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Culture is one of the most abstract and hardly measurable influencers of human behavior, as suggested by many authors (Liu, Furrer & Sudharshan, 2001; Voss, Roth & Rosenzweig, 2004). For example, Gefen and Heart (2006) have demonstrated that the individuals’ culture affects their behavior as consumers. Cross-cultural research in the sphere of business management and marketing has increased in recent years due to the globalization of markets (Okazaki, 2004; Zhang, Beatty & Walsh, 2005; Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2006; Okazaki & Mueller, 2007; Okazaki & Skapa, 2008; Okazaki, Mueller & Taylor, 2010; Craig & Douglas, 2011; Engelen & Brettel, 2011).

Within this context it is vital to take into account the cultural differences that exist in different markets. Academic research has shown that although markets are shifting toward globalization, the behavior of consumers in relation to products or services differs depending on the cultural values of their country of origin.

Since the 1980s there has been an on-going debate regarding the most suitable approach to the study and comparison of cultures, the principal perspectives being those of: Hofstede (2001); Hall (1976); Schwartz (1994); and House, Ganges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004) with their GLOBE model (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness). Most of this research draws on the framework proposed by Hofstede (2001), who developed the cultural dimensions: a) power distance – the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally; b) uncertainty avoidance – the degree to which a society tolerates uncertainty and risks; c) individualism/collectivism – the degree to which people in a given society create strong or weak links with groups; d) masculinity/femininity – the distribution of roles between the genders; and e) long-term/short-term orientation – in the thinking of individuals from a given culture. His works unquestionably the most influential scholarly works on national culture (Kirkman et al., 2006; Gong, 2009). For Sondergaard (1994) the approach proposed by Hofstede (2001), based on measuring cultural differences between countries overall, constitutes a very large-scale attempt to classify nations in terms of broad value differences based on a rigorous research design, a systematic data collection, and a coherent theory to explain national variations. De Mooij (2010, 144-145) explains that in comparative research the properties of individuals as observed within a country are aggregated and then treated as country-level variables. To find explanations for phenomena at country level, the aggregate can be correlated to other country-level variables. This is called between-system or between-country comparison, although the data are collected from individuals.

Nevertheless, other authors, such as McCoy, Everard and Jones (2005) and McCoy, Galletta and King (2007), consider Hofstede’s (2001) approach to be extremely limited, since Hofstede’s seminal work is now several decades old and it is unrealistic to believe that the cultural values have not witnessed any
changes over the years. In addition, another limitation derives from the assumption implicit in the use of ‘country scores’ is that the scores of each country reflect the collective culture of all individuals from that nation. With these premises, McCoy et al. (2005, 2007) advocate the measurement of cultural differences at an individual level rather than using a collective approach at country level.

Regardless the approach adopted to examine the differences between countries, at both individual and aggregate levels, the achievement of a better understanding of the extent to which these cultural differences affect the consumer behaviour (online and offline) is extremely relevant for managers and marketers.

The globalized nature of markets – due in part to the development of information and communications technologies (ICT) and the Internet in particular – has increased the importance of national cultural values in online consumer behavior (Zahed, Van Pelt & Song, 2001). By definition, the potential users of any website are international and intercultural. Within this context, it is vital to take into account the cultural differences that exist among Internet users, and the extent to which these differences may affect user behavior (Chau, Cole, Massey, Montoya & O’Keefe, 2002; Li, Hess, McNab & Yu, 2009). Cultural differences may help to explain why certain online marketing strategies are successful in some countries yet less so in others (Jin, Park & Kim, 2008). Several studies undertaken in the online context have demonstrated that some cultural dimensions (uncertainty avoidance and individualism) intervene in the process of user attitude-formation and in user behavior (Bredillet, Yatim & Ruiz, 2010; De Mooij, 2011; Lim, Leung, Sia & Lee, 2004; Noh, Lee, Kim & Garrison, 2013; Zhao, Kim, Suh & Du, 2007).

