Culture and Values – Their Relevance for Marketing Strategies

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Abstract: Research on consumer behaviour has revealed that the prospect of reaching a personal value is the virtual buying motive. Bearing this in mind, the researcher, as well as the marketer, is not only able to observe whether one product is preferred to another, but also to understand why this product is preferred. Hence, identifying consumers' personal values contributes to explaining consumer preferences and buying motives, which is of great importance for marketing practice.

Personal values that are developed during the process of socialisation are part of a culture and differ depending on one's cultural background. Therefore, culture- specific values result in specific consumer behaviour.

The aim of our paper is to combine research about buying motives (generally speaking, consumers' personal values) and about culture- specific consumption patterns. Knowledge of these cohesions is of great importance for marketing strategies. If there are differences between the personal values of consumers who are from different cultural backgrounds, this has to be taken into account by differentiating the strategic direction of marketing strategies, which should incorporate culture- specific product cognition.

The following aspects of this issue will be discussed in the paper:

- *consumers buy products because of the resulting consequences, which satisfy consumer values*
- *values are part of the culture, and therefore cause culture- specific consumer behaviour*
- *the underlying motives for culture- specific consumer behaviour have to be included in marketing strategies.*

Keywords: culture, values, consumer behaviour, marketing strategies

1. Introduction

Until the beginning of the 1970s, food markets were characterised by excess demand due to population growth and increasing income levels. On these so- called seller- dominated markets, suppliers were able to satisfy excess demand by increasing production capacity and efficiency without considering consumer needs. Concerning their marketing strategies, producers were able to focus on traditional production orientation, i.e., they concentrated on

production efficiency and an area-wide distribution system. When population growth declined and the food supply was guaranteed, the maintained production capacity led to an increasing but undifferentiated amount of output, resulting in so-called buyer-dominated markets. On buyer-dominated markets, producers have to adopt their marketing strategies in that they increasingly focus on marketing orientation and aim to satisfy consumer needs and wishes. This can be achieved by differentiating products through product innovations and improvements and through emotional advertising. Whenever a product is particularly capable of satisfying consumers' needs and wishes and is able to promote some emotional feelings, this offers the opportunity to differentiate one's own product from the competitor's product (Kotler, Bliemel, 1999: 21-26). Hence, the first aim of our paper is to figure out what marketing-oriented producers and marketers need to know about consumer behaviour in order to be able to differentiate their products emotionally by analysing the interdependency between a consumer's personal values and his/her consumption habits.

Market-oriented suppliers have to distinguish between the satisfaction of needs and wishes. While humans have limited needs such as food, clothes, shelter or approval, they have unlimited wishes. These wishes constitute the kind of human needs which have to be considered in the proper cultural context. People all over the world have a need for food, but people in different cultural areas wish to satisfy this need with certain foods, e.g. rice instead of glass noodles or potatoes (Kotler et al., 2003: 40). Therefore, the second aim of our paper is to consider people's wishes in their respective cultural context by combining research about buying motives and culture-specific consumption patterns.

Our paper is structured as follows. In the second chapter, we identify the virtual buying motive, which, generally speaking, is made up of the consumers' personal values and their influence on consumer behaviour. The third chapter is dedicated to the consumers' cultural background by identifying those elements of culture which are important for consumer behaviour and by examining how they affect consumption patterns. Knowledge of the cohesion between consumers' personal values, which often depict the actual buying motive, and cultural background is of great importance for marketing strategies, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. If there are differences between the personal values of consumers from various cultural backgrounds, these have to be taken into account by differentiating the strategic direction of marketing strategies, which should incorporate the culture-specific cognition of products. Our paper finishes with summarising conclusions and some suggestions for future research.

2.   Consumer behaviour affected by values

2.1   Consumer behaviour in general

As shown in the introduction, producers that focus on marketing orientation have to distinguish between consumers' needs and wishes, because consumers regard products as a combination of various components. On the one hand, a

