THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONAL CULTURE ON INTERNATIONAL MARKETING & CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN IRAQI KURDISTAN, USING HOFSTEDE'S MODEL AT INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT: *There are growing interest in the consequences of culture for global marketing and advertising and many recent researches urged companies to consider the necessity of adapting their international marketing strategies to the culture of the consumer (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). In order to investigate the influence of national culture on international marketing and consumer behavior and answer the research questions in Iraqi Kurdistan, this paper tend to identify Hofstede cultural dimensions and explain how these dimensions may impact the global marketing management. This paper was divided into three main parts. The first part of this research concentrates on international marketing as well as national culture and tries to investigate the past research on how national culture as an independent variable may influence international marketing and consumer behavior as dependent variable. In the second part of this study, two main questions were raised and a quantitative self-respond questionnaire was used to measure the cultural values at individual level. This research used convenience sample method and it is based on the sample of 272 professionals mostly managers at different levels and combined with the previous research sample of 441 students to bring consistency and reliability to the research and also reduce sample error. In the third part, data were measured and analyzed and at the end a discussion was developed to answer the questions. The findings explain the relationship between both variables and support the past works by De Mooij and Hofstede as concrete works that can be applied by international managers. Therefore, this author can conclude that this paper provide strong argument that there is positive relationship between national culture and international marketing and consumer behavior. There are some suggestions for more cross-cultural research in this part of the world.*

Keywords: Hofstde Model, Culture, International Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Kurds, Context Model.

INTRODUCTION

One of the best ways to grow your business is to go global because now it is business without borders and if you do not challenge your competitors in their markets, the foreign competitors will inevitably come and compete with you in your home market (Kotler, 2003). What stop firms to invest abroad are tariffs, language differences, cultural differences, currency exchange control and bribery (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Schneiter (1982) believes the culture impact international marketing in a way that they want to enter into a market and marketing strategy. Fulford (2001) argued culture affects the effectiveness of formulating an effective marketing message in any cross-cultural context. Marketing managers need to understand how different cultural background impact communication and exchange (Varey, 2002).

Marketplace interaction should not be summed up only in terms of economic transactions but also as a cultural form, thus, a cultural approach and methods to marketing and consumer behavior is needed to understand the complexity of culture across globalized market environments (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). There is an increasing interest in the consequences of culture for global marketing and advertising (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). Thanks to the internet as a means of spreading messages about products and service offering, lifestyle, and cultural image, consumers around the world are far more familiar with global brands than they were few decades ago and these resulted in forcing practitioners and researchers of global marketing and management to search for alternative paradigms of culture that will help them navigate the more dynamic environment of markets, consumers and organizations around the world (Nakata, 2009). The adaptation of branding and advertising strategies to the culture of consumers were the subject of recent researches and Hofstede cultural model is widely used to understand cultural differences (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010).

As the globalization of economy is happening, an accurate understanding of national culture and its impacts on buyer behavior in international marketing is very important. This research, tries to understand the role of national culture in international marketing and how it impacts consumers behavior. It is understood that these disciplines are still evolving, broadening the understanding on these changes requires us to involve in interdisciplinary study. This fragmented, plural, and fluid view of culture enables researchers to investigate culture at micro-level social formations, such as subcultures and brand communities (Nakata and Bilgin, 2009). Unlike Hofstede paradigm, this research, measure national culture at individual levels where behaviors are determined by each member in a group or society. The dynamic view of culture speculates those individuals' actions and decisions are ruled by a complex collection of factors; including national culture ones (Nakata and Bilgin, 2009).

International Marketing

Several scholars such as: Brassington and Pettitt (2006), Baines and Chansarkar (2002), Donaldson (1998), Kent and Omer (2003), Kotler (2003), Kotler and Armstrong (2012), Schneiter (1982), Terpstra and Sarathy, (1991), have looked at culture briefly as a part of macro-environment that may influence businesses. In contrast, other researchers such as: Arnould et al, (2009) Brannen (2009), De Mooij (1997; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2010; 2011; 2013), Fulford (2001), Nakata, and Bilgin (2009), Varey (2002), have looked at the influence of culture on international marketing and consumer behavior in more detail. It is over two decades that the culture construct has been considered seriously within marketing and consumer research; otherwise, it has mainly played the role of an externally given antecedent variable which explains the difference and similarity between national markets (Arnould, et al., 2009).

International marketing can be explained by first looking at marketing in a domestic environment (Terpstra and Sarathy, 1991). According to Brassington and Pettitt (2006) definitions of marketing are moving away from the single exchange, seller-focused perspective towards more socially relevant and relationship-oriented. Kotler and Armstrong (2012, p.29) defined marketing as "The process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return." Additionally, international marketing is to find out what customers want around the world and then satisfy these wants better than other competitors, both domestic and international (Terpstra and Sarathy, 1991, p.5). Berry and Wilson (2000) suggested global marketing is different from

international marketing in a way global marketing try to create a standardized marketing strategy regardless of different countries or regions.

In addition, Belch and Belch (2003) defined consumer behavior as "the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires." Kotler and Armstrong (2012) stressed the complexity of buying behavior, especially when consumers are highly involved in a purchase decision making and perceive significant differences between brands. Kent and Omer (2003) also indicated the complexity of purchase behavior at the retail level. Donaldson (1998) have looked at personal factors in buying behavior to identify how marketers can market and sell effectively. Belch and Belch (2003) argued the broadest and most intangible of the external forces that impact consumer behavior is culture. Varey (2002) stated cultural influence of consumer behavior impacts on marketing management and it is the dominant values that explain which needs must be achieved. There is a huge interest in investigating the influence of culture on consumer behavior (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011).

Some scholars believe that global marketing worked as a force to push for a better, enhanced communication and other technologies so in return consumers around the world will have similar tastes and needs. Others feel that this level of commonality is overstated and consumer' needs and wants should be examined in different market environments (Berry and Wilson, 2000). Moreover, Moisander and valtonen (2006) argued It is the marketers who Produce goods and services, give meaning to them and make them available to consumers, thus, they have a significant role in providing what market wants but also function as significant shapers of tastes, including creating and recreating new wants, needs and lifestyles, exerting power and authority from their position within important cultural institutions. Therefore, they have assumed that products and brands as cultural artifacts that have meaning, produced and consumed in and through processes and practices of representation. DePalma (2002) pointed to internet for allowing companies and countries instantly promote their language, culture, and economic might anywhere in this world. Brannen (2009) referred to economic globalization and cultural integration as a superficial impression and stated these are only happening on the surface level because today, more than ever, international managers are realizing that they really lack in deep environmental understanding – specifically cultural context.

In addition to the relation between culture and marketing, Arnould, et al. (2009) also raised the question of standardization-adaptation debate, and asked whether certain developed marketing strategies or tactics would be applicable in a different cultural context. Varey (2002) argued the ethnocentricity can lead business to failures when necessary standardization and adaptations are missed, what works at home market does not mean it will work elsewhere in every case and what makes standardization of advertising and other communication activities more attractive is cost. According to Arnould, et al. (2009) many of the world's most brutal conflicts are waged in term of culture, from the Turkic-speaking Uighurs in China to the Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Iraq. By communicating to similar and ignoring the different groups marketer will harness the differences (Vary, 2002). Brannen (2009) raised the question of what would happen when global companies try to transfer core competencies to another country such as technology and what role culture plays? This is where the influence of culture on management more apparent and if these linkages are left unmanaged, unexpected outcomes occur.

De Mooij (1997) blamed globalization and modernization for making international companies to come to conclusion that marketing, branding and advertising strategies should be

standardized. She added this was reinforced by the success of a few global brands such as Coca-Cola and Levi's (De Mooij, 2001). Varey (2002) indicated recently, Coca-Cola has fallen foul of local tastes for traditionally brewed beverages in Russia. De Mooij (2003) stated ignoring culture's impact has led many companies with centralized way of operations and marketing in declining profitability. She criticized business schools for teaching and making graduates believe in global homogenization of consumer behavior which she sees it as one of the greatest myths taught in international marketing courses (2002). Arnould, et al. (2009) pointed to globalization as a great force that challenges the assumption of distinct national differences and the methodological foundation of Hofstede's survey instrument. From another side, De Mooij (2002) argued the phenomena is not the convergence of consumer behavior but technology and national wealth in developed world and these are developments at macro-level not micro-level.

