

Chapter 2: Social and Cultural Influences on Consumer Behaviour

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Consumer behaviour is profoundly influenced by a myriad of factors, among which social and cultural forces wield considerable significance. The study of consumer behaviour explores the larger socioeconomic and cultural circumstances in which consuming occurs, going much beyond straightforward transactions. For companies and marketers looking to build lasting relationships with their target audience and promote brand loyalty, it is critical to comprehend these impacts (Solomon, 2019). Businesses may better target their products, services, and marketing messages to resonate with particular consumer segments by understanding the varying requirements and preferences of various demographic groups (Kotler et al., 2020).

In the dynamic realm of business, social and cultural factors play a pivotal role in shaping customer behaviour and generating potential. From demographic shifts to emerging trends, understanding these dynamics is a key to unlocking market opportunities. Additionally, by being aware of social and cultural factors, organizations might spot new trends and seize market possibilities (Hofstede, 1984).

In essence, cultural and social awareness creates a foundation for knowledge diversity within a business. This diversity fuels creativity, leads to better decision-making, and ultimately paves the way for sustainable business growth. Understanding the cultural quirks and social variables that influence consumer behaviour helps firms create more impactful and genuine communication

strategies (Belk, 2019). On the other hand, failing to recognize or comprehend these factors may result in errors and difficulties, which might harm a brand's reputation (Mooij, 2019). Businesses may manage risks, negotiate problems more efficiently, and cultivate positive connections with consumers and communities by proactively recognizing and appreciating social and cultural aspects (Usunier & Lee, 2013). In summary, firms hoping to prosper in the varied and linked marketplace of today must comprehend the social and cultural factors influencing consumer behaviour. This will ensure long-term success and sustainability.

This chapter's goal is to examine the complex interactions between social and cultural factors that affect consumer behaviour in various socioeconomic situations. The chapter attempts to give a thorough knowledge of how these influences impact consumer attitudes, perceptions, and actions by exploring the complex dynamics of family relationships, social class, and cultural elements. The chapter aims to clarify the fundamental processes by which social and cultural factors affect consumer choices and consumption patterns by a thorough analysis of pertinent theories, empirical research, and real-world examples. The chapter also seeks to illustrate the consequences of these effects for companies and marketers, providing guidance on how to successfully negotiate cultural quirks and create focused marketing campaigns that appeal to a range of consumer groups. The aim is to advance understanding of the interactions between social and cultural factors that shape consumer behaviour. This understanding will benefit academic research and real-world applications in the fields of marketing and consumer studies. This chapter will offer a thorough analysis of a number of crucial ideas that are essential to comprehending how social and cultural factors affect consumer behaviour. Reference groups, family dynamics, socioeconomic status, and cultural factors



are some of these ideas that are crucial in influencing the attitudes, perceptions, and actions of consumers. Reference groups—which can include a wide range of social entities, from close-knit circles to aspirational figures—have a big impact on how consumers make decisions (Solomon, 2019). Similar to this, consumer preferences and consumption patterns are influenced by family dynamics, including roles, communication styles, and decision-making processes within families (Kotler et al., 2020). Furthermore, social class influences people's brand preferences and consumption patterns, and it is a key factor in determining their socioeconomic level (Hofstede, 1984). Last but not least, cultural factors such as values, conventions, and symbols influence people's actions and perceptions, affecting the products they choose and the way they perceive certain brands (Belk, 2019). The goal of this chapter is to provide readers a thorough knowledge of the complex interactions between social and cultural influences and how they affect consumer behaviour by exploring these important ideas.

Reference groups, fundamental in consumer behaviour, are social groups individuals use as benchmarks for evaluating attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, significantly shaping consumption patterns, product choices, and brand preferences (Solomon, 2019). Reference groups come in several varieties and have different effects on consumer behaviour. They include normative, comparative, associative, and dissociative forms (Kotler et al., 2020). Normative reference groups, which include family, close friends, and coworkers, have a significant impact because people look to them for acceptance and validation. According to Belk (2019), individuals want to resemble the aspirational images of comparable reference groups, such as celebrities and successful professionals, in order to improve their social standing and self-image. Associative reference groups, which include online communities and clubs, encourage people to conform to group standards by providing a sense of identity, belonging, and

social validation. On the other hand, dissociative reference groups which include competitors' brands and marginalized communities represent ideals that people reject, which causes them to disassociate in order to preserve their identity and sense of self (Hofstede, 1984). In order to create tailored strategies that support brand loyalty and engagement among a variety of consumer categories, marketers must understand the dynamics of reference groups and their influence on consumer behaviour.