product serves one's basic needs, and on the other hand it contains components which are able to satisfy a consumer's wishes. As consumers in saturated markets usually have the chance to choose from different products that all serve their basic needs, they tend to choose the product which satisfies their wishes on top. These wishes are derived from a consumer's personal values (Nieschlag et al., 1994). To consider how values affect consumption patterns and in which way consumption decisions depend on values, it is necessary to analyse consumer behaviour. Consumption behaviour, i.e., whether a consumer favours one brand over another, depends on a consumer's information processing and his/her cognitive resources, respectively. Cognitive resources refer to the consumer's mental capacity available for undertaking several information-processing activities. This capacity is a limited resource, because people are only able to process a certain amount of information at a given time. Thus, marketers compete for the cognitive capacity of consumers who allocate their cognitive capacity into different directions and with different intensity, a concept known as attention. The direction refers to the focus of attention. When exposed to several information sources at once, consumers have to choose from these information sources because their information-processing capacity, i.e., their cognitive capacity, is limited. Hence, consumers are selective in which direction they allocate their cognitive capacity. The intensity of attention represents the amount of cognitive capacity, which is focused in a certain direction (Engel et al., 1995: 323). Because consumers actively choose how to allocate their cognitive resources, i.e., in which direction and with which intensity they allocate their attention, processing information is selective as well as subjective. Therefore, consumers perceive their social environment and the products located therein differently because various consumers allocate a different amount of cognitive resources (intensity of attention) to different product characteristics (direction of attention).

As can be seen from the direction of attention, consumers usually do not focus on the product as a whole, but on a combination of different product characteristics or attributes, which can be either concrete or abstract. Concrete product attributes are defined as being measurable in physical units and refer to the objective, physical features of the product (e.g. colour). Abstract attributes are an aggregation of several concrete attributes and because of the consumers' selective and subjective allocation of cognitive resources, abstract attributes are perceived differently by consumers. Thus, the main element of abstract attributes is that they are subjective in nature, as with style or taste (Olson, Reynolds, 1983: 80; Reynolds, Gutman, 1984: 29).

Usually, consumer decision-making may be regarded as a problem-solving strategy. Hence, in the context of buying decisions, product attributes are of little or no relevance to the consumer. Instead, attributes have a meaning in terms of the consequences they bring about. Whenever product attributes produce immediate, tangible, directly-experienced outcomes, these consequences are called functional consequences, e.g. satisfying hunger. In contrast, other self-relevant and emotional consequences can occur a long time after the decision to purchase. These consequences are termed psychological consequences when they are related to personal experiences and social consequences when they refer to the consumer's social environment.

Generally, psychological and social consequences are subsumed under the term psychosocial consequences (e.g. being attractive or group membership) (Gutman, 1982: 61; Olson, Reynolds, 2001: 10, 14).

Whether the consequences brought about by attributes are positive (benefits) or negative (risks) depends on the consumers' personal values, which are defined as enduring beliefs that specific modes of conduct or end-states of existence are personally or socially preferable to opposite modes of conduct or end-states of existence. Values can be divided into instrumental values (modes of conduct) and terminal values (end-states of existence). Whereas terminal values represent the goals toward which we strive (e.g. freedom, happiness), instrumental values define the means by which we approach these goals (like being independent or cheerful). The expectation of achieving a personal value through the usage of a certain product is the actual buying motive (Grunert, 1994: 218; Reynolds, Gutman; 1979: 132). For simplification, the connection between product attributes, consequences and values is depicted in Figure 1.
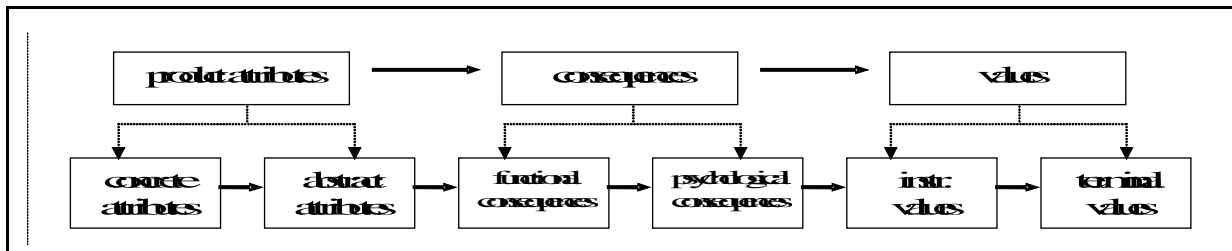