Consumer needs are not different in different countries depending on culture, level of economic development and different product standards (Hill, 2007). Stone and McCall (2004) suggested that the distribution of income among a population can be a significant factor in deciding what products and services international companies should offers. DePalma (2002) mentioned some of the reasons for why it is hard for a generic product to travel abroad without any modifications such as; redevelopment, reengineering, repackaging, total quality controls and he suggested building global requirements into the next version rather than trying to redoing it. In marketing literature, the product value is not about the material properties of the products but its symbolic properties which show signs of status, prestige, and social class (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). Thus, the product/brand has to be managed within restrictions and opportunities provided by the law of a country. In manufacturing, the success of international products is subject to economies of scale as well as accepted across cultures (Berry and Wilson, 2000). Mass customization brings the advantages of standardization and adaptation together, creating economies of scale and scope (Stone and McCall, 2004).

Firms that try a policy of standardized pricing must know the same forces that inhibit the international standardization of other marketing mix components will influence them too (Ball, Geringer, McNett and Minor, 2012). They have added what makes price strategy more complex in international markets are two types of pricing: foreign national pricing, which is domestic pricing in another country, and international pricing for export. Incomes, cultural habits, and consumer preferences are not similar in different market and for the same price in two different markets; different amount may be demanded (Terpstra and Sarathy, 1991). Across cultures and markets, negotiation is a key feature of the pricing scene and must be supported by cross-cultural skills (Stone and McCall, 2004).

National culture has a significant role in making the process of international promotion implementation more complex and difficult because different media has different usage across international markets and the type of promotion mix works in one country, say, France, is not necessarily will work for other countries says, Iraq for example (Stone and McCall, 2004). Media are part of countries' culture and some of the differences are related to national income (De Mooij, 2003). Cultural values and norms provide a set of rules for how people need to communicate, behave and make decision about what to consume because language impact culture and culture influences language (Varey, 2002). Thus, marketers must communicate meaning through various forms of communicating media and international manager must pay attention to the cultural and media differences. Language has many facets that relate to the meaning of consumer products (Douglas and Craig, 2009). The objective of the promotion message and media selection may be the same but implementation and media usage and the

details of the messages in each country could be different, particularly, when it comes to expenditure and the language used for portraying the same message (Stone and McCall, 2004). Varey (2002) suggested that family, work, politics, religion, and communication technologies provide reference points to people and any dissimilarity in them can explain the meaning of message. The Communication channel that was used between family and friends as traditional word of mouth, now, social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are offering the possibility of electronic word of mouth (De Mooij and Goodrich, 2013).

Advertising constitutes a key system for producing sign values (Moisander and valtonen, 2006). In studying global advertising culture creates global-local dilemma because marketers has to decide whether to standardize for efficiency reasons or to adapt to be effective (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). It is more sensible and cheaper to create advert locally than to import it and then adapt it because sometime cultural differences make it very difficult to pull off a global campaign (Aakar and Erich, 2001). An Advert should mirrors consumer behavior and start by getting attention, create interest, build desire and stimulate action (Moore, 2005). The emphasis of advertising is different among Western and Eastern cultures, for example, in Western culture the focus is on individualism, comparison and competition, whereas, in Eastern culture the emphasis is on status, emotions, indirect expression, and the avoidance of comparisons (Varey, 2002). Moreover, brand cannot just be imposed on all market because it is a risky path to take and a brand's image may means different things in different countries (Aakar and Erich, 2001). De Mooij (2004) found that both consumer behavior and the way they communicate are strongly dependent on their cultural values and as for advertising, one important distinction is between low and high context communication.

International marketers may find it very difficult to create distribution strategies whether it is in home market or in host because they must deal with two functions: getting the products to foreign markets (exporting) and distributing the products within each foreign market (Ball, et al., 2012).There are some cases that the distribution channels that marketers accustomed may not be available. Stone and McCall (2004) warns about the use of family and friendship ties in some parts of Latin America, Black Africa, part of Asia and in the Arab countries, as being a necessary and important means of doing business. Meanwhile, the use of agents and distributors raises the question of commission and bribery.

Differences in the international marketing environment across countries will dictate the way in which data is collected, the type of question to ask, who will answer, and how to interpret the answers (Baines and Chansarkar, 2002, p. 210). Similar to home market research, international marketing research uses the same quantitative research methods, with measurements as a base for assessment (Stone and McCall, 2004). Differences in socio-cultural environment are viewed as the most important aspect of the international environment as it relates to differences in language, culture, literacy and numeracy. Baines and Chansarkar (2002) see these socio-cultural differences as challenge because it makes international marketing research and design more complex. Nakata and Bilgin (2009) suggested that as the body of international marketing research expands, marketer has to review these researches periodically to be able to measure the state of knowledge and identify what need to be done in the future. They have recommended that there is a set of theories garnering current attention centers on culture but it is the Hofstede's model that most widely used and referred in this field.

De Mooij (2000) found significant correlation between Hofstede cultural dimensions and patterns of consumer behavior which shows the impact of culture on consumer behavior. She discovered variation in all aspects of consumer behavior: in consumption of packaged goods,

in usage and ownership of durable goods and in media behavior (2003). Similarly, the results of Antunes, et al. (2013) research shows that the cultural differences have big impact on marketing strategy of subsidiaries they were studying that forced these subsidiaries to change their products, design and brand name in order to meet the needs of the host countries. DeMooij (2004) have found that there is a strong correlation between product ownership and related behavior with Hofstede's Dimensions. In their recent research, Spiers, et al. (2014) found that there is relationship between family structure, language, values and beliefs on consumer behavior in both Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica. Moreover, Leng and Botelho (2010) have used Hofstede's cultural dimensions and tried to investigate the relationship between national culture and consumer decision-making styles in the purchase of cell phone and found there is mixed evidence for the application of Hofstede's cultural dimensions to decision making.

Hofstede's work is highly functional for quantitative manipulation, and repeatedly supported through empirical testing which it responsible for more than two-thirds of culture studies (Nakata and Bilgin, 2009). With disappearance in dissimilarity of national incomes and differences in GNP per capita, culture is a powerful explaining variable and Cultural models are increasingly applied in international business, marketing and advertising research (De Mooij, 2013). According to Hofstede's logic, globalization will lead to decreasing differences in at least some of the indexed value profiles of the different countries. But will not diminish the value of the index as such (Arnould, et al., 2009).

Culture

There are too many different definitions of culture and because it impacts on several dimensions of human behavior. Different disciplines tried to define it in their own understanding and for that reason culture is not universally accepted notion (Hofstede, et al., 2002). According to Hofstede, et al. (2010) sociologists and anthropologists are more comfortable with explaining culture than defining it. Schein (2004, p. 17) has defined culture of a group as "a Pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems". Also culture was viewed by Schneiter (1982) a marketing guru as "That complex whole which include knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." this complex whole acquired by man has a profound influence on buyers behavior and perception in buying decision making which is often overlooked by many marketing managers assuming "one size fits all" (Fulford, 2001). Culture is the main cause of someone's needs, wants and behavior and this behavior is largely learned (Kotler, et al., 1999). De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) argued the cultural values define the self and personality of consumers and for marketers to communicate effectively, the consumer need to be central. Hofstede and his associate assume that values and attitudes of people are stable over time. Societies old values become manifest in consumption and consumer behavior (De Mooij, 2001).

