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CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM: COMPARISON OF SLOVAKIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

Consumer ethnocentrism is an important concept that few scientists are researching in the context of comparing two countries. The main aim of the article is to examine the level of consumer ethnocentrism and its differences in selected countries – Slovakia and Czech. The measurement was performed on the basis of the CETSCALE instrument. We verified the reliability of the instrument on the basis of Cronbach's alpha, while high reliability can be stated. The results suggest that Czechs are more consumer ethnocentric than Slovaks (about 9%). The one-way ANOVA test was used to explore the impact of selected demographic factors (age and gender) on consumer ethnocentrism in both countries studied (Czech Republic and Slovakia). The results suggest that demographic factors (age and gender) are significant factors in consumer ethnocentrism in both countries, but not in the same direction and strength. The reason for these differences can be just the difference in culture from which consumer ethnocentrism is based. In the future, it would be appropriate to examine precisely cultural differences in the context of consumer ethnocentrism. The results can be used in many fields (sociology, psychology, marketing) – both theories and praxis.

Keywords: consumer ethnocentrism, culture, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic

INTRODUCTION

The theme of ethnocentrism is a highly topical subject, especially in the era of globalization. Currently, many authors do not pay attention to the concept of consumer ethnocentrism, and therefore we have decided to contribute new knowledge of the subject to the file.

The main aim of the article is to examine the level of consumer ethnocentrism and its differences in selected countries – Slovakia and Czech. There are several reasons for choosing these countries. The Slovak and Czech Republic's share a long common history, but some research suggests (Dumetz and Gáboríková, 2016) there are significant differences between these countries. An instrument developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987) CETSCALE

(derived from the initials "Consumer Ethnocentric Tendencies Scale") was used to measure consumer ethnocentrism.

Theoretical Background

Theoretical analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism concept Shimp and Sharma (1987) are the creators of the theory of consumer ethnocentrism in the scientific field. Their definition is general, but specified for the American consumer: "the beliefs held by American consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign made products. From the perspective of ethnocentric consumers, purchasing imported products is wrong because, in their minds, it hurts the domestic economy, causes loss of jobs,

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and is plainly unpatriotic; products from other countries (i.e., out-groups) are objects of contempt to highly ethnocentric consumers. In terms of functionality, consumer ethnocentrism gives an individual a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, and an understanding of what buying behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable to in-group." (Shimp and Sharma, 1987) The authors clearly define the in-group and out-group. In-group is considered to be homeland and foreign is understood as outgroup. Consumer ethnocentrism is a belief that the purchase of foreign products is wrong. Shimp and Sharma are also looking for the reason why the purchase of imported products is wrong for ethnocentric consumers, because it damages the domestic economy, causes unemployment and acts unpatriotic. Due to the internal conviction of the ethnocentric consumer, it is unacceptable to support out-group and thus harm its in-group - domestic. The definition is a clear definition of in-group and out-group groups, as well as defining the reasons for rejecting an out-group for an ethnocentric consumer.

Solomon (1992)states that "consumer ethnocentrism is belief in superior domestic products to foreigners". He modified his definition and subsequently defined consumer ethnocentrism as "a tendency to prefer products of his own culture, to products of other cultures. Ethnocentric consumers are likely to feel it is wrong to buy products from other countries mainly because of the negative impact on the domestic economy." (Solomon et al., 2006). Like Shimp and Sharma (1987), Solomon (2006) understands the foreign country as out-group and domestic landscape as ingroup. However, we also find significant differences. Solomon no longer regards ethnocentrism as a belief, but a tendency. The tendency can be understood as an effort to achieve the goal. Solomon does not understand ethnocentrism as a firm assertion of domestic products, but an attempt to favour domestic products over foreign - not excluding the consumption of foreign products. He also adds that an ethnocentric consumer is likely to feel unsuitable for foreign product purchases while Shimp and Sharma clearly claim that an ethnocentric consumer simply does not buy a foreign product. We find the consensus at the end of the definitions, because the ethnocentric consumer does not show interest in foreign products because of the negative impact on the domestic economy.

