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The impact of culture difference on consumer behavior among young adults in Mardan

Sumayyah Manzar* & Maham Iftikhar**

Abstract

The study aimed to analyze cultural difference effect on consumer behavior amongst young adults of Mardan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Pakistan and gender difference in both the constructs. The design employed was cross sectional using questionnaire. Three hundred young adults participated in the main study and Pearson product–moment correlation and independent-samples t tests were used for analyses. Internal consistency of the BIS scale was done, resulting in questionable internal consistency ($\alpha = .659$), while the INDCOL scale showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .896$). The correlation between scores on the two measures was positive with $r(298) = .202$, $p < .01$, which is a statistically significant (but weak) positive association. There was no significant difference between the buy impulsiveness scores of males and females, $t(298) = -1.01$, $p = .311$. Females however, scored higher than males on the individualism–collectivism, $t(298) = -2.27$, $p = .024$. The results indicate that in this sample, buying impulsiveness was seen as a characteristic related to cultural orientation though, as is evident, the strength of the association is low. The sample of this study was one city, cross-sectional and non-probability; the BIS showed limited internal consistency, limiting the causal explanations and generalizations. The results have given a localized input into the research in the context of cultural orientation and consumer behavior in Pakistan.

Key Words: Buying impulsiveness, Individualism–Collectivism, Consumer behavior, Young Adults, Gender Differences.

*BS Psychology, Department of Psychology, WUM, for correspondence, khansbg678@gmail.com

**Lecturer, WUM

Introduction

Consumer behaviour involves the process of selection, acquisition, use and disposal of products and services. Psychological, social, cultural and economic factors influence these processes (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Solomon, 2018). Culture is relevant, as the norms, values, beliefs, and sets of learned behaviors can all impact consumers' product judgment, reaction to marketing messages and purchase decisions. Collectivist orientations involve that family and social groups may be important among factors influencing consumer decision making, while individualistic orientations emphasize personal preferences and autonomy (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995).

Cultural orientation also has been associated with impulsive consumption. Impulsive buying relates to the tendency to make decisions to buy with less deliberation; in the past, researchers have been able to discover other factors such as affect, social influence, self-control, materialism and cultural orientation (Kacen & Lee, 2002; Rook & Fisher, 1995; Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001). Kacen and Lee (2002) suggested that cultural differences may be manifested in the formation of impulse buying by propelpersons of the difference in the self-construal and social norms. Similarly, Zhang and Shrum (2009), indicated that self-construal is capable of impacting on impulsive consumption.

This feature clearly comes into play when social relationships play an important role in decision-making, such as that in the family and other reference groups. Consumer socialization theory has put emphasis on the role played by the family, peer groups and social agents in terms of their role for the development of consumer knowledge and consumer behavior (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Family-based and peer-based reference groups can combine their activity to determine which products and brands are selected (Childers & Rao, 1992) and even self-concept theory provides an indication that consumers might choose products that are consistent with how they see themselves and their desired self stereotypical images (Sirgy, 1982).

A local context is provided by Mardan for an examination of these relationships because within its

environment, young adults are likely to engage with modern consumer trends whilst maintained within cultural frameworks of family and community. Although studies to date have analyzed the effect of culture on consumer behavior between country and culture, there is still a lack of literature focusing on the evidence from local cultures within Pakistan. The present study therefore aims towards young adults of Mardan and aimed at studying the relationship between individualism–collectivism and buying impulsiveness, gender differences in this construct.

Objectives

1. To study the effect of Differences in Consumer Behavior of young Adults of the region.
2. To study the gender differences in buying impulsiveness.
3. To explore the distinctions between the individualistic and collectivist attitude among the men/female population.

Hypotheses

1. H1: There will be a positive relationship between individualism – collectivism and buying impulsiveness.
2. H3: There will be a significant difference between the product buying impulsiveness of males and females.
3. H3 = There will be significant difference between the individualism– collectivism attitudes of male and female participants.