Figure 1: Linkages between attributes, consequences and values

The described linkages between product attributes, consequences and personal values have important implications for consumer behaviour and for the analysis of consumption patterns. Consumers choose products with certain attributes because of the consequences they are perceived to bring about and finally, the consequences are expected to satisfy a consumer's personal values. Therefore, values define which consequences a consumer regards as desirable and in turn the consequences define which attributes appear to be important to the consumer. Hence, this linkage can be used to explain differences in preferences for product attributes and products, respectively. Because products have a meaning beyond attributes and consequences, values which add significant explanatory power for product preferences over and above the explanatory power of consequences and attributes can be used to identify buying motives and the rationales for certain consumption patterns (Perkins, Reynolds, 1988). Furthermore, as personal values are ordered in importance, this results in an accordant ordering of the importance of certain consequences due to the linkage between values and consequences. Thus, consequences leading to important values should be more relevant to a consumer than those leading to less important consequences (Gutman, 1982: 61). Because of the linkage between consequences and product attributes, this cohesion in turn results in an analogous ranking of preferences for product attributes. Since in the end, values are of major importance for a consumer's preferences concerning

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certain product attributes, we take a closer look at the concept of values in the next section.

2.2 Values in general

The conceptualisation of values is of interest to many disciplines. Anthropologists, with their interest in life-style and cultural patterns, regard values as objective social elements which impose themselves on individuals and induce an individual's reaction. Sociology, with its focus on ideologies and conventions, defines values as concepts which group together modes of behaviour in a society (cf. Vinson et al., 1977: 44). In psychology, which is interested in attitudes and personal motives, values are viewed as centrally held, enduring beliefs that guide actions and judgements across specific situations. These value-based actions aim to achieve ultimate end-states of existence that go beyond immediate goals (Rokeach, 1968). In marketing research, values are usually described in dependence on psychology. Hence, values are people's beliefs about life and acceptable behaviour, as well as the goals that motivate people and the way to achieve these goals appropriately (Engel et al., 1995: 442).

In consumer research, a value is often described according to Rokeach's definition, which states that "a value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973). Bearing this definition in mind, two main characteristics of values can be identified. First of all, values are enduring. Therefore, they are stable and quite resistant to changes over time. Secondly, values can be either social or personal. Whereas social values define normal behaviour for a group of people, personal values represent the norms for individual behaviour. Individuals derive their personal values from the society into which a person is born and its respective social values. As individuals pick their personal values from the whole set of values held by their respective society, personal values represent the choice an individual made from the variety of social values. Even if individuals are influenced by the social values of their respective group, they develop their own values in that the choice from the variety of social values and the priority of certain values is subject to a person's own decision (Engel et al., 1995: 443-444). Hence, an individual's social environment influences each person's values, which are subjective even if they are shared by a whole society or culture.

In general, humans only hold a limited number of values, leading Rokeach to define 18 terminal values (desirable end-states like freedom, happiness or wisdom) and 18 instrumental values (modes of conduct, such as being independent, cheerful or intellectual) (see Appendix 1 for the complete Rokeach Value Scale; Rokeach, 1973). The Rokeach Value Scale, which has been applied in consumer research after being modified to the "List of Values" (Kahle et al., 1986) summarises values that are general and elementary. Moreover, this limited number of values has a major impact on an unlimited number of attitudes. Attitudes are not as general as values, but refer to a specific object (e.g. a company or a product) and cause people to react to

particular objects in a consistently positive or negative way (Fishbein, Ajzen, 1975). So values have an impact on attitudes, which in turn influence human behaviour in general and particularly consumer behaviour. Thus, the identification of values contributes to the explanation of consumer behaviour.

As already shown, values are guiding principles in human behaviour in general as well as in consumer behaviour. Therefore, the formation of several preferences for certain products depends on values which people acquire during the process of socialisation. Through this process, which starts within the family, goes on at school and continues throughout life, people develop their values, motivations and habitual activities. Furthermore, humans learn through imitation and by observing the process of reward and punishment which values and what kind of behaviour is approved by a society (Engel et al., 1995: 612- 613). Usually, this process of socialisation takes place against the cultural background, so that socialisation also is the process of absorbing a culture. Hence, cultures distinguish themselves through their respective socialisation and their respective values, which are passed on through socialisation. Which elements constitute the complex phenomenon of culture and the respective impacts these elements have on consumer behaviour will be subject to the following section.

3.   Cultural influence on consumer behaviour

3.1   Culture as a complex phenomenon

According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) culture is a collective phenomenon which is at least partly shared with people who live in the same society and distinguishes the members of one group from another. After having revised 164 definitions of the term "culture", Kroeber and Kluckhohn came up with the following definition:

"Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action."
Kroeber, Kluckhohn, 1952

The above- stated definition of culture contains three main findings that have an impact on consumer behaviour:
- Culture has to be learned.
- An interdependency exists between culture and behaviour.
- Culture manifests itself through symbols, heroes, rituals and values.