People learn culture from childhood as they live in a society and a kid learn the basic values, perceptions, wants and behaviors as s/he lives with family, go to school, mix with other kids in the area (Hofstede, et al., 2010; Kotler, et al., 1999). Thus, marketers should be aware of cultural shifts in order to satisfy needs by providing a new product or services. Douglas and Craig (2009) stress the importance of understanding that culture's influence does not happen in a vacuum but there are several other variables (macro-micro-environment) coexist with and impact culture and consumer behavior directly and indirectly. Kotler, et al. (2002) argued that

each culture contains smaller subcultures that each group has its own shared value system based on the way they live, experience and situation. Subcultures include nationalities, religions, racial groups and geographic region which they can be significant sources of income. Additionally, Kotler and Armstrong (2012) admitted that marketers have to look for social classes because some class systems have a greater impact on buying behavior than others. They have added in most western countries 'lower' classes are more culture-bound and may behave and shop like 'upper' classes. Douglas and Craig (2009) admitted that subcultures are surrounded by the dominant culture as well as the micro-environment (e.g., neighborhood, living conditions, and urban vs. rural) in which they live. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) viewed cultural values as an integrated part of the consumer's self, not as an environmental factor. Moreover, buying behavior can also be influenced by personal characteristics such as: age, life-cycle stage, occupation, incomes, lifestyle, and personality (Kotler, et al., 1999).

Hall's high and low context model offers a classification of cultures based on communication styles and look at the role that context plays in the communication patterns such as body language, place in the room and who speaks before and after (Ball, et al., 2012, p. 98). They have added that in high context, the communication tends to be implicit, indirect and poly-chronic, while, in low context cultures, the communication is explicit, direct, clear and mono-chronic. In high context cultures such as China and Middle Eastern countries, people depend strongly on nonverbal sign of communication and a person official status, place in society and reputation carry considerable weight (Robbins and Judge, 2013, p. 391). Thus, what is not said maybe more important than what is said. In contrast, in low context cultures such as European and North Americans, people depend on spoken and written words to pass the meaning, status, and reputation are secondary (Robbins and Judge, 2011).

In marketing, several models have been implemented to explain the influence of socio-cultural values on consumer behavior such as: individualism-collectivism dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; 2001; and Triandis, 1995) and Schwartz's (1992) framework of motivational values, derived from Rokeach's (1973) Value Survey (Douglas and Craig, 2009). People's wants and needs are determined by their values and the factors make the buying decision occur include the language spoken, beliefs of people, their attitudes toward time, wealth acquisition and risk-taking (Stone and McCall, 2004). Kotler (2002) stated, in marketing, value was defined as "ratio between what the customer gets and what he gives", in another word, customer should get benefits and assumes costs, as shown in the below equation:

Value= benefit/cost = functional benefits+ emotional benefits/monetary cost+ time cost+ energy cost+ psychic cost

Based on this equation, the marketer can increase the value of the customer offering by (1) raising benefits, (2) reducing costs, (3) raising benefits and reducing costs, (4) raising benefits by more than the raise in costs, or (5) lowering benefits by less than the reduction in costs (Kotler, 2002, p. 6).

HOFSTEDE'S STUDY

Hofstede's framework is an interpretation of unstructured idea of culture that turned them into a tractable construct suitable to empirical research (Nakata, 2009). His study is one of the widely applied and referred to within the social sciences and business disciplines including

marketing community (Fulford, 2001). For decades, management and marketing researchers are thankful to Geert Hofstede for providing them an empirical approach to study national culture as well as workplace culture (Adair, et al., 2009). In his second edition of 'Culture's Consequences' Hofstede clearly explained the influence of national culture on international marketing, advertising and consumer behavior (Fulford, 2001). Fulford added Hofstede's findings lead many professional marketing community and companies to come to realization of local preferences in term of marketing and the benefits of local approach instead of standardized global message.

Over the last 30 years Hofstede surveyed more than116, 000 IBM employees in over 40 different countries (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 184). The questions were about participants' values and perceptions of their work situation. From the collected data Hofstede discovered managers and employees are different on five value dimensions which try answering the questions of how and why people are affected by national cultural structures. The dimensions are: Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Power Distance (PDI), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), and Long term-Short term Orientation (LTO) (Hofstede, et al., 2010). These dimensions help researchers to explain and predict a range of markets and marketing behaviors a cross different cultures, including consumer innovativeness, brand credibility, and global advertising effectiveness (Alden et al., 1993; Erdem et al., 2006; Steenkamp et al., 1999 cited in Nakata and Bilgin, 2009). Since the initial publication over 30 years ago, hundreds of researchers have used his model to understand culture's impact on managerial, consumer and organizational behavior (Adair, et al., 2009).

Power Distance (PDI), related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality (Hofstede, 2011). The focus is on power inequality, in house, in work place, and society and how members of different societies feels about having less power (large PDI) or they will reject this notion of inequality (small PDI) (Hofstede, et al., 2010). This dimension emphasizes how people appears, behave, communicate in both private and public places, do they try to show their status through brands, do they withhold information, how they use electronic devices, credit cards, advertising and how they handle complaining behavior of consumers and personnel in retail (De Mooij, 2011). Douglas and Craig (2009) suggested that power distance can influence factors such as personal values like (achievement and success, equal reward systems) as well as impression management (i.e., focusing on sociability, kindness vs. self-competence and advertising appeals). In large (PDI) everyone has its place in societal hierarchy and this is where global brands serve this purpose of to exhibit one's social status (De mooij and Hofstede, 2011). In small (PDI) societies, everyone work hard to look younger and powerful members try to hide their power and look more equal to others (De Mooij, 2002).

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future (Hofstede, 2011). It reflects the level anxiety people take while faced with uncertainty, ambiguity and change. Hofstede, et al. (2010) argued people in strong (UAI) are paradoxical, this means, they are willing to take risk in order to reduce the risk and to cope with unknown they take refuge to rule of laws for prescribed behavior. This dimension looks at whether people of that society read books and newspaper, have personal computers, access to internet and how innovative they are. It also explains differences in whether sports, traveling, learning languages were taken seriously, the usage of medication and mineral water, the numbers of physicians per 1,000 individuals, and whether the advertising message conveys

values such as details and precision or use of humor (De Mooij, 2011). In strong (UAI) culture people are less open to change and innovation, they tend to pay attention to rules and formality to structure life and competence is a strong value resulting in belief in experts while weak uncertainty avoidance cultures belief in the generalist and people tend to be more innovative and entrepreneurial and play more active sports (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011; De Mooij, 2002). In low (UAI) cultures, people tend to use convenience products, buy secondhand cars, invest in stock and 'do it yourself in home. In contrast, high UAI cultures, people try to eat organic food and fruits, read less books, buy new car and invest in precious metals and gems (Fulford, 2001).

Individualism-collectivism (IDV), related to the integration of individuals into primary groups (Hofstede, 2011). It explains how individuals see themselves in the group and alone. Whether, individuals are free to decide for their future and primary interests or they are member of a group and group interest and success comes first in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, et al., 2010). Individualistic cultures are universalistic; they think their values are valid for the whole world (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). In other word, they believe in standardization of marketing strategies and global branding than collectivistic countries like Japan which they believe in adaptation of their international marketing strategy. According to Hofstede (2001) individualistic people are ready to take more risk and innovate than collectivist, and also they are more willing to buy new and different products and brands (Leng and Botelho, 2010). People in collectivistic societies are more implicit, indirect and more poly-chronic in their communications, while, individualistic are more direct, explicit and more mono-chronic in their communication. Thus, sales people are more direct and into the point in individualistic cultures than collectivistic culture where it is important to build a good relationship and trust between parties then sales (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). The same arguments will apply to advertising: persuasion versus creating trust. Moisander and Valtonen (2006) suggested that the marketing relationship in individualistic cultures aims to build and develop a positive relation between the companies, brands, and customers, while the tribal approach to this relationship is to rebuild and support the relation between customers. Douglas and Craig (2009) argued in marketing, cultural orientation has been studied primarily in relation to marketing communications and cognitive processes. De Mooij and Goodrich (2013) found collectivists trust heavily on word-of-mouth than advertising and this reflects their behavior while the use online to purchase a product as they rely more on information sources 'electronic word of mouth'.

