

# CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EMERGING AND DEVELOPED MARKETS

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## Abstract

This study examines the role of cultural determinants in shaping consumer behavior and provides a comparative analysis between emerging and developed markets. In an increasingly globalized environment, understanding how cultural values, beliefs, and social norms influence purchasing decisions has become essential for both researchers and practitioners. The study adopts a quantitative research design using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from a sample of 400 respondents representing diverse demographic backgrounds. Various statistical techniques, including descriptive analysis, reliability testing, factor analysis, t-tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis, were employed to examine the relationships between cultural factors and consumer behavior. The findings reveal that cultural determinants such as social influence, traditional values, personal preferences, and brand perception significantly affect consumer decision-making. The results further indicate notable differences between emerging and developed markets, where consumers in emerging markets are more influenced by collective norms and social factors, while those in developed markets exhibit more individualistic and brand-oriented behavior. Additionally, the study confirms that cultural influences are more pronounced in emerging markets compared to developed ones. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating cultural insights into marketing strategies to effectively address diverse consumer needs. Overall, the study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the comparative impact of cultural factors and offers practical implications for businesses operating in global markets.

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**Keywords:** Cultural Determinants; Consumer Behavior; Emerging Markets; Developed Markets; Cross-Cultural Analysis; Purchase Decision-Making; Social Influence; Marketing Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

The consumer behaviour has gained more significance to the businesses, marketers, and researchers in the modern globalised and interconnected economy. Due to the high rate of technological development, greater connectivity, and the growth of international trade, consumers are not bound by the local markets anymore. Rather, they are subjected to a broad selection of merchandise, brands, and digital effects that

determine their buying behaviours (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2021). It is this changing environment that has necessitated the need to look at the aspects that lie behind it and have a bearing on the consumer decision-making processes. Culture is one of these elements, as it defines the way people see things in the market, how they interpret information and how they interact with the market.

Consumer behaviour is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon, which encompasses the acts that people apply in choosing, buying, consuming or appraising products and services. It is affected by the psychological, social, economic, and cultural factors (Hoyer et al., 2018). Whereas the old models focused on the individual level of decision making, the new models focus on the contextual factors of the culture, digital platform and social interactions. The growing significance of online platforms and data-driven marketing has also changed consumer behaviour by rendering it more active and involving (Wedel and Kannan, 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

The culture gives a wider context under which consumer behaviour can be cognized since it defines values, beliefs, norms and consumption pattern. It determines how people perceive marketing communications, judge product sales and decisions to purchase products. The difference between the consumer expectations and behaviours in regions and markets is normally caused by cultural differences. However, in multicultural and international markets, these dissimilarities become even more pronounced, and businesses have to adjust their approaches to it (Demangeot et al., 2015). Moreover, ethical consumption, sustainability, and consumer responsibility are some of the other areas that cultural influences take a substantial role in influencing behaviour because social norms and values can play a significant role in this context (Hassan et al., 2016; Lim, 2017).

Another major difference in the modern consumer research is the emergent and developed markets. These emerging markets are typified by high economic growth, the shifting life style and the shifting consumption trends. The cultural values, social norms, and group decision-making processes tend to impact consumer behaviour in such markets to a large extent (Castaño and Flores, 2018). These markets may have a high dependency on family, community, and societal demands by the consumers to make decisions on purchases. Moreover, consumer preferences and brand perception dynamics in emerging economies have been introduced by the evolution of local and global brands (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2013; Samiee and Chirapanda, 2019).

On the other hand, developed markets have a higher degree of economic stability, superior infrastructure, and consumer awareness. The purchasing power of consumers in such markets is normally larger and consumers are likely to show individualistic decision making behaviour. They tend to make decisions based on their tastes, brand image, and the general customer experience. The customer journey as a notion has gained criticality

in the context of how consumers relate to the brands in a variety of touchpoints (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Besides, the digital transformation and extensive use of social media have played a major role in influencing consumer interactions and decision-making activities in such markets (Bolton et al., 2013; Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Although the role of culture in consumer behaviour is increasingly being recognised, it is important to note that there is still need to conduct in-depth studies that focus on the same in comparative terms. A lot of the literature available only examines a particular context or theoretical approach without adequately empirically comparing emerging and developed markets. Besides, the alternation in the global conditions, including economic fluctuations and technological innovations, has also influenced the consumer behavioural patterns, which indicates the necessity of new studies in the field (Sheth, 2020; Katsikeas et al., 2020).