First of all, culture is not inherited, but has to be learned and therefore should be distinguished from human nature on the one hand, and an individual's personality on the other hand, as shown in Figure 2.
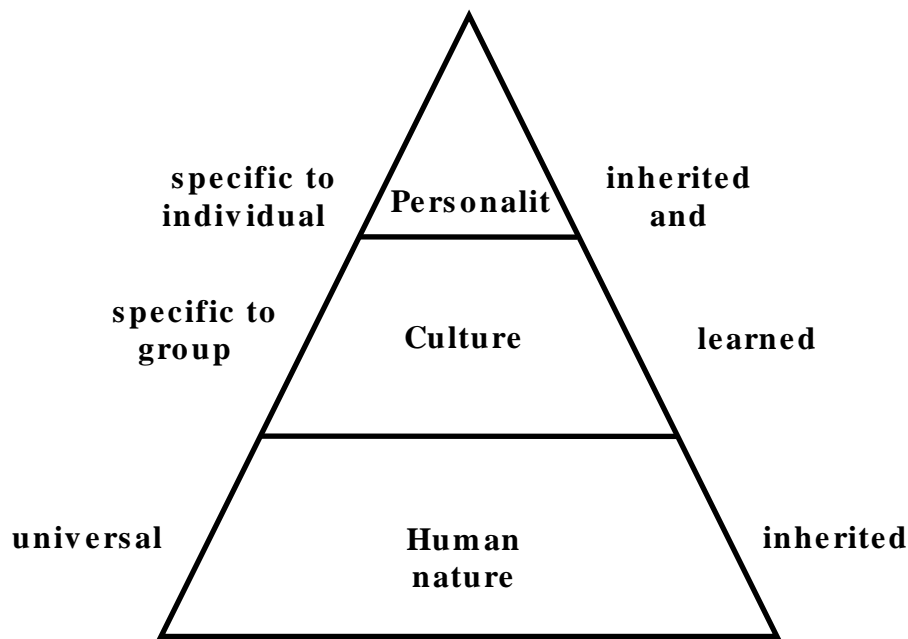
Figure 2: Culture's influence on personality
Source: Hofstede, Hofstede, 2005: 4

The least unique level in Figure 2 is that of the human nature, which is shared by all or almost all human beings. Human nature is innate and determines the physical and basic psychological functioning, as well as the human ability to feel e.g. fear, joy or sadness, and to communicate with other people. The way in which people express different feelings and communicate them to others depends on their cultural background in which they grew up and which was transmitted to them. The second level in Figure 2, namely that of a certain culture, is common to people belonging to a certain group, but is different among people from other groups. The cultural level includes all kinds of different manners people learn while being brought up in certain society, e.g. the language, the physical distance from other people we keep up in order to feel comfortable, the kind of food people eat, with what kind of other food it seems to be appropriate, how the food is prepared and the way food is eaten at a particular time of the day (Hofstede, 1984: 15-16; Hofstede, Hofstede, 2005: 4-5). Whereas e.g. the Japanese eat a lot of fish, especially raw fish, this is unacceptable to most Western European countries. Accordingly, eating dogs, horsemeat or sheep eyes is part of usual consumption patterns in some cultures, but unconceivable in other cultures (Engel et al., 1995: 613, 615). Hence, consumers from varying cultural backgrounds perceive food differently (Osinga, Hofstede, 2004: 308). The third level in Figure 2, which is the level of an individual's personality, is unique and not shared with other people. To some extent, personality is inherited and partly it is learned. In this context, learning means that the personality is influenced by culture and by individual experiences, resulting in a wide range of alternative behaviours within the same culture (Hofstede, Hofstede, 2005: 5).

The second finding, stemming from the cited definition of culture, refers to an interdependency between culture and behavioural patterns. On the one hand, culture is the result of certain human actions and therefore becomes manifest in material artefacts like buildings or memorials and in mental abilities, e.g. knowledge, emotions, attitudes and values. On the other hand, culture influences human behaviour and thus is one of the determinants of human activities. The latter direction of action is of great importance to consumer behaviour, especially whenever consumption patterns in an international context, i.e., in different cultures, are analysed (Kroeber-Riel, Weinberg, 2003: 553).