Nowadays the crucial role of language in intercultural relations is widely acknowledged, the words used in a language being ‘symbols’ that work as vehicles for cultural transfer (Hofstede, 2001). Tavassoli (2002) and Puntoni, Langhe, Stijn and Van Osselaer (2009) demonstrated the influence of language on the effectiveness of marketing communication and pointed out that, depending on the language in which subjects process information, consumer behavior may vary.

The field of psycholinguistics has studied how consumers use information processing and its effect on memory, perception and attitude (Lowrey, 2002; Luna, Peracchio & De Juan, 2005; Luna & Peracchio, 2007; Noriega & Blair, 2008; Wyer, 2002). The literature shows that the way in which a person processes information is conditioned by cultural values – both those of the individual and those associated with the language concerned – and is thus flexible (Singh, 2002). Hence, a bilingual consumer can exhibit styles of information-processing that are similar to those of native consumers (Tavassoli, 2002; Puntoni et al., 2009). Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that language is associated with cultural frameworks, such that communicating in a given language can increase cognitive access to the cultural values associated with that language (Luna, Ringberg & Peracchio, 2008; Marian & Kaushanskaya, 2004; Ross, Xun & Wilson, 2002; Wong & Hong, 2005). This opens up the possibility of communicating different cultural values via communications campaigns by deliberately using different languages.

Accordingly, this book provides a new approach to cross-cultural research by analyzing not only the cross-cultural differences between consumers but also the capacity of the language – as a vehicle for cultural values, to influence consumer behavior. In the globalized context of the economy, this research will be of particular interest to business managers and marketers, as it demonstrates that cultural can be used as an additional tool in their strategies.

This book is likely to be of interest both to academics, in the context of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, and also to researchers studying issues relating to the role of culture and language in the area of business management and marketing.

More specifically, the potential audiences are the following:
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- Those researchers focusing on cross-cultural analyses and/or on the effect of language in the context of business management, marketing, or consumer behavior.
- Academics, including lecturers from disciplines related to this broad topic area, as the content can be used by teaching staff at both undergraduate and post-graduate level in subjects including business management, marketing, consumer behavior, international marketing, and marketing communications, for example. Furthermore, by covering both online and offline markets, the book would be of interest to academic staff in disciplines related to website design, website usability, accessibility, and so on.
- This book will also help undergraduate and post-graduate students to identify new research problems in the areas it addresses.
- Another significant audience for the book comprises the many professionals working in business management and marketing in an international context, and those working in website design and management, with a global perspective. In these latter areas, it is vital that professionals understand how the cultural values and language of users can influence the success or failure of a website or indeed of the products and services it is commercializing.

To achieve the above-mentioned goals, the 15 chapters included in the book are structured into three sections. The first two sections deal with cross-cultural marketing research adopting a both conceptual (Section 1) and empirical (Section 2) research approaches. Section 3 focuses on the role of language as a key factor in managing the cultural diversity in a global marketplace, including theoretical and applied research perspectives.