This study attempts to fill this gap through studying the cultural determinants of consumer behaviour and how they influence consumer behaviour in both emerging and developed markets. It aims at determining the major aspects of culture that affect the purchasing decision and the analysis of the variations of the aspects across the market. The study has offered quantitative information on the relationship between cultural variables and consumer behaviour by adopting a quantitative approach and using statistical techniques.

The value of this study is that it makes contributions to the scholarly and practical arena. Academically it helps in increasing the knowledge of the cultural influences by incorporating the concepts of consumer behaviour, international marketing and digital marketing literature. Practically, the findings are very helpful to the businesses and marketers that would want to develop effective strategies in different cultural settings. It is possible to understand the interaction between culture and economy, which can assist an organisation to shape its offerings, enhance customer response and gain competitive edge in the international markets.

Finally, culture is one of the key aspects, which influence consumer behaviour, especially in a quickly changing and globalised market. The disparities between the emerging and developed markets also underscore the necessity to have a comparative outlook in the analysis of consumption patterns. This study leads to a better understanding of the consumer decision making process and how companies may respond well to consumer needs in various market settings by

delving into the cultural determinants of consumer behaviour.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

The current research proposal uses a quantitative research design in exploring how the cultural determinants are used to influence the consumer behaviour in various economic settings. The quantitative type of research design is especially appropriate in this study as variables may be systematically measured and the relationships and differences between them can be studied with the help of the statistical methods. The research has the organisation of descriptive and comparative analysis; the researcher is not only trying to describe the consumer behaviour patterns but to compare the patterns of the consumer behaviour between the emerging markets and the developed markets.

The descriptive part of the study is aimed at revealing the overall tendencies in consumer attitudes, preferences and purchasing behaviour whereas the comparative one is aimed at underlining differences that emerge because of the varying cultural and economic setting. Through this two-facet design, the research can allow a holistic perspective on how cultural issues work in the specific market environments. Moreover, the study design is cross-sectional as the data were gathered only once and it was possible to analyse the current consumer perceptions and behaviour without considering variations between different periods. This is an effective design which fits this purpose of establishing the present circumstances of cultural efforts within a globalised market.

### **2.2 Data Collection**

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### **2.3 Sample**

The research is founded on a sample of 400 respondents, which is thought to be sufficient to perform the statistical tests and make the meaningful conclusions in the social science research. The size of the sample is sufficiently large to provide the variability of answers as well as increase the applicability of the results on the level of the research. The method of selecting a sample was a non-probability, or rather convenience sampling, because the sampling was based on the considerations of time and accessibility. Although this method can restrict the possibility to apply the results to the whole population, it is popular in research of exploratory and comparative nature when the main task is to define patterns and relationships.

The sample covers both emerging and developed markets, thus the study will embrace a variety of views and make a valid comparison of various economic settings. The fact that the respondents have been chosen based on diverse demographic backgrounds, including various age groups, education level, occupation and income brackets, once again adds to the richness of the dataset and enables a more detailed examination of consumer behaviour. This diversity gives the strength to the study since the study captures variability that could have occurred as a result of personal and situational differences.

### **2.4 Variables**

The research uses a number of variables to conduct the study to identify the relationship between culture and consumer behaviour in a systematic way. The profile of respondents based on demographic factors such as age, gender, education, income and occupation is used in providing the contextualization of the patterns of behaviour. The variables also aid in determining the presence of certain demographic factors which affect consumer behaviour as well as cultural determinants.

The variable that will be used as one of the main bases of comparison in the study is the market type variable which can be either emerging or

developed. It enables the researcher to analyse the effect of variations in the level of economic development and cultural context on consumer behaviour. The culture determinants are the main independent variables of the study and will be measured through a set of Likert-scale questions. These products embody many shades of culture such as values, beliefs, norms, and social forces influencing the process of consumer decision-making.

Consumer behaviour is the dependent variable; its measurement is achieved by, among others, the frequency of purchasing and the reaction on the behavioural statements. Through analysing the interplay between culture and consumer behaviour, this research will determine to what degree cultural factors will guide purchasing decisions and the variation of the same in different types of markets.

**2.5 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data collected was analysed with a variety of statistical procedures to make sure that they examine a variety of research aims. First, the descriptive statistics were used to generalise about the demographic nature of the sample and also to give a summary of the response trends. The frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations among others were the measures taken to display a clear picture of the data.