Masculinity-Femininity (MAS), related to the division of emotional roles between women and men (Hofstede, 2011). The dominant values in masculine societies are performance, competition, achievement, control and focus on material success, whereas in feminine cultures the dominant values are equality, caring, helping and nurturing for others, and men and women are equal (Hofstede, et al., 2010). This dimension tries to explain the differences between men and women in household and how the responsibilities are divided. It explains how and the frequency of internet and hotels usage for personal or pleasure, and it looks at the differences in buying status brands, luxury goods, jewelry and coffee consumption (De Mooij, 2011). For example, in masculine societies achievement should be seen, so status products and brands such as jewelry are important to present your achievement, whereas in feminine societies small is beautiful, status is not an issue, and male and female roles overlap (De Mooij, 2002; 2004). Also in masculine cultures, works are not divided equally between husband and wife and men do less shopping than in feminine societies (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011).

Long Term-Short Term Orientation (LTO), related to the choice of focus for people's effort: the future or the present and past (Hofstede, 2011). "Long-term orientation stand for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards-in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present-in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of "face" and fulfilling social obligations" (Hofstede, et al., 2010, p. 239). How people feel about traditional values, the truth and perseverance. In the LTO cultures people are willing to sacrifice todays for a better tomorrow, whereas people in STO cultures, future is less important, now is powerful and they are committed to no change but routine (De Mooij, 2011). LTO suggests long term investment such as a long term investment between Broadband and other businesses or government (De Mooij, 2010; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). Also variance in degrees of thrift has implication for the using credit cards: it is low in LTO cultures and high in STO cultures (De Mooij, 20002).

Although, there are other cultural models such as Trompenaars (1993; 1997), Schwartz (1994;2006) and the most recent one GLOBE study (House et al. 2004) that can explain the similarity and differences among culture of nations and spot patterns of basic issues that can influence the way group and individual function, Hofstede's paradigm has grown importance, dominating other culture theories and putting Hofstede into the ranks of the top three referenced international business authors (Nakata, 2009). Some international marketing scholars tend to view Hofstede's model as old and outdated and thus not valid anymore. For that reason, the new GLOBE model is used without understanding the basic difference (De Mooij, 2013). Hofstede's model is similar to other models in finding basic value differences, it is different in respect to the numbers of countries measured, level of analysis, the dimension structure and number of dimensions, the subjects (Schwartz – teacher and students; GLOBE – middle managers; Hofstede – all levels of employees in a company) and conceptual and methodological differences (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). Nakata and Bilgin (2009) found that Hofstede's work was used by marketing researchers more than any other culture concept. Fulford (2001) predict that Hofstde's work will continue to grow and to be referred to as the competition for the global customer becomes more intense because he knows what his is doing, why, what theory had been used before and had access to necessary data. De Mooij (2011) argued that it is the simplicity and applicability of his dimensions that has been widely used by different academics. For managers and marketers, Hofstede's model has proven fruitful (Adair, et al., 2009). His discovery was proved empirically (Fulford, 2001).

De Mooij, one of the prominent supporters of Hofstede's works continuously try to demonstrate his framework in a way it was used for intercultural management can also be incorporated to understand differences in consumption and consumer behavior. De Mooij, (1997; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2010; 2011; 2013) have tested Hofstede's model in international marketing and discovered positive correlations between variables. Her work is now widely respected; Hofstede himself (2001) pays tribute to her work (Fulford, 2001).This author believes there is a need for new understandings of culture in Kurdistan region, and how national values can influence international marketing and consumer behavior. Therefore, he tries to undertake a research on discovering Iraqi Kurds national culture using Hofstede models but at individual levels to quantify cultural impact on international marketing and consumer behavior and incorporate De Mooij findings on international marketing and consumer behaviors to predict the relationship between both national culture and international marketing. De Mooij (1998; 2000; 2001) focused on the impact of advertising and tried to compare this between developed Western countries and also the Middle and Far East countries (Fulford, 2001). Adair, et al. (2009) argued that when researcher's intention is to explain and predict the

behavior of employees, managers, and consumers in an increasingly global workplace, it is wise to assess culture empirically at the individual level, in describing and categorizing individuals from different nationalities when shared values are apparent.

Hofstede's Findings on Iraq

In his work Hofstede categorized Iraq with other Arab countries in Middle East. Hassan (2015) and Rarick, et al. (2014) in their recent research found that Iraqi Kurds gone through some major changes in their cultural values compared to Hofstede's indexes. Hofstede's results indicate that Iraq scored high on "Power distance" which means there is inequality in power distribution inside organizations and Iraqi people are accepting the fact. According to Caldwell (N.D.) during the conflict years, uninterrupted wars, followed by international embargo, Iraqis were cut off from the rest of the world, and they have suffered very badly, whatever they have created, developed for three decades, and all the educated people either left Iraq or isolated from educational and economic opportunities, leaving it ill-prepared for the new opportunities opened by foreign invasion. The results of Rarick, et al. (2014) study shows that both ethnic groups of Iraqi Arab and Kurds possess a low power distance. Hassan (2015) also found in his recent research that Kurds are low power distance with a significant decrease in the score. The results are not in line with Hofstede's finding and it reduced from .95 to .41. Hassan states, Participants were more towards low power distance and high power sharing, they do not expect only few individuals inside organization make all decisions, be responsible for all the resources and the rest obey these small group of elites. Previous literature confirms there is strong correlation between this dimension with data such as Education, age, economic situation, population and even geographical latitude (Morrison, 2002 & Hofstede, 2010). Perhaps, the reason for these results is due to the age of respondents because the samples in both studies were young university students, from mountainous region of Northern Iraq '*Kurdistan*'.

 Hofstede also categorized Iraq as a "Collectivistic" culture which indicate that Iraqi do well in team work but also can sacrifice their individual goals for the benefits of group. Hassan (2015) also came to the similar result that Iraqi Kurds are more toward collectivism. Kurds are born into extended family, family values and beliefs were respected and passed into the next generation and in exchange, family protects them for their loyalty (Meho, 1997; stansfield, 2003; O'shea, 2006 & Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede believes collectivist values are popular in tribal societies, where family has too many children, their education system is old fashion, and law system is built on traditions and religion (Fougere and Moulettes, 2007). Although, Iraqi Kurds value education highly and students are hungry to learn and develop themselves, concepts of quality and detail orientation were not valued or rewarded (Caldwell, N.D). Arguments in literature reviews support this statement and it is perfectly complement the current situation in Iraqi Kurdistan. The researcher can argue that in this dimension the third factor "wealth" does not have much influence on peoples' behavior as much as religion since it encourages loyalty and surrounding to society.

 Hofstede's findings on Iraq also suggest that Iraq is a masculine society favors masculine roles, achievement, and control. Rarick, et al. (2014) found that Iraqis are masculine in nature but Kurdish culture is less masculine, more feminine. Hassan (2015) explored there is a small decrease in original score from 70 to 65.When masculine society combine with collectivist society there is very low chance of success but when it is combine with individualism success is expected (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). (Hofstede, et al., 2010) have observed age and gender are two factors strongly associated with the nature of this dimension rather than wealth. From religious point of view, masculine society warship a tough god and since the majority of Kurds

are Muslim, their religion has always maintained tough and masculine elements which for any bad behaviour there is a tough punishment (Hofstede, et al., 2010). Clearly in Islamic societies Islam has divided different roles for men and women and this reflected in power sharing, giving responsibilities to female and differences in earning between both genders.