Section 1 is divided in six chapters. In the Chapter 1 entitled Effect of Globalization on Multicultural Consumer Behavior, professors Manrai, L.A. (University of Delaware, USA), Manrai, A.K. (University of Delaware, USA) and Mady, T.T. (Concordia University, Canada) provide a comprehensive overview of the current state-of-the-art of cross-cultural and cross-national consumer research, identifying a dearth of research on multicultural consumer behavior (MCB). On this premise, the authors examine the mechanisms of multicultural consumer behavior in a globalized economy and develop a conceptual model capturing the effect of globalization on multiculturalism. Chapter 2 entitled The Globalisation of the Media: Towards Cultural Homogeneity? by professor Virkar, S. (University of Oxford, UK), examines in depth the role of global media on culture, critically analyzing the theories claiming that pan-global commercial broadcasting can forge a global culture and promote a global cultural convergence. The author highlights pointed out that the globalization of the media, as the general process of globalization itself, is a phenomenon of many facets and suggests that many positive outcomes derive from the globalization process, as it allows for diversity and quality through increased competition in global, national, and local markets. This author concludes that global media also contributes to the production and dissemination of different cultures to different parts of the world and that cultural convergence is not inevitable, as suggested by the theories of cultural homogeneity. Professor Kijpokin Kasemsap (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand) addresses in Chapter 3, entitled The Roles of Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Global Marketing, the most relevant cross-cultural perspectives in global marketing, providing theoretical and practical insights into the role played by cross-cultural consumer ethnocentrism toward global brand, country-of-origin perceptions, animosity and trust, the global brand reputation and cross-cultural social networking services. Meanwhile, Chapter 4, Teenagers’ Socio and Cultural Values: Relation with Entrepreneurship, by professors Dutshke, G. (Universidade Atlântica, Portugal), García del Junco, J. (University of Sevilla, Spain), Espansandi Bustelo, F. (Univesity of Sevilla, Spain), Dutschke, M. (ESE
João de Deus, Portugal), and Palacios Florencio, B. (Universidad Pablo Olavide, Spain) addresses an exploratory research aims to identify the relations between teenagers’ socio and cultural values and their want to become entrepreneurs. In concrete, if socio and cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede and Minkov (2010) are related with the want to become entrepreneur. Professor Codignola, F. (Università degli studi di Milano-Bicocca, Italy) examines in Chapter 5, entitled The Globalization of the Art Market: A Cross-Cultural Perspective where Local Features meet Global Circuits, the not-yet-conceptualized framework of the art market in cross-cultural context. The author specifically identifies divergences and convergences concerning consumer behavior and art goods in a global economy. The results support the notion that in the current art market cultural diversity influences consumer attitudes. Finally, Chapter 6 entitled A Framework of Brand Strategy and the “Glocalization” Approach: The Case of Indonesia and carried out by Japutra, A. (Oxford Brookes University, UK), Nguyen, N. (East China University of Science and Technology, China) and Melewar, T.C. (Middlesex University, UK) develop a branding strategy framework to successfully operate in such a culturally diverse market. These researchers focus their study on the case of Indonesia providing several interesting and very much needed contributions regarding the challenges that companies face in building a strong international brand. They also propose a conceptual framework for “glocalization”, consumer-brand relationships and societal marketing that are prominent in order to build and/or strengthen a brand in a culturally diverse market.

Section 2 is made up of the following four chapters. Chapter 7 entitled The Formation of Usage Intention of Electric Cars: A Comparative Study of Denmark, Belgium, and Italy is carried out by professors Barbarossa, C. (Luis Guido Carli University), De Pelsmacker, P. (University of Antwerp, Belgium), Beckman, S. (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark), Moons, I. (University of Antwerp, Belgium), Gwozdz, W. (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark). In this chapter an empirical cross-cultural research has been conducted to assess how the intention to use electric cars is indirectly and directly affected by green self-identity, environmental concern and moral obligation and attitude towards electric cars. The authors propose a theoretical model and empirically test it in Denmark, Belgium and Italy using the Hofstede theoretical framework. On the other hand, professors Jiménez, N. and San-Martín, S. (University of Burgos, Spain) in Chapter 8 entitled A Cross-National Effect of Ethnocentrism on Purchase Intention provide a better understanding of the role of socio-psychological and cultural factors (patriotism, cultural openness and collectivism) in the ethnocentrism phenomenon via conducting a cross-national empirical study to a sample of Spanish and Mexican consumers aiming to analyze their behavior when evaluating foreign products. The results show that both in Mexico, an emerging market, and in Spain, a developed market, patriotism and cultural openness are antecedents of ethnocentrism, however the authors found that collectivism only influences the ethnocentrism of Mexican consumers, the ethnocentrism negatively affects purchase intention of foreign products only in the case of Spanish consumers. Another interesting study related to this empirical perspective of cross-cultural marketing research was carried out by García-Maroto, I. and Muñoz-Leiva, F. (University of Granada, Spain). Entitled Adoption of Biomass Heating Systems: Cross-Market Segmentation of the European Region this Chapter 9 focuses on the adoption of biomass heating systems identifying its main socio-economic drivers and examining its potential adopters within the European market via applying the theories of adoption of innovations or new systems. The authors conduct cross-market segmentation of potential adopters of biomass heating systems in Spain, Germany, UK, France, Norway and Sweden, providing relevant recommendations for a successful commercialization of this type of heating for end-consumers. Professors Danbury, A. (University of Bedfordshire, UK), Palazzo, M. (University of Salerno, Italy), Mortimer, K. (University of Northampton, UK), and Siano, A. (University of Salerno, Italy) in Chapter
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10 entitled *Cultural Perspectives on Advertising Perceptions and Brand Trustworthiness* explore the creation of a trustworthy brand identity through advertising by undertaking focus group research in the UK and Italy to identify the characteristics of print advertisements perceived as portraying a trustworthy image. The results show that advertisements that are simple, straightforward and clear are perceived as being more trustworthy, although some differences had been found between national samples in relation to factors such as color perception and consumer ethnocentrism.