Businesses looking to target their audience and influence purchase decisions must comprehend how reference groups affect consumer behaviour. Reference groups are important in influencing people's attitudes, perceptions, and brand choices. They may be any kind of social entity, from close-knit circles to aspirational characters. The next table explores the subtleties of several reference group kinds, clarifying their unique traits and influencing methods. Our objective is to furnish enterprises with practical insights to customize their marketing tactics and foster robust relationships with heterogeneous consumer segments through the classification of reference groups and subsequent analysis of their influence on consumer behaviour.

Table 2-1 Types of Reference Groups and Their Influence on Consumer Behaviour

Type of Reference Group	Description	Influence on Consumer Behaviour	Mechanisms of Influence	Examples
Primary Reference Group	Close-knit groups such as family and friends	Strong influence on purchase decisions and brand choices	Social identity, conformity, emotional support	Immediate family, best friends
Secondary Reference Group	Larger social groups like professional associations or online communities	Moderate influence on consumer attitudes and behaviours	Informational influence, aspirational identity	Alumni networks, online forums

Aspirational Reference Group	Groups representing desired social status or lifestyle	Influence consumer aspirations and purchase motivations	Idealized self-concept, social comparison	Celebrities, luxury brands
Dissociative Reference Group	Groups representing undesirable traits or values	Influence avoidance behaviour and brand rejection	Social identity, stigma avoidance	Hate groups, controversial figures

Reference groups have a significant and complex impact on the attitudes and actions of consumers, influencing people's perceptions, preferences, and patterns of purchasing. Reference groups impact several facets of consumers' decision-making processes by acting as societal standards by which people assess their own attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Reference groups have a big impact on consumer attitudes and actions in a number of ways through processes including social comparison and identification. First and foremost, reference groups are essential in shaping consumer choices and brand impressions. When making judgments about what to buy, people frequently turn to their reference groups for advice and approval. They seek out brands and goods that match the tastes and selections of their reference groups (Solomon, 2019). While negative attitudes may discourage people from interacting with certain brands or goods, positive attitudes and favorable views toward such brands or items within a reference group can boost adoption and loyalty among group members. Second, people's adoption of particular lifestyle choices and consumption patterns is influenced by their reference groups. In an attempt to improve their social standing and identity, people may model their actions after those in their reference groups (Belk, 2019). To feel accepted as a part of society, people may, for instance, take up similar hobbies, dress sense, or consumption patterns as their reference groups. On top of that, through peer pressure and

social norms, reference groups can influence people's purchasing patterns and decisions about what to buy. The need for social acceptability and approval is frequently the driving force behind adhering to group norms and expectations (Kotler et al., 2020). To avoid social rejection or condemnation, people may feel forced to follow the consuming habits and beliefs of their reference groups, even if doing so means compromising their own tastes or morals. Additionally, reference groups function as informational and social influencers, offering advice and suggestions to people about the selection of products and consumption patterns (Hofstede, 1984). Individuals' opinions about certain brands or items may be greatly influenced by recommendations from reliable reference group members, which increases the possibility of adoption and purchase. In summary, reference groups have a significant and diverse impact on the attitudes and actions of consumers, affecting many facets of people's choices and actions related to consuming. Marketers may create focused tactics to interact with and sway consumers inside their social networks, building brand loyalty and influencing consumer behaviour, by comprehending the mechanics of reference group influence.