Zamazalova (2010) associates consumer ethnocentrism not only with domestic products (as defined by Solomon, 2006), but also with domestic brands over foreign ones. This is an interesting insight, as it is important to realize that in some industries, current consumers are strongly emotionally linked to different brands. Brands have a very important position in marketing and need to be explored from the perspective of consumer ethnocentrism.

From the perspective of consumer behaviour, ethnocentrism can be characterized as a factor that influences consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour is influenced by four groups of factors, namely cultural, social, personal and psychological factors (Kotler and Armstrong, 2007). Most experts include ethnocentrism as cultural factors (Mooij, 2004).

Cultural Dimensions – In the Slovakia and Czech Cases

UNESCO (2017) define culture as: "a complex whole that would include, belief, art, morality, laws, customs and other abilities that could participate in decision-making about companies that could participate in the program". In our work we will participate in the work of the Dutch sociologist Gerard Hofstede. Hofstede *et al.* (1993, 2007) understands culture as "collective mind programming, which distinguishes members of one group, or categories of people from others". It is a truly general definition in which culture can be understood as a collective abstraction. In our paper we will draw on the work of the sociologist Gerard Hofstede.

Hofstede *et al.* (2007) understands culture as "collective mind programming that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from another". Based on research, Watson and Wright (2000) conclude that the greatest limit of studies on cultural factors in consumer behaviour is the lack of a theoretical basis for the choice of research countries. To minimize this limit, we decided to use the cultural dimensions of prof. Hofstede. In exploring cultures, many experts have sought to find a measuring tool. Therefore, Hofstede *et al.* (2010) use the term dimension that characterizes it as "a aspect of culture that can be measured in relation to other countries." Hofstede created a model called 6-D.

1. Power Distance Index (PDI)

The dimension deals with the extent to which less powerful members of society accept the inequality of power for the country. A high rate means that they regard inequality as natural and thus accept it. A low score indicates that an imbalance is not accepted, which means that there is an equality of power.

2. Individualism Versus Collectivism (IDV)

In this dimension, we are examining two countersituations. On the one hand, the country can show signs of individualism and, on the other hand, society is collective. Individuality is manifested by the fact that individuals take care of themselves or about their loved ones, while the collective society perceives strong belonging to the group.

3. Masculinity Versus Femininity (MAS)

Masculine society (sometimes also referred to as masculine society) is focused on strong hierarchical relationships, competition, aggressiveness, while femininity manifests itself in the blurring of hierarchical relationships and quality of life orientation.

4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

The dimension examines the extent to which members of a given country feel insecure. Avoiding uncertainty is marked by compliance with rules that guarantee certainty. In countries with a low UAI index, members of the culture perceive uncertainty as part of their lives.

5. Long-Term or Short-Term Normative Orientation (LTO)

Low score countries focus on the present and the past, leading them to respect traditions and standards. A high score represents a future orientation.

6. Indulgence Versus Restraint (IVR)

Usefulness is the freedom to satisfy the needs of the members of the culture. Restraint means that these needs are regulated on the basis of the norms that operate in the culture.

Fig. 1 shows the 6-D model values for Slovakia and Czech Republic. Slovakia and the Czech Republic have a very close history. By 1993, they were one country. However, as shown in Fig. 1, their cultural difference is significantly different, especially in the PDI and LAGs. Based on the assumption that consumer ethnocentrism is strongly related to culture (it is a cultural factor), it is likely that consumer ethnocentrism will reach different values in these countries.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main aim of the paper is to measure the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic and then to investigate differentials in the context of selected demographic factors (age, gender).