The third section of the book looks at issues related to the role the language plays as a key factor in managing the cultural diversity in a global Marketplace. This section is divided in the following five chapters. Chapter 11, entitled *A Review of Psycho- vs. Socio-Linguistics Theories: An Application to Marketing Research* and authored by Alcántara-Pilar, J. M., Del Barrio-García, S., Crespo-Almendros, E., and Porcu, L. (Universidad de Granada, Spain), reviewing the most salient socio- and psycholinguistic theories and their application to the marketing field. On the basis of this conceptual framework, this chapter analyses Code-switching, Cultural Frame Switching and Foreign Language Display as concepts being broadly implemented in the previous marketing and consumer behavior literature. The authors also reveal the future research lines to be undertaken in the discipline of linguistics and their application to marketing. Professor Noriega, J. (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA) in Chapter 12 (*Cultural Frame Switching: Marketing Implications*) discusses a phenomenon referred to as cultural frame switching; a psychological process experienced by bicultural individuals whereby exposure to a culturally significant. This chapter focuses on the antecedents of this phenomenon, the cues which can activate either cultural identity, or existing research on the subject matter. Chapter 13 entitled *Codeswitching: An Alternative Approach to Traditional Communication Methods for Reaching Multilinguals in the Global Marketplace* whose authors are Bishop, M.M. (University of New Hampshire, USA) and Peterson, M. (University of Wyoming, USA) addressed about language codeswitching which refers essentially to the alternation between two languages in communication by bilinguals. The history of codeswitching, motivations for codeswitching, and the use of codeswitching in the media and in advertising are discussed in this chapter. *Foreign Language Display in Advertising from a Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspective: A Review and Research Agenda* is the Chapter 14 carried out by Hornikx, J. and van Meurs, F. (Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands). This chapter clarifies the role of the strategic use of languages in advertising campaigns adopting both psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic theoretical perspectives. After presenting the most relevant research on the effectiveness of the foreign language display, the authors provide empirical evidence for the beneficial effects and drawbacks of FLD. Finally, professors Alcántara-Pilar, J.M., Del Barrio-García, S., Porcu, L. and Crespo-Almendros, E. (University of Granada, Spain) in Chapter 15 entitled *The Moderating Role of Language on Perceived Risk and Information-Processing Online* analyze whether the cultural values associated with a given language affect the website users' perceived risk online and information-processing. They propose an information-processing model for the online context in which perceived risk online is an antecedent and consumer loyalty towards the service is the ultimate outcome. Researchers found that the cultural dimension ‘uncertainty avoidance’ moderates the effect of perceived risk on perceived ease of use and usefulness, while the influence of perceived ease of use or usefulness on attitude towards the website depends on whether the language used to process the information on the site conveys cultural values with a shorter or longer-term orientation.

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