The third finding refers to the elements of culture. Culture manifests itself through symbols, heroes, rituals and values, which are at the core of culture as stated by Kroeber and Kluckhohn's definition and as depicted in Figure 3.
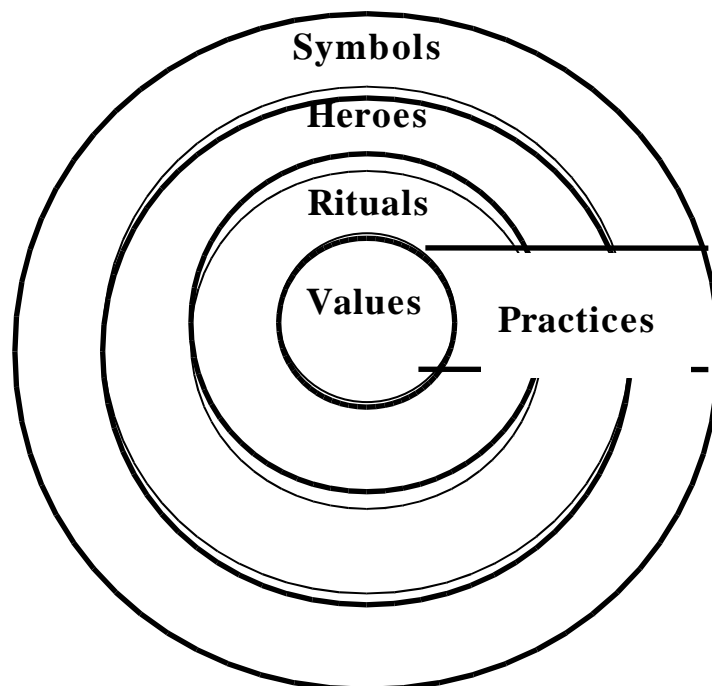

Figure 3: Manifestation of culture
Source: Hofstede, Hofstede, 2005: 7

In Figure 3, symbols represent the most superficial manifestation of culture. Symbols are words, gestures or pictures which have a particular meaning. Even food represents a symbol, e.g. if food is associated with special characteristics like strength in the case of spinach, or if a recipe which is passed on from one generation to another acts as a symbol for a particular relationship to one's own family or nationality. Usually, the meaning of symbols is only recognised by those people who belong to the same cultural background. As symbols are easily developed and often copied by other cultures, they are not very specific to certain cultures and therefore appear in the outermost level. Heroes serve as archetypes because they possess characteristics which are approved by a culture and therefore act as models for behaviour. Rituals belong to the third

level of manifestation of culture and are socially essential, collective activities like the way of greeting or social and religious ceremonies. In the manifestation of culture through rituals, products, including food products, often play a major role in that special food products are used in culture-specific rituals like a particular Christmas dinner or a turkey eaten on Thanksgiving in the USA. These first three levels of manifestation of culture are observable, even if their meaning is not obvious to the observer but only to people from the same cultural background. For this reason, they are pooled under the term practices. As depicted in Figure 3, the core of culture is formed by values, which is in accordance with the definition by Kroeber and Kluckhohn. In contrast to symbols, heroes and rituals values are not visible to an outside observer, but since values have a major impact on consumer behaviour (cf. 2.1), they are of interest in consumer research, especially when analysing consumer behaviour in an international context, as will be explained in the next section (Engel et al., 1995: 616; Hofstede, Hofstede, 2005: 6-8).

3.2 Culture-specific values and their impact on human behaviour

In the previous section, we described the interdependency between culture and human behaviour. Whereas culture manifested in memorials and ideas is the result of human activities, culture, especially its body of thought, also influences human behaviour. Indeed, not only is human behaviour in general influenced by culture, but consumption behaviour as well (eating raw fish, dogs, etc.) resulting in culture-specific consumption patterns. Even if, through the globalisation of markets, migration and world wide web usage, cultural differences seem to decrease, culture-specific consumption patterns still exist. One extreme example of culture-specific consumption patterns is that of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism represents the proneness of believing in the superiority of one's own group and the inferiority of others, causing people to interpret other social groups from the perspective of their own group, to disapprove of culturally-dissimilar people, including their cultural symbols and values and to only accept people from the same cultural background as well as the respective symbols and values. Consumer ethnocentrism therefore refers to the belief held by consumers about the appropriateness of buying products made in a foreign country and to the understanding of which kind of purchasing behaviour is acceptable. This ethnocentric buying behaviour is often motivated by patriotism and apparently rational, economic reasons in that the purchase of domestic products stimulates the economy and creates jobs, whereas purchasing foreign made products is viewed as harmful to the own economy and a cause of domestic unemployment (Orth, Firbasová, 2003: 140; Shimp, Sharma, 1987: 280). Thus, by examining the example of consumer ethnocentrism, we seek to identify the main reasons for culture-specific consumption patterns.