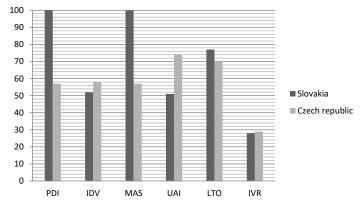
In the article we focus on three areas of partial goals, on the basis of which we have created research questions and hypotheses:

- 1. Measurement of Consumer Ethnocentrism in Slovakia and the Czech Republic
- RQ1: What is the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Slovakia?
- RQ2: What is the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Czech?
- 2. Examination of the impact of demographic factors on consumer ethnocentrism in Slovakia and the Czech Republic

creators of the consumer the ethnocentrism phenomenon, Shimp and Sharma (1987) observed differences in ethnocentrism rates based on age factors. They concluded that younger consumers are less ethnocentric than older. Caruana and Magri (1996) and Klein and Ettenson (1999), who have reached the same results on the basis of empirical research, agree with this statement. Newer studies such as Grundey and Bakowska (2008) and Čvirik (2018) have also shown a tendency for older consumers to be more ethnocentric. However, some authors consider this conclusion to be ambiguous. Sharma et al. (1995) and Festervand et al. (1985) did not demonstrate a significant statistical link between age and ethnocentrism. Based on qualitative research, Schooler (1971) concluded that age has a negative relationship to ethnocentrism. Segment age intervals are different for different authors, often undefined, which may result in differences in results.

H1a: Older consumers are more consumer ethnocentric than younger consumers (in the case of Slovakia). H1b: Older consumers are more consumer ethnocentric than younger consumers (in the case of Czech).

Gender has been studied by many experts as consumer ethnocentrism factor. Sharma *et al.* (1995) concluded that women are more ethnocentric than men. The same research result came from the authors Bruning (1997) and Čvirik (2018). Caruana



1: 6-D model for Slovakia and Czech Republic Source: Own processing based on Hofstede Insights (2019)

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and Magri (1996) and Balabanis (Balabanis *et al.*, 2001), based on quantitative research, have not shown a link between gender and ethnocentrism. A study by Bannister and Saufers (1978), based on qualitative research, shows that men in Britain achieve higher ethnocentrism than women.

H2a: Women are more consumer ethnocentric than men (In the case of Slovakia).

H2b: Women are more consumer ethnocentric than men (In the case of Czech).

3. Examination of Consumer Ethnocentrism differences in Czech and Slovakia

On the basis of theoretical knowledge there is a presumption that there are significant differences in the context of consumer ethnocentrism between Slovak and Czech.

The study is based on primary research. We used a quantitative method to collect data. We conducted a standardized query using a research tool – a questionnaire. The questionnaire was created in both print and electronic form using the Google form to get as many respondents as possible. The basic population was defined as consumers of Slovak nationality (in the case of the Czech Republic,

Czech nationality) older than 15 years. The basis for our research was 400 respondents (200 Slovaks and 200 Czechs). We use non-probability sampling (convenience sampling).

The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts. We aimed to measure the consumer ethnocentrism based on the original CETSCALE (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). We used a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Mean scores, standard deviations and Cronbach alphas for the items of CETSCALE used in Slovakia is presented in Tab. I and used in Czech is presented in Tab. II.

As we can see, it is very interesting that in both cases question number 13 appears to be a good fit (based on Cronbach alpha).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main aim of the paper is to measure the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic and then to investigate differentials in the context of selected demographic factors (age, gender).