In Hofstede's model Iraq like other Arab countries score high (85) on uncertainty avoidance which may mean Iraqi people have no interest in uncertainty, ambiguity and new ways of doing things. Similarly, Hassan (2015) found that Iraqi Kurds score 81 which are very close to the original index and it indicates that the results are in line. Another research by Rarick, et al. (2014) suggests that Iraqi culture is low uncertainty avoidance, while Kurdish culture is high. Societies score high on uncertainty avoidance are more anxious, expressive, and hot blooded people and to reduce ambiguity they seek refuge to technology, law and religion (Hofstede, 2010). Kurds are mountainous emotional people with risk adverse attitude, they strongly prefer standard ways of doing things, regulation and standard of procedures, and they also consider change, new ways of doing things inside organization as threat. In addition, majority of Iraqi Kurds work in public service sector and the Kurdish government use its oil revenue which is the only source of income to support and pay its huge public services. According to Hofstede, et al. (2010) there is a strong correlation between strong UAI and high level of corruption, and their explanation for the high level of corruption goes back to poor pay from government. Transparency International investigated the level of corruption in Iraq and found that Iraq scores 16/100 and ranks 170/175.

In last dimension, Hofstede discovered that Iraqi scores very low on LTO which it reveals it has a normative culture. Rarick, et al. (2014) comes to similar conclusion that both Iraqi and Kurds are short term oriented. People have a strong concern with establishing the absolute truth; they are normative in their thinking, (source, Hofstede's website). Hassan (2015) had very different results indicating that Iraqi Kurds unlike Iraqi counterparts are more toward long term orientation. People are ready to sacrifice today's fun, and plan for a better future. According to Mooij and Hofstede (2010, p. 6) The values for long term orientate people are perseverance, ordering relationships by status, thrift, and having a sense of shame, long term society implies investment in the future. There is huge interest and well from Iraqi Kurds to take successful societies and organizations as their role models and to learn from them. Kurdish students attribute success to hard effort and failure to lack of efforts. From early stage of childhood kids are taught about future difficulty and saving.

Chart 1: Hofstede's Findings
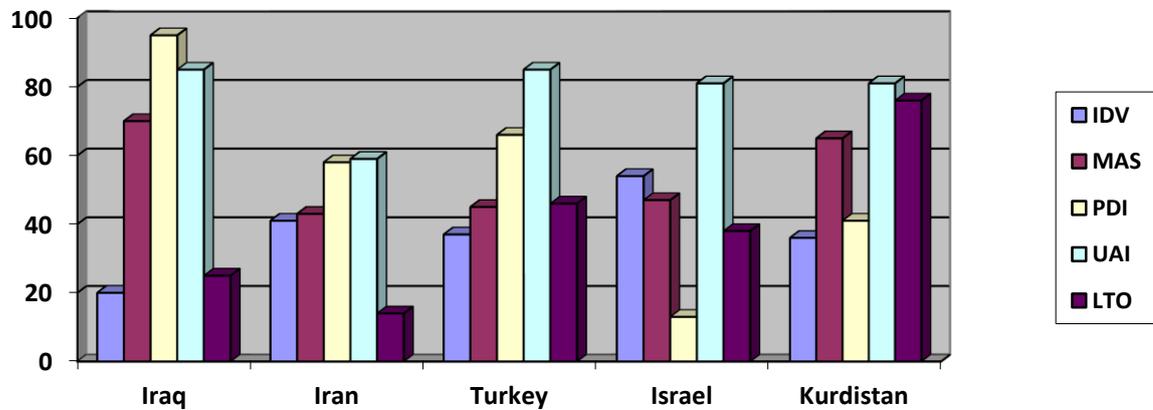
SOURCE: Hofstede's website

The above chart shows the ratings (difference and similarities) for the four countries in the region which data are available on Hofstede website. The new scores for Kurdistan which was explored by Hassan, (2015) were added. It shows Iraq is either scoring the highest or the lowest in compare to other three countries in the region. It was argued earlier that change in environment could cause changes in values and norms of particular culture and as result affect the scores of these dimensions over time.

Problem and Questions

After a deep review of literature related to the developments of this research, this author has spotted a gap in existing literatures. There is lack of research on the influence of national culture on international marketing and consumer behavior in this part of the world. Thus, research intends to close the gap by answering the questions and contributes to the current literature. It was argued by Robbins and Judge (2011, 2013) most of these theories and models were developed in Western countries and they have cultural implications. Although, these topics are investigated broadly in western societies, there is a lack of research in this part of the world. Several studies on international marketing have concluded that consumers follow different styles or rules in making decisions when confronted with choices in the market and suggested that external factors such as culture may influence the way consumers develop those styles. To determine how Kurds cultural values influence international marketing and consumer behavior in Iraqi Kurdistan, this author put two research questions:

1. Does the dimensions of national culture influence international marketing and consumer behavior?

2. How these dimensions can impact international marketing and consumer behavior and what companies need to consider before entering into the market?

To answer the questions, a quantitative research was used by conducting questionnaire with the use of none-verbal observation. The main goal of quantitative survey research methods is to provide specific facts and estimates—from a large, representative sample of respondents—decision makers (Hair, et al., 2002).

DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD

Multiple methods where used in this research to evaluate Iraqi Kurds culture and how culture can influence marketing and consumer behavior in this region. Thus, this author used a three-method approach to measure culture (Soares, 2005): regional affiliation, indirect values, and direct value inference (Soares, et al., 2007). They have suggested that for regional affiliation the use of nationality to reflect culture makes sense since there is empirical support. Hofstede's study treat Iraq as homogenous country which in fact Iraq is a heterogeneous country made up of too many ethnic groups e.g. Arab, Kurds, Turkomans, Yezidi, and Assyrians, (cited in Iraqi constitution). The second method that Soares and his associate recommended is the use of benchmarks, the indirect values approach which involves attributing characteristics of cultures based on other studies (Soares, et al., 2007). Researcher used non-verbal observation technique to analyze consumer behavior toward product usages, advertisements and the use of internet and mobile phones in Iraqi Kurdistan. Also used De Mooij findings as a secondary source in answering how culture can influence international marketing and consumer behavior to classify what each dimension means compare to the opposite sides in other countries. This helped researcher for this approach researcher to ascribe characteristics of cultural groupings without directly assessing members of the society. The third method used in this study is the direct value inference approach, which is based on measuring the values of cultural values in the sample to infer cultural characteristics. Although Hofstede's classification of cultures helps researcher to understand and assess cultural values, the sample need to be more categorized on cultural dimensions in a way it is a satisfactory to their characteristics (Soares. et al., 2007).

However, the accuracy and suitability of Hofstede's metrics were criticized for not being able to measure values that are culturally sensitive (Dorfman and Havell., 1988; Yoo, et al., 2011). Hill (2007) pointed to western stereotype of model because it based on IBM only. Another widely held criticism of Hofstede's work is generalizing the countries and assuming the whole population is homogenous (Yoo, et al., 2011). Hofstede tends to ignore the significant of community, and the variation of its influences (Smith 1998., p. 62). Dorfman and Hovell (1988) found that cultures are fragmented and they are not essentially limited by borders. Thus, there is not one-to-one correspondence between culture and nation. Therefore, this research intends to study Iraqi Kurds national cultural values at the individual level, using member's perceptions of society. In the lights of these criticisms, many models were developed to measure cultural values at individual levels such as: Dorfman and Hovell (1988) framework and Yoo, et al. (1998; 2001; 2011) CVSCALE approach. The first model has 22 items and only measures four dimensions. In contrast, the CVSCALE by Yoo and his associate has 26 items and measure five dimensions. The CVSCALE is applicable to general consumer situations and has a good reliability and adequate psychometric properties (Donthu and Yoo, 1998; Lenartowicz and Roth, 2001 cited in Soares, et al., 2006, p. 283). It is possible to link individual behavior to individual attitudes when measuring culture at individual level because all the data are coming from the same primary sources instead of secondary (Yoo, et al., 2011).