Since in Section 2 we explained that consumers choose certain product attributes because of the consequences they provide and that these consequences satisfy personal values, which in turn have an impact on attitudes and therefore on human behaviour, values were identified as a major determinant of human behaviour. To explain the relationship between values and cultures, we also illustrated the complex phenomenon of culture and

identified values which are acquired during socialisation as a central element of culture. As values are one determinant of consumer behaviour and of culture, it has to be assumed that these cohesions lead to culture- specific consumption patterns and to culture- specific perceptions of products in general (Watson et al., 2002: 295). Looking back at the example of ethnocentrism, this assumption must be confirmed because the apparently rational, economic reasons like supporting the domestic economy are in some respect related to values such as a comfortable life, family security and national security (see Appendix 1) which are all somehow affected by economic wealth. Furthermore, ethnocentrism explicitly generates from culture- specific values and symbols. Therefore, we conclude that economic considerations are responsible for ethnocentric or culture- specific consumption patterns in that these reasons are related to values. The remaining question is why culture- specific values and their impact on human behaviour, leading to culture- specific consumption patterns, still exist despite the globalisation of markets and consumer migration. The main reason is likely that values are acquired early in our lives through the process of socialisation and handed down from one generation to another. Also, because they are at the core of a culture, people stick to their acquired values as the example of ethnocentrism showed. Thus, values tend to be quite stable, which has to be taken into account during the development of marketing strategies.

4.   The impact of culture on marketing strategies

Of course, it is not possible to assess the impact of a consumer's respective cultural background on marketing strategies in general, because the specific elements of the marketing- mix, i.e., 1. pricing, 2. distribution policy, 3. product development and 4. communication strategies, are all more or less affected by culture.

Pricing, which is the first element of the marketing- mix, refers to decisions about the actual product price the consumer has to pay and thus considers e.g. production costs, as well as the consumer's willingness to pay, which might especially be affected by his/her cultural background. The willingness to pay represents the valuation of products. Since consumers learned during the process of socialisation which products they should approve of and which they should not, the socialisation and thus the transmission of culture influences the appreciation of certain products as well as the willingness to pay. On the other hand, decisions concerning pricing interact with the economic development of a country. Hence, cultural background might serve as a determinant of the target market, but the originalities of the culture itself are less important.

In the context of distribution policy, the cultural area might also be important to differentiate between several target markets, even if the characteristics of the culture do not have a direct impact on decisions concerning product distribution. Nonetheless, different cultures have to be considered when distributing products because consumers from different cultures have different buying habits in terms of preferring hypermarkets, supermarkets or peasant markets. The preferences for different retail formats might partly be

due to the economic development of the respective cultural area, but on the other hand, people's customs concerning food purchases might also result from their cultural background. As depicted in Figure 2, culture influences the consumer's personality in that people adopt manners and customs such as the preferred preparation of food, the time of the day certain meals are eaten and where food is bought. Thus, cultural background has to be taken into account when distributing products, but the differences between cultures that are of interest for decisions on distribution policy are observable, which makes it easier to consider these differences in product distribution. The reasons for different buying habits are only important if a company tries to change buying habits in the target market in favour of its own distribution policy. This is likely a very difficult and slow process, which even might be part of a company's communication policy instead of the distribution policy.

The third element of the marketing-mix, product development, is much more affected by the consumers' cultural background. As the consequences product attributes are perceived to bring about and the values which should be satisfied differ according to the consumers' cultural background, culture has to be considered in the development of products. Otherwise, products are not in accordance with what the consumers expect the products to be. Moreover, products which are preferred in certain usage situations such as religious ceremonies vary because of culture. If e.g. kosher butchering is part of a culture like Judaism, this has to be taken into account when developing products which should be marketed in the respective cultural area. Therefore, culture-specific preparations of food and culture-specific usage situations generally have to be considered in product development. For the development of products it might be sufficient to observe in which usage situation certain products are preferred without knowing the reasons of specific preferences.