I: CETSCALE – Results for Slovakia

CETSCALE items*	Mean scores	Standard deviations	Cronbach alpha **
1. Slovak people should always buy Slovak-made products instead of imports.	3.09	1.634	0.898
$2. \ Only \ those \ products \ that \ are \ unavailable \ in \ the \ Slovak \ Republic \ should \ be \ imported.$	3.03	1.387	0.890
3. Buy Slovak-made products, keep Slovak Republic working.	2.76	1.391	0.894
4. Slovak products, first, last, and foremost.	2.83	1.447	0.895
5. Purchasing foreign-made products is un-Slovakian.	2.19	1.108	0.896
6. It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Slovaks out of jobs.	2.63	1.208	0.896
7. A real Slovak should always buy Slovak – made products.	2.34	1.300	0.894
8. We should purchase products manufactured in Slovak Republic instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	3.02	1.629	0.893
9. It is always best to purchase Slovaks products.	2.74	1.361	0.900
10. There should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from other countries unless out of necessity.	2.70	1.327	0.899
11. Slovaks should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Slovaks business and causes unemployment.	2.60	1.319	0.892
12. Curbs should be put on all imports.	2.48	1.194	0.900
13. It may cost me in the long-run but I prefer to support Slovak products.	3.23	1.499	0.902
14. Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products on our markets.	2.38	1.201	0.898
15. Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into the Slovak Republic.	2.55	1.377	0.898
16. We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.	2.57	1.434	0.894
17. Slovak consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Slovaks out of work.	2.37	1.131	0.896

Source: Own calculation

Notes: * Based on Shimp and Sharma 1987; **Overall Alpha = 0.901

II: CETSCALE - Results for Czech

CETSCALE items*	Mean scores	Standard deviations	Cronbach alpha **
1. Czech people should always buy Czech-made products instead of imports.	3.74	1.353	0.756
$2. \ \ Donly \ those \ products \ that \ are \ unavailable \ in \ the \ Czech \ Republic \ should \ be \ imported.$	3.38	1.270	0.760
3. Buy Czech-made products. Keep the Czech Republic working.	3.08	1.425	0.771
4. Czech products, first, last, and foremost.	3.23	1.444	0.768
5. Purchasing foreign-made products is un- Czech.	2.63	1.327	0.761
6. It is not right to purchase foreign products, because it puts Czechs out of jobs.	2.94	1.268	0.760
7. A real Czech should always buy Czech – made products.	2.81	1.424	0.767
8. We should purchase products manufactured in the Czech Republic instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	3.35	1.552	0.766
9. It is always best to purchase Czech products.	3.09	1.443	0.767
10. There should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from other countries unless out of necessity.	3.54	1.299	0.767
11. Czech should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Czech business and causes unemployment.	2.90	1.398	0.766
12. Curbs should be put on all imports.	2.76	1.301	0.771
13. It may cost me in the long-run but I prefer to support Czech products.	2.98	3.216	0.835
14. Foreigners should not be allowed to put their products on our markets.	2.59	1.277	0.771
15. Foreign products should be taxed heavily to reduce their entry into the Czech Republic.	2.62	1.377	0.761
16. We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our own country.	2.71	1.476	0.773
17. Czech consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Czechs out of work.	3.33	1.491	0.776

Source: Own calculation

Notes: * Based on Shimp and Sharma 1987; **Overall Alpha = 0.779

In the article we focus on three areas of partial goals, on the basis of which we have created research questions and hypotheses. The following subchapters focus on solving research questions and hypotheses.

Measurement of Consumer Ethnocentrism in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

RQ1: What is the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Slovakia?

RQ2: What is the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Czech?

III: Descriptive statistics of CETSCALE

Argument	Slovak version	Czech version
Mean	45.455	51.630
Standard error of mean	0.984	0.851
Median	45	51
Mode	30	48
Standard deviation	13.927	12.035
Max	74	84
Min	17	27

Source: Own calculation

The basic statistical parameters of CETSCALE were recorded in Tab. III. The average of consumer ethnocentrism in Slovakia investigated accounted for 45.455 points, which is below the average in scale (scale average – 51; <17.85> scale). The average calculation error is 0.984 points. The lowest measured rate of consumer ethnocentrism has reached 17 points, which is the smallest possible measurable value. The modus represents a value of 30 points and a median of 45. Overall, we measure the measured ethnocentrism as below average. The mean in the Czech Republic was more than the average of the scale.

Based on statistical indicators, it can be stated that the Czech Republic achieves a higher level of consumer ethnocentrism than the Slovak Republic.