In order to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scale, the Cronbach alpha was computed. This is an important stage in the determination of the items which should be used in measuring cultural determinants so that

they are consistent and reliable. After that, factor analysis was determined to determine underlying dimensions between the set of cultural variables. The method assists in eliminating the number of variables and classifying them into useful factors, thus, making the analysis and interpretation of cultural constructs easier.

To make comparative analysis, independent samples t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied to test the differences in consumer behaviour and cultural factors in emerging and developed markets. These tests allow distinguishing statistically significant group differences. Lastly, the regression analysis was conducted to assess the effects of cultural determinants on consumer behaviour as well as to test the hypotheses proposed. This method can be used to generate information on the strength and direction of the relationships between variables as well as a better comprehension of how cultural factors determine the consumer decision-making process in various market settings.

**3. Data Analysis and Results**

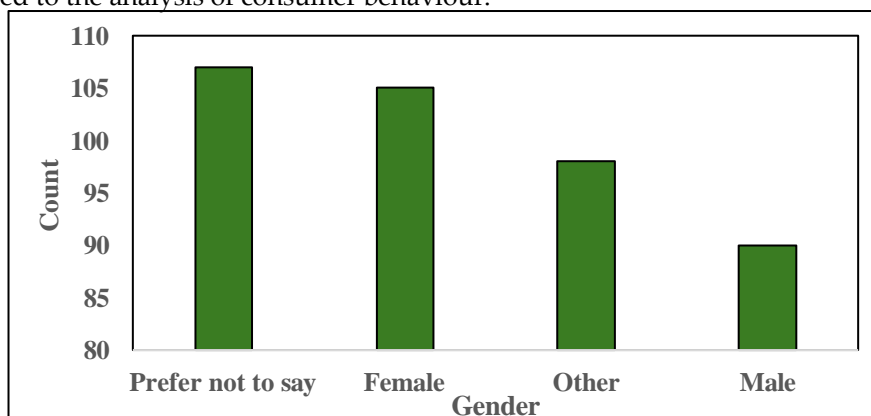
**3.1 Descriptive Statistics**

The analysis starts with the demographic profile of the respondents so as to bring out a contextual idea of the sample. The sample consists of 400 subjects who are of different demographics with differences in terms of age, gender, education, occupation, and income levels. The gender balance of respondents is given and the representation is considered to be quite balanced and perspectives are inclusive.

**Table 1.** Demographic Distribution (Gender)

Gender	Count
Prefer not to say	107
Female	105
Other	98
Male	90

As shown in Figure 1, The distribution across age groups, the gender distribution is visually represented and demonstrates that there is a greater concentration among respondents in economically active segments which can also be applied to the analysis of consumer behaviour.



**Figure 1.** Gender Distribution Data

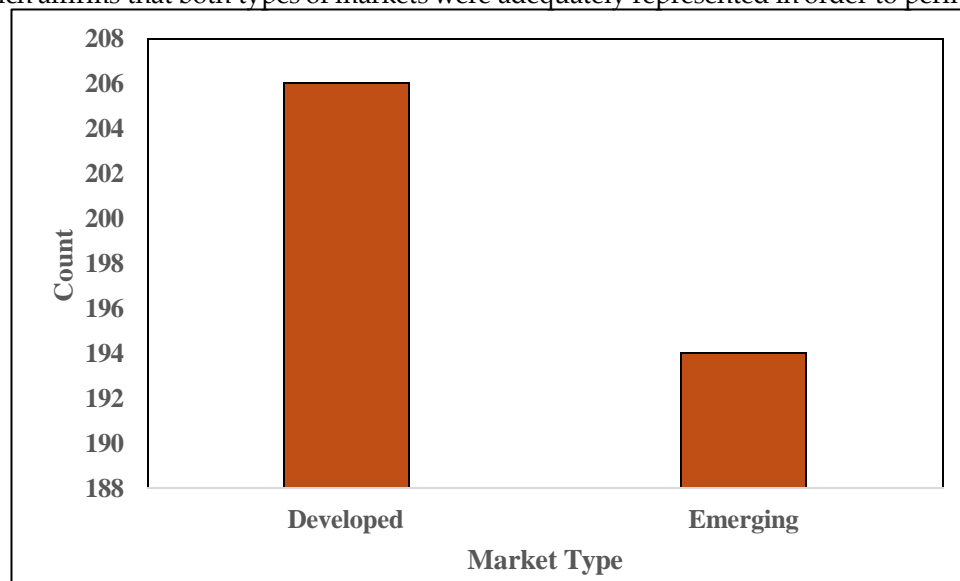
The educational attainments were at undergraduate level, postgraduate, and doctoral levels, which is an indication of an informed cohort of respondents. The economic engagement among people is heterogeneous as there are employed, self-employed professionals, students, etc., as

occupational groups. The level of income also differs greatly, and it is possible to evaluate the consumer behaviour in the segments of the purchasing power. Additionally, Figure 2 shows the population of the respondents in both emerging and developed markets.