This is contrary to the fourth element of the marketing-mix, the development of communication strategies. If a company wants to communicate that its product is particularly appropriate to certain usage situations, it is not satisfactory to only observe consumption patterns, it is also necessary to get to know the reasons for culture-specific consumption habits. Hence, in order to convince consumers of the appropriateness of certain products, it is of major importance to know the reasons why consumers prefer some products over others and to know the cohesions between buying motives and cultural background. If this is the case, producers should be able to communicate their products successfully in international markets.

Thus, the reasons for purchasing specific products, which might differ across cultures, have to be taken into account if communication strategies are to be expanded internationally. Usually, a communication strategy must consider differences in languages (e.g. the translation of adages and different meanings of words in the same language, but different cultures), differences in infrastructure (e.g. diffusion of television and the world wide web) and in legal parameters (e.g. comparative advertising). Differences in culture and their impact on the development of communication strategies is our main interest. The interdependency between culture-specific buying motives and the development of communication strategies is due to the main elements of culture (1. symbols, 2. heroes, 3. rituals, 4. values). These culture-specific

elements often are used in several parts of the communication strategy as a whole. For example, direct marketing probably is affected by culture, because culture influences people's personality (cf. Figure 2) and hence has an impact on different manners, such as the style of greeting and the interpersonal distance kept. These different customs are important for personal contact with consumers. Furthermore, a company's corporate identity has to account for cross-cultural differences. Whereas in corporate behaviour the above-stated has to be considered, corporate design has to take into account the different meanings of cultural symbols like colours. As advertising plays a major role in a company's communication strategy and is affected by all kinds of cultural elements, advertising especially has to consider cross-cultural differences. In the following, we take a closer look at the several elements of culture and how they should be accounted for in communication strategies.

Since the first elements of culture, i.e., symbols like religious signs, gestures, pictures, or the meaning of colours are normally only recognised by those people who live in the same culture, communication strategies employing these culture-specific symbols are only understandable to people from the same cultural background. Therefore, if a communication strategy shall be expanded to another culture, marketers have to verify whether the culture-specific symbols will be interpreted in the way the marketers intended them to be interpreted. Otherwise, the consumers' associations with the product will be false, causing the consumers not to recognise or even to reject the product.

The second element of culture, i.e., heroes, also have to be kept in mind while developing communication strategies. Heroes are approved by a culture because of the characteristics they possess. Thus, cultures probably also have an ideal regarding the appearance of people and which outward characteristics are appreciated and accounted for, as e.g. typical masculine, feminine or adolescent. As stereotypes often are used in communication strategies to associate products with certain characteristics and these stereotypes, e.g. gender stereotypes, differ across cultures, communication strategies have to be adapted to avoid confusion.

The third element through which culture manifests itself is that of specific rituals. In a broader sense, a usage situation might be considered as some kind of ritual. Generally, rituals or usage situations should be accounted for in product development as stated above and in communication strategies since products are often part of a ritual or are associated with certain usage situations. Since these rituals or usage situations differ depending on a consumer's cultural background, culture-specific rituals and usage situations should be taken into account during the development of products as well as communication strategies. Furthermore, the consideration of a ritual or a usage situation in a communication strategy is advantageous because by providing a ritual or usage situation to the consumer, the communication strategy itself provides a recurring buying motive. A precondition for this kind of communication strategy is that the marketers are aware of culture-specific rituals or usage situations and which products the consumer views as appropriate.

The fourth and most central element of culture is values. As shown in section 2, products often are bought to satisfy a consumer's personal values. Hence, personal values constitute a buying motive. As communication strategies should provide a buying motive, a consumer's personal values might serve as an appropriate basis for a communication strategy. Communication strategies which are based on values have to consider that values are an element of culture and differ, at least partly, among cultures. Therefore, the interdependency between product attributes and the values these attributes are supposed to satisfy might also differ between cultures in that certain values might have deviating priorities or analogous values might be satisfied by differing product attributes and vice versa. This has to be taken into account when communication strategies are expanded to foreign markets. Otherwise, the buying motive which is provided in the communication strategy is irrelevant to the consumer because the consumer does not link the advertised product with the accordant value.