Examination of the Impact of Demographic Factors on Consumer Ethnocentrism in Slovakia and the Czech Republic

In this section we focused on the following hypotheses:

H1a: Age is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism (in the case of Slovakia).

The average measured values of consumer ethnocentrism in the context of demographic age

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IV: Factor age - in the case of Slovakia

Age range	n (count)	Mean score
0–25	30	28.13
26–40	62	50.47
40-55	70	40.21
55+	38	60.61
Σ	200	

Source: own calculations

factor were recorded in Tab. IV. As we can see, we are creating a clear trend. Based on average values, older consumers are more ethnocentric than young. It can also be stated that the differences are considerable. Strong differences in measured values for different age groups suggest that gender is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism.

H1b: Age is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism (in the case of Czech).

Age factor appears to be a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism in the Czech Republic. As we can see in Tab. V, the lowest average age reached the age of 25 years. The highest rate is achieved by the group, which has 26–40 years, 56.10 points. Strong differences in measured values for different age groups suggest that gender is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism.

Average values can only be understood as indicative. To confirm (refute) the hypotheses we chose the ANOVA one-way test. Selected results of the ANOVA test were recorded in Tab. VI. Based

V: Factor age in the case of Czech

Age range	n (count)	Mean score
0–25	12	41.83
26–40	62	56.10
40–55	88	50.99
55+	38	48.92
Σ	200	

Source: Own calculations

on these results (F > F-crit.), Hypothesis 1a and 1b can be confirmed. Confirmation of the hypothesis is also supported by the fact that Alpha > P-value. In this way, it can be rejected that it is only noise or a random factor and we confirm we confirm that there is a relationship between the cognitive component and the affective component.

H2a: Gender is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism (In the case of Slovakia).

The average measured value of female consumer ethnocentrism was 54.49 points and the average measured value of men consumer ethnocentrism was 35.67 points. Differences in measured values for men and women suggest that gender is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism. On the basis of the above, it can be stated that women are more consumer ethnocentric than men.

H2b: Gender is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism (In the case of Czech).

In the Czech Republic, the average value of consumer ethnocentrism in women was 44.74. In men, consumer ethnocentrism was measured with a value of 59.09. Differences in measured values for men and women suggest that gender is a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism. Accordingly, it can be stated that men are more ethnocentric than men.

Average values can only be understood as indicative. To confirm (refute) the hypotheses we chose the ANOVA one-way test. Selected results of the ANOVA test were recorded in Tab. VII. Based on the above results in Tab. VII (F > F crit.), Hypothesis 2a and 2b can be confirmed. Confirmation of the hypothesis is also supported by the fact that Alpha > P-value. In this way, it can be rejected that it was just a noise. We confirm that there is a relationship between the cognitive component and the conative component.

Examination of Consumer Ethnocentrism Differences in Czech and Slovakia

On the basis of theoretical knowledge there is a presumption that there are significant differences in the context of consumer ethnocentrism between Slovak and Czech.

VI: Hypothesis Evaluation Results (ANOVA)

	F-value	F-crit.	F-F crit.	alpha	p-value	alpha – p-value
H1a	79.635	2.650	F > F crit.	0.001	1E-33	Alfa > P-value
H1b	6.763	2.651	F > F crit.	0.001	0.0002	Alfa > P-value

Source: Own calculation

VII: Hypothesis Evaluation Results (ANOVA)

	F-value	F-crit.	F-F crit.	alpha	p-value	alpha – p-value
H2a	167.482	11.158	F > F crit.	0.001	3.68E-28	Alfa > P-value
H2b	109.845	3.889	F > F crit.	0.001	9.95E-21	Alfa > P-value

Source: Own calculation

Slovakia reaches below average consumer ethnocentrism rate (about 41.85%) and Czechs reach consumer ethnocentrism rate slightly above the CETSCALE average (about 50.93%) higher by about 6 points, which is more than a 9% difference.