Apple, for instance, has been successful in creating a strong reference group around their brand, which is made up of committed supporters referred to as "Apple enthusiasts" or "Apple loyalists." Similar attitudes, convictions, and actions are frequently displayed by these reference groups, such as a strong feeling of brand loyalty and a predilection for Apple products. This reference group has developed as a result of Apple's marketing tactics, inventiveness, and product design, which have helped to create a community of people who share the company's ideals. Influencers with significant followings on social media platforms act as reference points for their viewers; in a similar vein, influencer marketing makes use of these reference groups. Influencers who have the same



beliefs and way of life as their target market are partnered with by brands, who use their power to market goods and influence the attitudes and actions of consumers. Influencers in the fitness and beauty industries, for instance, could support athleisure companies and skincare goods, respectively, therefore influencing consumer preferences and purchasing decisions within their respective reference groups. Another example of using reference groups to sway consumer attitudes and behaviours is Nike's well-known "Just Do It" campaign. With the use of motivational tales of athletes conquering obstacles and succeeding, the campaign establishes Nike as a name linked to tenacity, willpower, and sporting brilliance. Nike encourages consumers to embrace comparable attitudes and habits by associating themselves with reference groups of athletes and fitness lovers, which increases consumer loyalty and buy intent. Aspirational reference groups, which are made up of people who want to achieve a better social position and a luxurious lifestyle, are another target market for luxury fashion manufacturers. Through their marketing efforts, celebrity endorsements, and invitation-only events, luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci appeal to consumers' wants for status and distinction by creating aspirational imagery. Celebrity or influencer endorsements frequently serve as the primary motivation for consumers to make a purchase. Consumer made the purchase decision Luxury brands create a sense of belonging and drive demand for their products by identifying with aspirational reference groups and influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours. These illustrations show how reference groups affect consumer attitudes and actions in a variety of settings and sectors, emphasizing how crucial it is for marketing tactics to comprehend and take advantage of social dynamics.

Family is the fundamental socialization factor that shapes people's views, values, and actions from a young age (Bandura, 1977). Families, the earliest and most



personal social group, offer the foundation for socialization by transferring cultural norms, values, and customs that have an ongoing impact on people's lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Through observation, interaction, and reinforcement from parents, siblings, and extended family members, children within the family unit acquire social roles, interpersonal skills, and behavioural expectations (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). Individuals' socialization experiences and ensuing attitudes and actions are greatly influenced by family dynamics, which include communication patterns, parenting techniques, and relationship dynamics (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). For instance, children who experience authoritative parenting—which is defined by warmth, support, and unambiguous expectations—are more likely to attain scholastic success and strong self-esteem (Baumrind, 1991). On the other hand, disorders like poor self-esteem, anxiety, or behavioural challenges can result from dysfunctional family dynamics, which include conflict, abuse, or neglect, and can have a negative impact on an individual's social and emotional development (Straus & Field, 2003). Families also function as the main conduits for the transmission of cultural values, customs, and rituals from one generation to the next (Hofstede, 2001). Individuals' feeling of identification and belonging within their cultural environment is influenced by family-centered cultural activities such language usage, religious observances, and holiday celebrations (Triandis, 1995). All things considered, family, as the main socializing agent, is extremely important in forming people's social, emotional, and cognitive development as well as their attitudes, values, and actions all through life.

Family members each have a unique part in the decision-making process that consumers go through, which together shapes the dynamics of choice-making inside the family. Numerous variables, such as family structure, culture, and personal preferences, impact these positions. First, driven by individual



experiences, inclinations, or outside cues such as advertisements, the initiator discerns a need or want for a specific good or service (Hochbaum & Rosenstock, 1960). Next, using their experience or familiarity with certain brands or items, family influencers offer insightful information, counsel, or views regarding prospective purchases (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). The decision-maker, who might be a single person or several family members, is then in charge of deciding what to buy after considering the feedback they have received (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995). After deciding, the buyer purchases the selected product or service, looks into the costs, compares them, and completes the purchase (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991). The user, who uses or consumes the purchased item in the end, assesses their experience and level of satisfaction, which might have an impact on their future purchasing decisions (Olshavsky & Granbois, 1979). The gatekeeper also manages marketing messages, filters alternatives, and keeps an eye on family budgets in addition to controlling information flow and access to possible purchases (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Finally, the provider finances the purchase by working, earning a living, assigning resources, and making financial decisions that influence the family's purchasing decisions (Ward, 1974). As family members cooperate and bargain to make knowledgeable and fulfilling purchasing decisions that are in line with the requirements and preferences of the entire family, these responsibilities interact and overlap. The family unit serves as a fundamental social institution that significantly influences consumer behaviour and decision-making processes. Within families, various roles and dynamics come into play, shaping individuals' preferences, purchase decisions, and consumption patterns. The following table examines the roles of different family members and their respective impacts on consumer decision-making. By exploring the dynamics of family roles, we seek to illuminate the complexities of household consumption and provide businesses with valuable