Therefore, for this research, the CVSCALE as a self-administered quantitative survey questionnaire has been used as the research instrument to assess the cultural dimensions at individual level. The problem with questionnaire is the subjects know they are being studied for that reason they may speculate about their answers (Andreasen, 2002).This author has used the translated (CVSCALE) that was implemented and translated by himself in his last research. Therefore, the translated questionnaire was already meeting all the criteria. At the beginning the questionnaire was not available in Kurdish. Thus, Hassan (2015) translated the

questionnaire from English to Kurdish and Kurdish to English and then it was checked by two bilinguals' assistance professors whose Mather language was Kurdish. There were some minor adjustments in the questionnaire such as entering the five-likert-points for each item to ease the process of answering. The dimensions are measured on a scale from 0 to 100 and the results indicate the position of Iraqi Kurdistan on each index. These scores of the research can be used for statistical analysis of data on consumer attitudes and behavior.

Sample

In social survey research, sample constitutes a key step in the research and to generalize your sample to signify the whole population, the sample must be representative (Bryman and Bell, 2007). For this research convenience sampling method were used. This is a non-probability sampling which researcher has the full authority to select the respondents (Baines and Chansarkar, 2002). They have added this method is subject to considerable sample errors due to the lack of representativeness of the population. To use this method the target population has to be homogeneous such as 'Kurds' and there should be similarity between participants to the overall population (Hair, et al., 2002). Bryman and Bell (2007) have stated that it is the absolute size of a sample that is important not its relative size, thus, as the size of the sample increase then it is likely the precision of the sample will increase too and sample error decreases. Additionally, in his last research this author took a sample of 441 students out of 743 in one of the largest university in Erbil Iraqi Kurdistan to analyze the national cultural values and it delivered good results. In this research the sample size is based on a diverse sample of 272 professional, mostly managers in all levels working in both private and public sectors. To increase the reliability and validity the results of both private and public sector managers for measuring cultural values will be presented, compared and then compared again with students sample results. Therefore, by doing this the size and the precision of sample can increase so it can represent the population and reduce the sample error.

Measurement and Results

Data for Hofstede's cultural values were collected via a self-report questionnaire using CVSCALE and participants indicate their answers using a 5-point-likert scale. Researcher aim was to measure cultural dimension by calculating and aggregating the results. Thus, SPSS (18) were used to calculate the standard deviations and means for every culture dimensions at the aggregate level (Bernstein, M.J., 2011 and Ebster, C., 2012). SPSS stands for "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (Babraham, 2008). It was first designed by a psychologist and now used for social science purposes. Landau and Everitt (2004) described it as package of programs for manipulating, analysing, and presenting data. SPSS is a powerful program that allows researchers to examine data in many ways including producing basic descriptive statistics, advanced tests and high-quality graphs and tables (Flynn, N.D). 610 questionnaires were distributed between both private and public sector organizations in all size and only 277 were returned but 5 of the questionnaires were exempted due to the validity problem. Thus, only 272 (45%) valid questionnaires left. The frequencies are the summary of statistical measures for a given variable and it gives frequency distributions for all types of data (Komrys, N.D). The tables below will explain more:

Table 1: male-female

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	177	65.1	65.1	65.1
	female	95	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	272	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	public	188	69.1	69.1	69.1
	Private	84	30.9	30.9	100.0
	Total	272	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Job title

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Supervisor	46	16.9	16.9	16.9
	Department Manager	144	52.9	52.9	69.9
	General Manager	27	9.9	9.9	79.8
	CEO	20	7.4	7.4	87.1
	President	9	3.3	3.3	90.4
	others	26	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	272	100.0	100.0	

Note: Others include Governor, Mayor, locum, directorates' committee members, lecturers, advisors, technicians, judges and lawyers, and so on.

The Reliability Test of Five Dimensions

Reliability analysis provides researchers to study the properties of measurement indexes; it calculates the reliability of scales and provides information about the relationship among individual items in the scales (IBM, 2010). Alpha (Cronback) was used to explore the internal consistency, based on the average inter-item correlation (SPSS, 17.0, 2007). Taking the number of questions and poor inter-relatedness between items there are different arguments about what number would be acceptable for alpha, ranging from .7 to .95 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Whatever the value between 00.0 and 1.00 is researcher can interpret as % percentage of reliability, for example .7 is 70% reliable (Brown, 2002). George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb: "_> .9 – excellent, _> .8 – good, _> .7 – acceptable, _> .6 - questionable, _> .5 – poor and _> .4 – unacceptable" (p. 231 cited in Gliem and Gliem, 2003). They have admitted that while high value means good internal reliability of items, it does not mean the scale is un-dimensional. The Cronbach's Alpha for 26 items in this survey is .686 which it can be considered adequate and to increase the internal consistency to above .7, and to strength the measurement tool two items with low correlation can be removed and then Cronbach's Alpha will be .708. Considering table (4) only LTO has Alpha of .554. Probably this is due to measuring different construct (Biostatistics, 2012; Mueller, 2014). In case of

combining both the previous sample which was made up of 441 students with this new sample of mostly managers in both private and public sector organizations, the Cronbach's Alpha would be .697 which it shows that the internal reliability is still very strong and adequate. Please check the below tables for further information:

Table 5: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Public sector organizations .645	.673	26
Private sector organization .754	.798	26
442 students & 272 managers .697	.707	26

Table 4: Reliability Statistics (both sectors)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
272 Managers in (public- Private) sector organizations .686	26
Power Distance .717	5
Uncertainty Avoidance .767	5
Collectivism .784	6
Masculinity .660	4
Long Term Orientation .554	6

Table 6: Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation[a]	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.077[b]	.061	.097	3.181	271	6775	.000
Average Measures	.686[c]	.629	.737	3.181	271	6775	.000

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

a. Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition-the between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.

b. The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.

c. This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis tries to find the underlying variables which can explain the pattern of correlations within a set of searched factors (IBM, 2010). Also they have added that it can also be useful in data reduction to discover a smaller number of variables that can explain most of the factors. Moreover, it can be used to create hypotheses regarding causal mechanisms or to screen factors for subsequent analysis (SPSS. 2007). KMO measure of sampling adequacy tests

to see whether the partial correlations among variables are small and Bartlett'S Test of Sphercity want to see whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, which would indicate that the factor model is inappropriate (IBM, 2010, 157). Thus, in factor analysis researcher can verify whether the data set is appropriate for factor analysis. Table (6) exhibits the results for both Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin which is .739 at the managerial levels and .824 if both samples of managers and students combined which in both cases the K-M-O is above .60. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Sig is 0.00 for both samples which it is significant because it is below 0.05 (Biostatistics, 2013). Therefore, this author can conclude that the factor analyses are suitable for this research data in both cases. If both private and public sector organizations are treated separately then the KMO for public is .700 and for private sector is .660 with Sig of 0.00.

Table 7: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.739
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	21553.722
	df	9180
	Sig.	.000

