) , "Does culture explain acceptance of new products in a country?", International Marketing Review, 20(4), pp377-396
Yoo ,B. and Donthu ,N.(2002) "Cultural Consequences Book" , Journal of Marketing Research, 39(3), pp388