insights to tailor their marketing efforts and offerings to effectively target family-oriented consumer segments.

Table 2-2: Family Roles and Their Impact on Consumer Decision-Making

Family Member	Role in Decision-Making	Influence Mechanisms	Decision Domains	Examples
Parents	Decision influencers and financial gatekeepers	Informational influence, economic control	Household expenses, major purchases	Primary caregivers, breadwinners
Children	Influencers through pester power and brand preferences	Socialization, emotional appeals	Leisure activities, snack choices	Tweens, teenagers
Spouse/Partner	Collaborative decision-makers or influencers	Negotiation, shared values	Household appliances, vacations	Married couples, domestic partners

The impact of family structure and composition on consumption patterns is significant, as it influences how resources are allocated, decisions are made, and consumption behaviours are shaped within the family unit (Beal & Delpachitra, 2003; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Pahl, 2000). Family structure, including factors such as the number of family members, their ages, genders, and roles, plays a crucial role in determining consumption patterns. For example, in nuclear families with parents and children, consumption decisions may revolve around meeting the needs and preferences of both adults and children, leading to purchases of items such as groceries, clothing, and recreational activities that cater to diverse age groups and interests (Kim & Park, 2018). In contrast, in single-parent households, consumption patterns may be influenced by factors such as financial constraints, time pressures, and the need to balance work and

family responsibilities, resulting in prioritization of essential goods and services over discretionary spending (Schoon & Bynner, 2003). Additionally, the presence of extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, can impact consumption patterns by providing additional support, resources, and influences within the family network (Wong & Hing, 2012). Extended family members may contribute to household expenses, provide childcare or eldercare assistance, or influence purchasing decisions through their own preferences, values, and behaviours. Furthermore, cultural norms, traditions, and values inherent within different family compositions can shape consumption patterns in profound ways (Thøgersen, 2006). For instance, in collectivist cultures where family ties are strong and interdependence is emphasized, consumption decisions may be guided by communal needs and preferences rather than individual desires. Overall, family structure and composition exert a profound influence on consumption patterns, shaping the ways in which resources are allocated, decisions are made, and lifestyles are maintained within the family unit.

Social class encompasses a hierarchical division of society based on socio-economic factors such as income, education, occupation, and wealth (Davis & Moore, 1945; Weber, 1946). It categorizes individuals or groups into distinct strata with varying levels of economic resources, social status, and power (Marx, 1867). The definition of social class may vary depending on cultural, historical, and disciplinary perspectives, but it generally encompasses several components (Bourdieu, 1984). Income, education, occupation, and wealth are fundamental indicators influencing one's social class position (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992). These factors interact to shape individuals' opportunities, lifestyles, and social experiences within society. Additionally, lifestyle and access to resources reflect social class identities and values, influencing patterns of behaviour,



consumption, and cultural practices exhibited by individuals or groups (Veblen, 1899; Lareau, 2003). Social class dynamics play a crucial role in analyzing social inequalities, mobility patterns, and consumption behaviours within different segments of the population (Weber, 1946; Bourdieu, 1984).