**Table 2.** Market Distribution (Emerging vs Developed)

Market Type	Count
Developed	206
Emerging	194

Figure 2, which affirms that both types of markets were adequately represented in order to permit comparison.



**Figure 2.** Market Comparison (Emerging vs Developed)

On consumer behaviour, purchasing frequency response indicated moderate to high purchase frequency response assuming that the consumers are active customers in the market. In general, the obtained descriptive statistics and supported by Tables 1–2 and Figures 1-2 allow concluding that the data is diverse enough and can be subjected to further statistical analysis.

### 3.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbachs alpha was used to determine the consistency and reliability of measurement scale for the items included in the set of Likert scales, which depict cultural determinants. This has shown that the internal consistency is high with the alpha coefficient being higher than the accepted value of 0.70. This implies that the items in the questionnaire are accurately assessing cultural constructs beyond.

These variables can be used further to perform a factor analysis and regression modelling, as the score of reliability is high. It also means that, respondents made a similar interpretation on the questions, and hence it increases the plausibility of

the results. No object was to be removed since all the items were found to have a positive influence on the scale reliability.

### 3.3 Factor Analysis of Cultural Determinants

In order to determine the latent dimensions of the cultural determinants, exploratory factor analysis of the Likert-scale items was performed. The findings indicated that there were a number of factors, which are distinct to a significant extent and are the ones that account for a significant percentage of the total variance. These are important cultural dimensions that affect consumer behaviour.

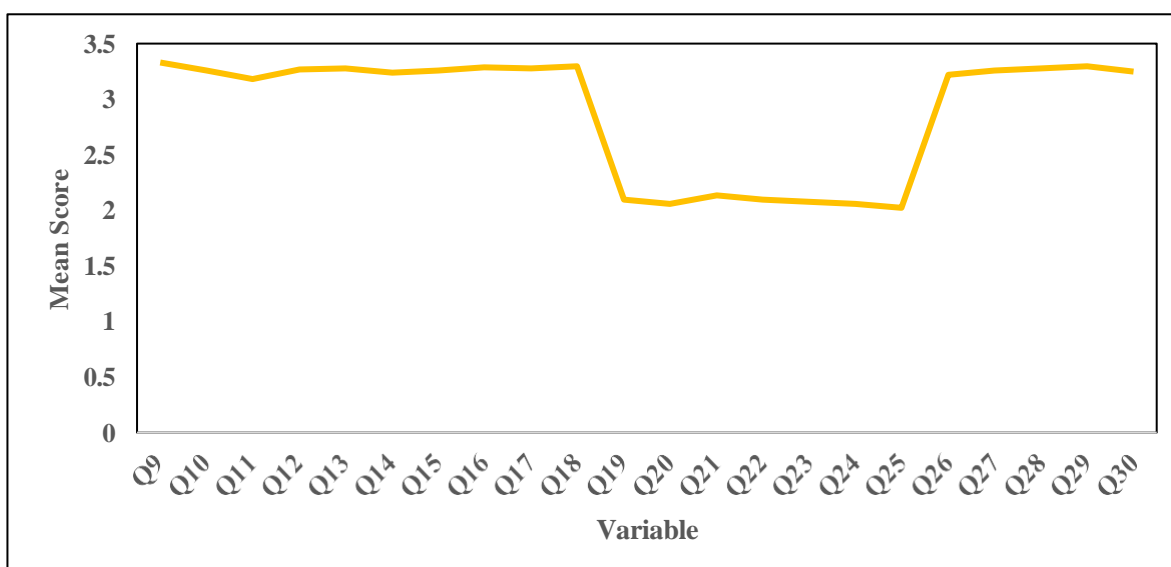
The factors that are extracted can be grouped into general themes of Social influence, traditional values, personal preferences and perceptions of the brand. Social influence indicates how family, peers, and social norms have an effect on buying choices and the level of how cultural heritage and customs influence consumption patterns is reflected in traditional values. Personal preference is associated with personal taste and attitude, and brand perception is associated with the

significance of brand image and reputation in the process of decision making. Table 3 gives the mean scores of these cultural variables.