 According to Biostatistics (2013) Kaiser Criteria decide how many components need to be extracted and for this research, the component with Eigenvalue of 1 or more is the subject of interest. There were only 8 components having the Eigenvalues of 1 or above that represent for only 50.846% per cent which it just passed the cumulative percentage 50 per cent. This indicates that the majority were explained by these 8 components. The Scree Plot below can explain more:
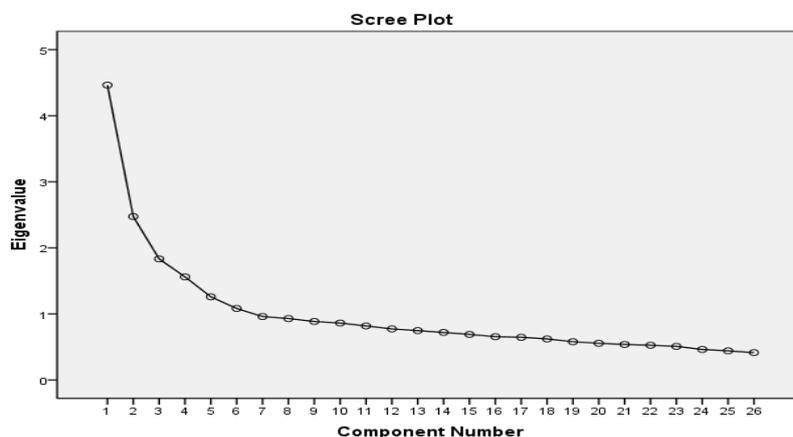
Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis produces summary statistics such as: mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum (IBM, 2011). The mean is based on all the data values, however because of this it is prone to being unduly affected by outlier in the data, most noticeably when the sample is small (Garth, 2008, p. 20). The table (8) presents all the means for the 26 items.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Power Distance	272	1.00	5.00	1.7941	1.00271
Power Distance	272	1.00	5.00	2.4596	1.27067
Power Distance	272	1.00	5.00	1.7426	1.00916
Power Distance	272	1.00	5.00	2.1765	1.13893
Power Distance	272	1.00	5.00	2.7169	1.34082
Uncertainty Avoidance	272	1.00	5.00	4.0772	.81358
Uncertainty Avoidance	272	1.00	5.00	4.2279	.63672
Uncertainty Avoidance	272	1.00	5.00	4.1949	.69440
Uncertainty Avoidance	272	2.00	5.00	4.1765	.62403
Uncertainty Avoidance	272	2.00	5.00	4.2904	.60152
Collectivism	272	1.00	5.00	3.8934	.97176
Collectivism	272	1.00	5.00	3.9228	1.04401
Collectivism	272	1.00	5.00	4.3934	.67345
Collectivism	272	1.00	5.00	4.3824	.78791
Collectivism	272	1.00	5.00	4.1471	.81977
Collectivism	272	1.00	5.00	3.9743	.85222
Masculinity	272	1.00	5.00	2.5993	1.21994
Masculinity	272	1.00	5.00	3.0919	1.10801
Masculinity	272	1.00	5.00	3.0515	1.23790
Masculinity	272	1.00	5.00	3.8750	1.00873
Confucian Dynamism	272	1.00	5.00	4.1985	.87457
Confucian Dynamism	272	1.00	5.00	3.5588	.95093
Confucian Dynamism	272	1.00	5.00	4.0515	.84014
Confucian Dynamism	272	1.00	5.00	4.3934	.78007
Confucian Dynamism	272	1.00	5.00	4.1324	1.01144
Confucian Dynamism	272	1.00	5.00	4.4154	.75397
Valid N (listwise)	272				

After a deep review of new results and comparing them with the old measurements, this study explored some significant new and reliable results. Table (9), recap the old and new statistical results of both studies and create a discussion to explain the relationship between Kurds cultural value dimensions and international marketing and consumer behavior. These statistical results of national culture as well as its influence on international marketing are explained in the

following sections. Please note, in my past research there were some discrepancy in calculations of the means and for that reason there are some minor correction in some dimensions numbers.

Table (9) Iraqi Kurds national cultural dimensions (%)

Country (IRAQ - Kurdistan)	PDI	UAI	IDV	MAS	LTO
Hofstede's findings	**.95**	**.85**	**.30**	**.70**	**.25**
Hassan's old findings on: (441 students)	.41	.81	.38	.65	.76
Hassan's new finding on: (272 managers in both private & public sector organizations)	**.44**	**.84**	**.41**	**.63**	**.83**
Public sector alone	.46	.84	.41	.64	.82
Private sector alone	.42	.84	.41	.63	.83
Combining both samples (441 students +272 managers)= 713	**.42**	**.82**	**.39**	**.65**	**.78**

Power Distance (PDI)

For the five items, the total mean for 272 managers was 2.17794/5= .44 compared with 2.10364/5= .42 for both samples of students and managers. It indicates that both research produced almost the same results which it tell us there is a consistency with these results. These scores suggest there is a change and huge decrease in Hofstede's old score (95) to the new score (42). It explains that the Kurdish culture is more toward low power distance 'equality' and high power sharing.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

The total mean for the 5 items in this dimension was 4.19338/5= .84, similarly, for both students and managers were .82 which both scores are also very close to the original Hofstede's score of .85. This indicates that Kurdish cultural values avoid uncertainty, change, and ambiguity but prefers rules and regulations and standard ways of doing things.

Collectivism (IDV-COL)

The total means of the 6 items for managers was 4.1189/5= .82 or in the reverse order .41IDV and for a combination of both samples of 713 students and managers 3.912933333/5= .78 or .39 IDV which it shows that there is an increase in the final score but still it indicates that Kurds are collectivistic people. These results are in line with Hofstede's finding. It suggests that Iraqi Kurds like other Arab countries in the region are more toward collectivism.

Masculinity (MAS)

The overall mean of the 4 items in masculinity dimension for managers was 3.154425/5= .63 and for both students and managers was 3.26015/5= .65 compared with Hofstede's score of .70. Both results indicate that there is little decrease in this dimension but still the new results suggest that masculine side have more weight than feminine side in this study.

Long Term Orientation (LTO)

The total mean of the 6 items for this dimension was 4.125/5= .83 for managers and for both students and managers was 3.915716667/5= .78 compared with Hofstede's index of .25. These new results tend to be not in line with Hofstede's finding and it indicates that there is significant change in this dimension which could have caused international firms huge inefficiency in implementing their plans. It suggest that Kurds are more toward long term orientation that people are planning for their future, and are willing to give up todays fun for tomorrow.

Discussion

According to the above results Iraqi Kurds are collectivistic people. They prefer to choose group over individualism and rely and dependent on group for help in return of their loyalty. Kurdish society is divided into subgroups of different clans and dialects, different districts and sub-districts, different political parties and other ideologies. Everyone has a place in social hierarchy and they tend to respect the norm. Collectivists are also high context in communication (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010, 2011). High context people are less verbally explicit communicators and understandings are more internalized of what is communicated (Geringer and Minor, 2012). In addition, there is an old Kurish saying "say it to the wall so you will understand it". Thus, Kurds are high context in communications and this style of poly-chronic, implicit communication is reflected in management, communication strategies and politics. Most of the professional and non-professional are done over the phone through a connection or links. Without knowing someone in government or work place, it would be impossible to do something.

Brands are amplified products that are used by people to establish their status and often individuals are judged by the brands they were or the football club they support (Brassington and Pettitt, 2006). The image, identity and personalities were added through communication strategies (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Kurds score indicates masculinity and in masculine culture status brands demonstrates one's success (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). Masculine culture value achievement and when combined with collectivism success is less likely (Hofstede, et al., 2010). In addition, Kurds are masculine and collectivists and to show their power and social status, they tend to less rely on brands and products but more on implicit poly-chronic style of communication for example; an individual holding a PhD must be respected to the extent that s/he needs to be called by three different titles such as "Excellency Mr. Doctor i.e., John". This does not mean that Kurds do not like gadgets, they need electronic products to show their accomplishments that give them confidence to protect face.

According to De Mooij and Hofstede, (2010) For understanding the global brands the rightful place concept plays an important rule and global brands serve as showing one's social status in large power distance, collectivistic and masculine cultures. In the sales process people in collectivistic cultures are less direct to the point but more concern about relationship and trust building (De Mooij, 2010). In individualistic societies, there is a consistency between people's attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Thus, in this kind of environment the behavior of consumers can be predicted from their attitudes toward brands and products and if they have a positive attitude toward a particular brand they are more likely to purchase from that brand. In contrast, there is no consistency among attitude and future behavior of collectivists and there is a chance of reverse relationship between behavior (product usage) and then attitude (Chang and Chieng, 2006 cited in De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). Robbins and Judge (2013) argued not necessary

all the time behavior follows attitude, sometime it can be both ways around depend on the important of the task/s one's does.

The purpose of advertising in collectivistic cultures is to create strong relationships and trust between seller and buyer (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). They referred to how Japanese try to induce positive feelings in their advertising instead of providing information like European. Although, advertising is not well developed in here and technically their messages are not very mature, like Japanese culture they tend to focus on the positive side of products with adding little bit of humors. Almost 60% of TV adverts are focused on the food products, restaurants and real states. Brand characteristic such as "trustworthy" is mostly attributed to strong brand in this culture (high UAI). Advert messages convey "Safety" and similar to Chinese culture brand name was mention at the end of advertising.