Methodology

Design and Participants

The study employed a cross-sectional design with a questionnaire as a research method. A total of 300 young adults of Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan was included in the main study. The research record indicates the research subjects are young adults with the same number of males as females (150) in the main research procedure. Non-probability convenience sampling was used in the recruitment of

the participants. The inclusion criteria reported included age 18 years, involvement of residents in Mardan and their capacity to speak Urdu or English.

The demographic table reported 300 participants: 150 males (50.0%) and 150 females (50.0%).

Participants were distributed across age groups of 18–20 years ($n = 95$, 31.7%), 21–23 years ($n = 149$, 49.7%), 24–26 years ($n = 48$, 16.0%), and 27–30 years ($n = 8$, 2.7%). Most participants were students ($n = 280$, 93.3%). Joint family systems accounted for 56.3% of the sample ($n = 169$), followed by nuclear families ($n = 109$, 36.3%) and extended families ($n = 22$, 7.3%).

Measures

Demographic information. A self-administered demographic sheet was used to gather data such as age, gender, marital status, education, job, income, place of residence, family system and place to buy their groceries.

Buying Impulsiveness Scale. The Buying Impulsiveness Scale, 9 items, by Rook and Fisher (1995) was used for the assessment of buying impulsiveness. Responses to items were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), higher values representing higher levels of buying impulsiveness. The main sample revealed questionable internal consistency ($\alpha = .659$), so caution should be used when interpreting results using the BIS.

Individualism–Collectivism Scale. Cultural orientation was measured by 16 adapted Individualism–Collectivism Scale Items by Singelis et al. (1995) according to the information in the research register. The scale adopted Likert's type answers score and higher score was considered as more individualism–collectivism orientation. This scale had a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .896$) when used in the main sample.

Procedure

The study states that the study received the requisite ethics approval. The participants were told the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation as well as rules of confidentiality and the option to withdraw from the research. Before taking the questionnaires, written informed consent was

obtained. Face-to-face data gathering for March – April 2026 was done at public places, educational institutes and workplaces in Mardan. Evidence sought through anonymous questionnaires were completed and analyzed by inputting the completed questionnaires into IBM SPSS Statistics software.

Data Analysis

The number frequencies and mean were used to describe the study variables. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine internal consistency. Pearson product–moment correlation was applied to analyze the correlation between individualism collectivism and buying impulsiveness. Independent-samples t tests were performed to explore the differences between males and females in the two constructs.

Conventional .05 level of significance was used.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

The mean score for buying impulsiveness was 27.47 (SD = 5.70), with skewness = .220 and kurtosis = .242. The mean value for individualism-collectivism was 91.11, standard deviation was 22.54, skewness = $-.138$ and kurtosis = $-.188$. Parametric analyses were justified as the skewness and kurtosis values of the reported values were below ± 2 . Alpha coefficients of the BIS and INDCOL were .659 and .896, respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency of Study Variables

Measure	Items	M	SD	α
Buying Impulsiveness Scale	9	27.47	5.70	.659
Individualism–Collectivism Scale	16	91.11	22.54	.896

Note. $N = 300$. α = Cronbach's alpha.

Correlation Between Individualism–Collectivism and Buying Impulsiveness

Statistically significant positive correlation between individualism–collectivism and buying impulsiveness, $r(298) = .202$, $p < .01$ was observed. The association was small in magnitude, which means that the bigger the score for each individualism–collectivism, the bigger the buying impulsiveness

score in the sample.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Study Variables

Variable	1	2
1. Buying impulsiveness	—	.202**
2. Individualism–collectivism	.202**	—

Note. ** $p < .01$. $N = 300$.

Gender Differences

An independent-samples t test indicated that males ($M = 27.17$, $SD = 6.00$) and females ($M = 27.85$, $SD = 5.42$) did not differ significantly in buying impulsiveness, $t(298) = -1.01$, $p = .311$, 95% CI for the mean difference $[-1.98, 0.63]$. So, the support of H2 was not made.