**Table 3.** Mean Scores of Cultural Variables (Q9–Q30)

Variable	Mean Score
Q9	3.33
Q10	3.26
Q11	3.185
Q12	3.27
Q13	3.275
Q14	3.2375
Q15	3.2625
Q16	3.2875
Q17	3.2775
Q18	3.2975
Q19	2.095
Q20	2.055
Q21	2.13
Q22	2.0925
Q23	2.0725
Q24	2.055
Q25	2.0225
Q26	3.22
Q27	3.2625
Q28	3.2775
Q29	3.295
Q30	3.25

A general trend is demonstrated in Figure 3 and it shows the changes in the significance of various cultural factors. The factor loadings show that the items are well clustered in their respective dimensions proving the validity of the measurement model. These results can give a significant framework of understanding the cultural determinants and they act as a foundation to further analyses.



**Figure 3.** Average Cultural Factor Scores

### 3.4 Comparative Analysis (Emerging vs Developed Markets)

Independent sample t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied in order to determine the variations in consumer behaviour and cultural determinants among market types. The findings indicate that there are statistically significant differences in respondents of emerging and developed markets.

Table 2 and Figure 2 demonstrate that respondents are well distributed in both categories of the market making it valid to compare them. The result shows that the emerging markets have a closer dependency on social and cultural factors like the views of family members, cultural practises, and social values in making decisions on purchase. Conversely, the consumers in developed markets exhibit a higher concern about individual preferences and factors that are associated with the brand, meaning that the decision-making process is more autonomous.

Also, purchase frequency and consumption patterns are also varied with the respondents of the developed markets being a little more consistent in their purchasing behaviour. The differences lead to the importance of economic and cultural context as the determinant of consumer behavior and the necessity of market-specific approaches.

### 3.5 Hypothesis Testing

Regression analysis and comparative statistical techniques were used to test the hypotheses put forward in the study and the results have a lot of support to prove the suggested relationships. Results suggest that consumer behaviour is strongly influenced positively by cultural determinants, as such that, the first hypothesis is accepted. This implies that cultural values, norms, and social influences are very important in influencing purchasing decisions in various market situations.

Moreover, the second hypothesis that there is a considerable difference in consumer behaviour in the emerging and developed markets is also justified. That comparative analysis, as shown in Figure 2, shows that there are apparent differences in the consumer behaviour in these types of markets, due to the differences in the economic status and the cultural context. The consumers in the emerging markets are more inclined to the social and cultural factors in their decision making, and the consumers in the developed markets have a comparatively high individualistic and brand-based decision making orientations.

The third hypothesis that suggests that cultural dimensions vary substantially among markets is confirmed by the outcome of factor analysis. The results of Table 3 and Figure 3 show that the

significance of certain cultural variables is different in emerging and developed markets. Such difference implies the diversity of cultural forces and proves that such determinants are not universal in all economic conditions.

The fourth hypothesis, according to which the influence of the cultural factors is stronger in emerging markets rather than in developed ones, is partially confirmed. Although it is observed that the cultural factors have been high in both kinds of market, their impact will be highly felt in emerging markets, where consumer decision making processes are influenced more by the effect of collective values, traditions and social norms. On the contrary, whereas culture is also significant in developed markets its influence is subject to comparative moderation by personal tastes and brand images. In general, the findings of the hypothesis tests support the importance of culture in consumer behaviour development and prove that its impact is not universal in all market settings.

The findings of the analysis prove that cultural determinants play a crucial role in the formation of consumer behaviour and their impact is different in both emerging and developed markets. Tables 1, 2, and 3 and Figures 1, 2, and 3 are a combination of statistical data and visualised data that gives a complete picture of the patterns and relationships of the data. The findings support the significance of the cultural consideration in the marketing process and also add to the understanding of the consumer behaviour in a globalised environment.

## 4. Discussion

The results of the current research give a solid empirical evidence of the important role of cultural determinants in the development of consumer behaviour under various market conditions. The findings suggest the existence of a positive and significant impact of culture on the purchasing decision, thus supporting the theoretical viewpoints that exist in the consumer behaviour literature. This will be in line with the previous research that has highlighted the significance of cultural values, norms, and social forces in influencing consumer selection (De Mooij, 2019; Torelli et al., 2024). The reliability of the measurement scale is high which also reinforces the validity of these findings and it implies that the constructs applied capture the cultural dimensions that apply to consumer behaviour.