Age have been confirmed as important factors in consumer ethnocentrism in both countries. In general, it can be stated that in Slovakia there is a presumption that good consumers are more ethnocentric. Consumer ethnocentric consumers in the Czech Republic were 26–40 years old. Young consumers were more consumer ethnocentric in the Czech Republic, while older consumers over the age of 55 were significantly higher in Slovakia.

Interesting situation occurred in the examination of the gender factor. In both countries, gender has been confirmed as an important factor in consumer ethnocentrism. Based on the results, it can be stated that in Slovakia women are more ethnocentric than men, but in the Czech Republic men are more ethnocentric than women. Since consumer ethnocentrism is strongly linked to culture, this difference may be due to a different degree of cultural dimensions.

DISCUSSION

The article focuses on the issue of consumer ethnocentrism in two countries, namely: the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Measurement of consumer ethnocentrism was performed on the basis of CETSCALE (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). As it is a foreign research tool, it was necessary to verify its reliability. Cronbach's alpha was used for this purpose. From the results it can be stated that statement No. 13 should be excluded, thus increasing the reliability of the research instrument. It is very interesting that this result was published in both countries. We are encountering specifics

here, which suggest that the financial loss in the case of these countries will not have a sufficient context with consumer ethnocentrism. It can be stated that the perception of price and loss can be perceived by the consumer in another area of his consumer decision-making. The authors Čvirik and Stanková (2019) in the case of Slovakia came to similar conclusions but the authors Stoklasa *et al.* (2014) in the case of Czech Republic (specifically the Moravian-Silesian) did not notice significant differences or needs eliminate the statement No. 13.

Based on the survey, it can be stated that Czech respondents achieve a higher degree of consumer ethnocentrism. These results may be influenced by cultural aspects (Sharma *et al.*, 1995; Čvirik, 2019) but also by the differential level of patriotism (Han, 1988; Čvirik, 2019) and world-mindedness (Čvirik and Stanková, 2019).

In the article we also focus on clarifying the influence of selected demographic factors - age and gender of respondents. The results suggest that this is a significant factor in both countries. In the conditions of Slovakia, the significance of selected demographic factors for consumer ethnocentrism is also indicated by other researches (for example, Lesáková, 2016; Čvirik, 2019). The reason may be the role of individual segments in the purchasing decision-making process, as well as the difference resulting from attitude theories. In the case of Czech Republic, the research by Stoklas et al. (2014) suggest that there is no statistical significance of the effect of age and gender on consumer ethnocentrism, which is in contrast to our results. Of course, the reason may be a change in the influence of selected factors over time caused by various factors, such as the advertising campaigns to promote the purchase of domestic products targeted at certain groups of respondents and the form.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of the paper was to measure the level of consumer ethnocentrism in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic and then to investigate differentials in the context of selected demographic factors (age, gender).

The theoretical contribution of the work can be seen in the analysis of the concept of consumer ethnocentrism and the introduction of Slovakia and the Czech Republic from a cultural aspect, which represents an important component of consumer ethnocentrism.

The study is backed by a primary survey that uses a tool to measure consumer ethnocentrism – CETSCALE. As can be seen from the survey results, in both cases the good validity of the tool was confirmed. The worst validity is presented in statement 13 (It may cost me in the long run but I prefer to Czech products) in both countries. Therefore, in future surveys, we recommend that you omit this statement or update it to today's conditions.

Based on the primary survey, we conclude that Czechs are more ethnocentric than Slovaks. While the Slovaks reach below average levels of consumer ethnocentrism, Czechs are above average. In the paper, we focused on two demographic factors – age and gender. Both represent a significant factor in consumer ethnocentrism. However, the gender factor results are inconsistent. While in Slovakia women are more ethnocentric than men in the Czech Republic, it is the other way around. This result can be seen in the context of the diversity of cultures, and therefore in future studies we recommend exploring the demographic factors of consumer ethnocentrism in the context of culture and cultural dimensions. In general, these findings can be used to allocate resources in marketing and sociology.

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