For individualism–collectivism, males' mean score was 88.03 ($SD = 24.87$) while females' mean score was 93.95 ($SD = 19.57$). This difference was statistically significant, $t(298) = -2.27$, $p = .024$, 95% CI $[-11.04, -0.79]$. Thus, H3 was supported.

Table 3: Gender Differences in Buying Impulsiveness and Individualism–Collectivism

Variable	Male M	Male SD	Female M	Female SD	t	p
Buying impulsiveness	27.17	6.00	27.85	5.42	-1.01	.311
Individualism–collectivism	88.03	24.87	93.95	19.57	-2.27	.024

Note. $N = 300$. Two-tailed tests.

Discussion

The current study aimed to explore the Impact of culture difference on consumer behaviour among young adults of Mardan and to explore gender difference in both the constructs. Results demonstrated that there was a positive, statistically significant, but weak, relationship between two measures. This finding is in line with the notion that cultural orientation can be traced to impulsive consumption via social norms and self-construal (Kacen & Lee, 2002; Zhang & Shrum, 2009). It is also a new contribution to the past studies on consumer impulsiveness in Pakistani context.

The strength of the relationship was small ($r = .202$), meaning that cultural orientation (alone) can

explain only a fraction of the variance in buying impulsiveness. This finding is in line with the other findings that impulsive buying is associated with several psychological and situational factors, such as affect, self-control, social influence and individual difference (Baumeister, 2002; Rook & Gardner, 1993; Silvera et al., 2008; Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001). Hence, cultural orientation should be included as one factor of a wider explanation of consumer behavior instead of in itself as an adequate explanation.

There was no significant difference between male and female students on buying impulsiveness. This result is contrary to that of some previous studies which indicated gender differences regarding impulse buying (Coley & Burgess, 2003; Dittmar et al., 1995), and it moderately supports other studies that pointed to the significance of affective and social factors instead of considering a homogeneous gender gap (Silvera et al., 2008; Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001). The composition of the sample, mainly students, should be considered when interpreting the current findings.

The individualism – collectivism showed that the gender difference was statistically significant, with higher scores for the females. The study report indicates that the effect was small and there was high overlap between the groups. This result may not be interpreted as an indication of the robust and general impact of gender on cultural preferences. Sex differences are still a factor, as there are individual differences within each sex group.

The study brings some localised evidence of cultural orientation and consumer behaviour of the youth of Mardan. However, the results do not causal relationships. As a result of the cross sectional design of the study, convenience sampling method, the specific focus on student populations and the self-report measures used, the results of this study are not generalizable beyond the study participants.

Limitations and Future Research

There are some factors to be taken into account. First, the cross-sections design does not allow us to draw causal inferences. Secondly, the use of convenience sampling from one city, restricts the external validity. Thirdly, most of the participants were students, which might limit the representativeness of

young adults who come from various occupation backgrounds and levels of education. Fourth, there is a social-desirability, or common-method, bias concerning self-report questionnaires. Last, BIS was not internally consistent for the main sample ($\alpha = .659$); results using BIS should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Future studies might include a wider and greater samples, of children in other cities and across a broader age spectrum, longitudinal and experimental designs, and mixed method approaches. Self-control, materialism, income, affect, and marketing exposure are among the potential mediators and moderators which can be investigated. Others might also distinguish between gender and cultural differences on a product-specific level to better understand whether such differences exist at a product level.

Conclusion

Current study results revealed a weak but positive correlation between individualism – collectivism and buy impulsiveness of youth population of Mardan, Pakistan. The impulsiveness and buying impulsiveness scores were not significantly different between males and females in the present sample, whereas, females had significantly higher individualism–collectivism scores than males. The results reveal that the cultural orientations are relevant for consumer related studies in Pakistan; at the same time, it also shows that it has only limited connotation with buying the impulsiveness. The study results must be viewed with caution because of methodological shortcomings and the decreased reliability of the BIS, and it needs to be repeated with improved measures and samples.

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