In summary, communication strategies should account for culture-specific elements like symbols, heroes, rituals and values in that these cultural elements, e.g. religious symbols or rituals have to be respected and should not be violated in order to avoid the consumers' reactance to the advertised products. The difficulty about not insulting cultural elements is that it sometimes seems to be a challenge for the marketer to get rid of his/her own cultural background and the respective cultural elements and to put him/herself into another culture. As long as cultural elements are observable (symbols, heroes and rituals) it might even be possible for the marketer to use these cultural elements properly in communication strategies. But since values are not observable, the marketer does not know the most important values of a culture as well as the interdependency between product attributes and values. Without knowing the culture-specific values and the cohesion between values and products, it is difficult to anticipate the meaning foreign consumers will attach to the advertised products and the way these consumers will interpret communication strategies. Thus, as the marketer's cultural background affects the development of the communication strategy and the intended message, the receiver's cultural background influences the interpretation of the communicated message (Hornik, 1980: 36-38). For this reason, the aim of international communication strategies has to be to achieve compliance between the marketer's intended message and the consumer's perception of the message. To attain this goal, marketers have to decide whether to standardise or to localise communication strategies. The degree of standardisation depends on various factors, e.g. the product in question and the similarities or differences between the two contemplated cultures. If the values of the cultures in question and the interdependency between values and products coincides, the standardisation of communication strategies might be successful, especially because standardised communication strategies are more cost-efficient. On the other hand, differentiating communication strategies is more effective, because localised communication strategies usually address the consumers' needs and wishes more accurately.

5.   Summary and conclusions

As mentioned in the introduction, in saturated markets, producers have to focus on marketing orientation. This means that they have to distinguish between consumers' needs and wishes which are derived from personal values. Hence, at the centre of a producer's decisions have to be the consumers, who allocate their attention in different directions and with different intensities, leading them to perceive product attributes differently. Product attributes are bought because of the consequences the product attributes are perceived to bring about. In turn, these consequences are supposed to satisfy a consumer's personal values. Hence, we identified values as the actual buying motive. Awareness of people's buying motives is of major importance for producers, since the buying motives are the basis for product differentiations through product improvement and emotional advertising. Emotional advertising especially profits from knowledge of the consumer's virtual buying motive. In our opinion, emotional advertising offers the possibility of differentiating one's own products in the long run, in particular if emotional advertising is based on the identified interdependency between a consumer's personal values and his/her buying habits. Since it is difficult and complicated to identify the cohesion between values and consumption patterns, the producer who is aware of these cohesions and therefore knows the buying motives of the targeted market segments is already in an advantageous position. Moreover, the actual buying motive, i.e., personal values, are enduring and stable. Hence, if a producer uses values as the basis for emotional advertising, this offers the opportunity for long-term differentiation.

Secondly, we tried to emphasise that values, which often depict the buying motive, are a central element of culture. Hence, as values are culture-specific, they lead to culture-specific consumption patterns. These cross-cultural differences in consumption patterns, which derive from deviating values, have to be considered in marketing strategies, especially in communication strategies that are based on culture-specific values. Since not only values are part of a communication strategy, other culture-specific elements like symbols, heroes and rituals have to be adapted to different cultural areas' communication strategies in order to be perceived and interpreted correctly.

Nonetheless, several questions for future research remain. First of all, research has to take a closer look at the interdependency between a consumer's personal values and his/her buying patterns. Because the cohesion between consumption habits and values depends on various factors such as the product in question or the contemplated cultural areas, research results are difficult to generalise and therefore usually refer to a specific product. Furthermore, adequate methods for the analysis of the cohesion between values and consumer behaviour have to be developed and applied in consumer research and in marketing research, as well as in marketing practice. The stated theoretical coherences should especially be applied in international marketing. Moreover, marketers and researchers have to be aware of the difficulty of transferring theories about consumer behaviour, the identified values and the identified linkages between products and values to other cultures. To avoid this problem, marketers, as well as researches, have to figure out how to work on problems in international marketing without looking at things just from one's own cultural perspective. It would likely be helpful to encourage cross-cultural cooperation.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: The Rokeach Value Scale

Terminal Values (Desirable End-States)	Instrumental Values (Modes of Conduct)
A comfortable life	Ambitious
An exciting life	Broad-minded
A sense of accomplishment	Capable
A world at peace	Cheerful
A world of beauty	Clean
Equality	Courageous
Family security	Forgiving
Freedom	Helpful
Happiness	Honest
Inner harmony	Imaginative
Mature love	Independent
National security	Intellectual
Pleasure	Logical
Salvation	Loving
Self-respect	Obedient
Social recognition	Polite
True friendship	Responsible
Wisdom	Self-controlled

Source: Rokeach, 1973