Among the major conclusions of the study is the existence of unique cultural dimensions which are identified by use of factor analysis. The categories of variables under factors like social influence, traditional values, personal preferences, and brand perception give an organised information on the

functioning of culture in consumer decision-making. The results are consistent with the previous studies emphasising the complexity of culture and its capacity to affect individual and group behaviour (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2019; Steenkamp, 2019). This difference in the average scores of these dimensions also suggests that some cultural aspects are more critical than others, depending on the situation, and the discussion about the fact that consumer behaviour is determined by a set of various cultural forces, rather than one determinant (Johri et al., 2024).

The comparative discussion of the emerging and developed market shows that there is a great difference regarding consumer behaviour which can be valuable in terms of the interaction between an economic and a cultural context. Customers in the developing markets are more dependent on social norms, family effect and traditional values in their purchasing decisions. This is the same result as the literature that shows that collectivist orientations are more common in developing economies in which group affiliation and social approval have a strong impact on behaviour (Safeer et al., 2022; Azimi and Saleh, 2025). Conversely, buyers in the developed nations are characterised by the higher level of individualism and their preference towards personal values and brand-related features are more related to consumer autonomy and worldwide trends in consumption (Alegbeleye, 2025).

Such variations demonstrate the need to make marketing strategies specific to the market contexts. To the extent that the business occupies an emerging market, it might be more advantageous to focus on community values, social approval, and a culturally sensitive message, and to the extent that the business operates in a developed market, it might be more beneficial to concentrate on individuality, novelty, and brand distinction. The above point of view is confirmed by the research on the global and local brand positioning, which indicates that the evaluations of consumers differ greatly depending on cultural and market conditions (Osmanoglu et al., 2024; Besharat et al., 2024).

The outcomes of the hypothesis testing also add to the knowledge of the cultural effects on consumer behaviour. The validation of the high influence of the cultural determinants is also consistent with the previous studies stating the prominent position of culture in determining the consumption patterns (Kumar and Pansari, 2016). The identified discrepancies between emerging markets and developed ones also contribute to the belief that the consumer behaviour depends not only on the cultural but also on the economical factors, which also justifies the necessity of

analysing the situation contextually (Johri et al., 2024).

Moreover, the fact that the power of cultural factors is partially supported in the emerging markets also implies that the role of culture is significant in any given scenario, but its degree may depend on the economic development level. This observation corresponds to the literature regarding ethical and value-driven consumption according to which, social norms and shared values are more likely to be dominant in less developed markets (Hassan et al., 2016).

Theoretically, the research is an expansion of the available literature since it offers empirical data on the relative position of culture in various market conditions. It contributes towards taking into consideration cultural frameworks in the study of the consumer behaviour and the dynamism of culture in the globalised economy. Also, the results support the applicability of marketing concepts and models in the interpretation of consumer behaviour in various situations (Khan, 2014).

The implications of the results on a practical level are beneficial to marketers and policymakers. Companies need to understand cultural differences and develop strategies that are responsive to certain values and preferences of the target audiences. Knowledge in the comparative significance of cultural dimensions can enable companies to create a better marketing campaign and enhance consumer interaction. To the policymakers, the results highlight the fact that it is crucial to take into account the cultural aspects when developing consumer-related policies and market regulations.

On the whole, the discussion demonstrates the vitality of cultural determinants as determining the consumer behaviour and the necessity of the specific and contextual approach. The fact that the findings of the study were consistent with the existing literature reinforces the research contribution and gives a strong basis to the next research in this field.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the role of cultural determinants in shaping consumer behavior and to compare these influences across emerging and developed markets. The findings clearly indicate that culture plays a significant and influential role in guiding consumer decision-making processes, affecting how individuals perceive products, evaluate alternatives, and make purchasing choices. The analysis revealed that cultural factors such as social influence, traditional values, personal preferences, and brand perception are key drivers of consumer behavior. Furthermore, the study highlights notable

differences between emerging and developed markets. Consumers in emerging markets tend to rely more on collective values, social norms, and community influences, whereas consumers in developed markets exhibit more individualistic behavior, emphasizing personal preferences and brand-related attributes. These differences underscore the importance of understanding cultural contexts when analyzing consumer behavior in a global setting. The study also demonstrates that while cultural influences are significant in both market types, their impact is more pronounced in emerging markets, where traditions and social structures play a stronger

role. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that businesses and marketers must adopt culturally sensitive strategies tailored to the specific characteristics of their target markets. A one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be effective in diverse global environments. Overall, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comparative understanding of cultural influences on consumer behavior and emphasizes the need for integrating cultural insights into marketing strategies to enhance effectiveness and competitiveness in international markets.

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