De Mooij and Hofstede (2011) argued that Researchers need to consider different measurements of attitude toward the advertisement in collectivistic societies as they need in individualistic cultures. They have stated the motives and emotions of consumers are fundamental in determining the standardization decisions not universal emotions. Hofstede categorized less developed countries as collectivist societies (Hofstede, 2011). Thus, what motivate people in less developed countries could be different from developed countries. De Mooij (2004) suggested many motives are category bounded, such as purity as a motive for food and status motives for luxury products and brands. Each culture has its influence on these motives (De Mooij, 2010). In collectivistic cultures, people are interested in concrete product features than in abstract brands because they are less used to conceptual thinking (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). What is not explained in their work is why they are more interested in concrete product features than abstract brands.

  Due to his work related experience as a university lecturer, this author try to speculate an answer for this question by looking at the socio-economic of people as well as the poor establishment of marketing infrastructure. Companies want to invest in similar markets due to cultural similarity and market infrastructures (Hill, 2007). Thus, less-developing countries tend to be targeted less as perfect destination for international companies and for that reason people are less familiar with international brands and more with local brands or those were imported to these countries through local investors. Moreover, the level of trust between consumers and businesses are at all the time low due to bad investment and short term money motivation. Those brands and branded products are sold in here are either fake brands selling copied products or they are brands from neighboring countries selling poor quality products and design expensively through their persuasive marketing communication strategies. Because of that People in general and Students in particular tend to not trust advertising and international brands. As they put it 'nobody says my yogurt is sour' and this will take us back to the high context style of communication which they tend to not trust people from outer-group. In here, brand is replaced by price and if they want to show their status and power they mention how much they have paid for a product. Also 'made in' western countries represent quality of the products. Therefore, in a market in this situation clearly standardization of Brands and communication strategy will make more sense than adapting communication strategies and rebranding.

De Mooij (2002; 2010) argued in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures consumers have a passive attitude to health by focusing on purity in food and drink and use more medication than fitness and sports. In term of product usage, people in here are more motivated in adaptation of purity such as food because they tend to have different tastes but also the negative image

attached to neighboring countries products for assuming that it is deliberately made unhealthy. Everyone in here is a doctor and has a pharmacy at home. There is more medication in the fridge than food. Electronic products such as laptop is used for facebooking, ipad is mostly used by kids for games and mobile phone for selfie. Thus, everyone has a brand-new mobile phones especially I-phone first and Samsung second regardless of their income. Nevertheless, the older generations are more interested in up to date electronic products such as I-phone to improve their appearance. Personal appearance is very important in cultures scores high on uncertainty avoidance and high on power distance such as Japanese culture but not so much with Chinese (high PDI/low UAI). Although, Kurds score (high UAI/low PDI) personal appearance is still important and a professional person will be judged by appearance more than skills and knowledge. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) stated that in high uncertainty avoidance cultures people are not very innovative and they tend to reject change.

Cultures with individualism, low power distance and low uncertainty avoidance value dimensions are verbal oriented which mean they read more books and newspapers and they receive information from media to prepare for purchase (De Mooij, 2010) whereas in collectivistic, high power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, members depend on implicit, interpersonal communication to acquire information and their buying decisions is based on their got-feelings and trust in the company. Additionally, this author identified people in here including professionals tend to not read books at all even if it is related to their profession such as university lecturers. Consumer buying decision mostly is based on personal experience, word of mouth and price. Facebook is over used, even ten years old kid has an account. Its popularity is growing with politicians as they use it as electronic version of word of mouth to reach their target audience and pass their message.

In individualistic cultures, youth are more independent than collectivistic cultures because in early life they develop an identity that give them power to move more freely and function more independently apart from the family and if they fail it can cause identity crisis. Whereas, in collectivistic cultures, youth are more dependent on complex familial hierarchy and the group ideal is being like others not being different (Triandis, 1995 cited in De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). Youth in Kurdish culture as a collectivistic and strong UAI culture are blamed for almost all crises happening. Children are brainwashed in early childhood for what the parents want them to become including what to study while they do not have any proper plans for their future. First year university students were approached by this author for why they choose this course, this university and what they want to achieve at the end? Majority of their answers were this is the only chance they have because the government system will allocate students according to their GPA. They also mention the role family has in what they want to be and when they graduate they want to get permanent job in public sector even if the salary is very little but instead they will have job security.

In large masculine societies, roles are not distributed equally; women do more house work and shopping for the house. In here shopping is like a day out for family as whole and everyone has a say in buying decisions. Outside shopping is mostly done by both man and women and if both of them work then the house work is shared by everyone. This could be explained by Kurds national cultural indexes Since, Kurds score 65% masculine and 41% in power distance. De Mooij (2010) argued that long term orientation implies investment in the future and the example (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010) provided in their study is the relationship between this dimension and broadband penetration. Although, personal steadiness and tradition are valued by short term oriented cultures, they also respected by Kurds even though 78% per cent they

are long term oriented people. For centuries they have dreamed and worked on a country of their own and they sacrifice too much for that dream. Saving is taught to children from early age and keeping hard cash at home means they do not trust banks and also can use it (mostly business) whenever they need it. Because of that most of big purchases such as house and cars are done in hard cash and paid in once.

Limitation

Even though this author believes this research provides some good results to the study of cultural values influence on international marketing and consumer behavior, it is not without limitations. One of the key limitations of this research was not being able to study the relationship between variable directly. Thereafter, make a direct comparison between the new research and other research around the world according to the dimensions. Due to the difficulty of reaching to our target sample as well as cost and time researcher was forced to use convenient sampling that is subject to considerable sample errors. The analysis and explanations of this work are speculative at its best, yet it does not stop us to not being able to distinguish and spot any relations between culture of nation and international marketing. While, the sample size of this study was large enough to meet the requirements, a bigger sample would have increase the validity of research.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the relation between national culture and international marketing and consumer behavior. The number of cross-cultural consumer behavior studies has been increasing over the years (Hofstede and De Mooij, 2010). Although, there is a growing body of knowledge and data available to researchers around the world to explain the influence of national culture on international marketing, there is very few or none study neither available nor done in this field in this part of the world. The idea of universal consumer behavior and international communities with similar values were view by De Mooij (2003) as the myths that international marketing and global advertising are surrounded with and taught in universities around the world. This research has demonstrated that international marketing and consumer behavior have been significantly influenced by national cultural values. As the time passes these cultural values effects are becoming more apparent and more important. Globalization and modernization will not only give a chance to nations and societies to celebrate their cultural differences and but also proved to international firms that standardization will not work unless the culture of markets were investigated. As the economy of a country improves the convergence may happen at income level but not at values of national culture (De Mooij, 1997).

Through this descriptive research, this author was able to answer both questions. By reviewing a number of studies of basic cross-cultural differences and how each cultural dimension would influence marketing strategies, these past analysis at country level exhibits that when nations come together in some points, it is the cultural variables that explain the differences in consumer behavior at country level. Therefore, this author can conclude that national culture can influence international marketing and how consumers behave toward a product, brand and communication strategies. Each cultural dimension has impacted global marketing in its own unique way that marketers need to be aware of them. Unfortunately, most of the companies try to view culture at a macro-level and study it as an external force that they cannot do anything about it. Therefore, it is very important for marketing managers and global firms to design their

international marketing in a way that can predict and respond to these cultural differences in each market. Although there are many different cultural models available that can explain cultural differences and help develop marketing strategies and predict consumer behavior across cultures, Hofstede' model was used for this study. Hofstede approach is a useful tool for understanding consumer behavior differences across cultures (Hofstede and Demooij, 2010). Hofstede model explains most of the variation of consumption and consumer behavior across countries that help international marketing managers to quantify the effect of culture (De Mooij, 2003). At the end, this study has updated and extended the current knowledge on national culture effect on international marketing. It is hoped that this new information can give some significant insights to the field of cross-cultural research as well as global marketing management. Extra work is absolutely necessary in less developed countries especially in this complex chronological line of study.

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