The influence of social class on consumer behaviour is profound and multifaceted, shaping individuals' attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions across various product categories and market segments (Bourdieu, 1984; Veblen, 1899). Higher social classes often exhibit preferences for luxury goods, premium brands, and high-end services that signify status, wealth, and exclusivity, while lower social classes may prioritize value-oriented products, basic necessities, and affordable options that meet their budget constraints and practical needs (Holt, 1998; Dubois & Duquesne, 1993). Likewise, social class dictates the types and quantities of goods and services purchased by individuals or households. Individuals from higher social classes tend to engage in conspicuous consumption, where consumption choices are driven by the desire to display social status and achieve social recognition, whereas those from lower social classes may prioritize thriftiness, practicality, and utilitarianism in their consumption decisions (Dion & Borraz, 2006; Holt, 1998). Moreover, social class can impact brand loyalty and preferences among consumers. Individuals from higher social classes may develop strong affinities for prestigious brands and luxury labels, viewing them as symbols of social status and cultural capital, while individuals from lower social classes may exhibit less brand loyalty and may be more price-sensitive, prioritizing affordability and value for money over brand prestige (Bourdieu, 1984; Holt, 1998; Dubois & Paternault, 1995). Furthermore, social class influences shopping behaviour, including where and how individuals shop for goods and services. Higher social classes may frequent upscale boutiques, department stores, and specialty shops that cater to their preferences



for luxury and exclusivity, while lower social classes may shop at discount stores and mass-market retailers offering affordable options and discounts (Veblen, 1899; Holt, 1998; Dubois & Paternault, 1995). Understanding the impact of social class on consumer behaviour is essential for marketers to develop effective marketing strategies, segment target markets, and tailor products and services to meet the diverse needs and preferences of different social class segments.

Social class, a key determinant of individuals' socioeconomic status, profoundly influences consumer behaviour and consumption patterns. From the affluent upper class to the economically disadvantaged underclass, different social strata exhibit distinct spending habits, brand preferences, and consumption behaviours. The following table explores the characteristics of various social classes and analyzes their respective impacts on consumer behaviour. By understanding the nuances of social class dynamics, businesses can develop targeted marketing strategies that resonate with specific socioeconomic segments, thereby maximizing market penetration and driving business growth.

Table 2-3: Social Class and Consumption Patterns

Social Class	Characteristics	Consumption Patterns	Brand Preferences	Examples
Upper Class	High income, prestigious occupations	Exclusive experiences, luxury goods	High-end designer labels, luxury cars	CEOs, celebrities
Middle Class	Moderate income, white-collar professions	Balanced spending on needs and wants	Established brands, mid-range products	Managers, professionals
Working Class	Lower income, blue-collar or service jobs	Value-oriented purchases, essential goods	Store brands, discount retailers	Factory workers, service industry employees

Underclass	Marginalized, low-income individuals	Basic necessities, minimal discretionary spending	Generic products, second-hand items	Homeless individuals, unemployed
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Social class dynamics vary throughout cultures because of the various ways that societal hierarchies are interpreted and constructed in various cultural contexts. Most civilizations have social class systems, although the standards used to divide people into different social classes and the consequences of falling into a certain class might differ greatly. There are obvious divisions between the high, middle, and lower classes in certain societies, which are mostly dependent on variables like money, income, and professional status (Bourdieu, 1984). These civilizations place a strong emphasis on economic success, meritocracy, and individual accomplishment as indicators of social mobility and prestige. For instance, social class differences are frequently correlated with economic characteristics like money and education in Western countries like the United States, with higher social classes benefiting from easier access to opportunities and resources (Weber, 1946). However, in collectivist societies, elements like cultural capital, community ties, and family history may have a greater impact on social class dynamics than just an individual's income and rank (Bourdieu, 1984). In these civilizations, social class membership may come with more social responsibilities and obligations, and prospects for growth and social identities are greatly influenced by the support and solidarity of the community. For instance, social class differences may be impacted by things like education, family history, and business connection in many Asian cultures, such those in Japan and South Korea, where a great focus is put on social harmony and allegiance to collective goals (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Furthermore, attitudes toward inequality within a society and perceptions of social class can be

influenced by cultural norms and values. High individualistic cultures, like those in Western Europe and North America, may tolerate social mobility and variety more readily and stigmatize upward or downward mobility less (Hofstede, 1980). In contrast, social class divisions may be more rigid in cultures with strong collectivist beliefs, such as those seen in many regions of Asia and Africa, where preserving social peace and established social hierarchies are valued more highly (Hofstede, 1980). In general, cross-cultural differences in social class dynamics show how social, cultural, and economic elements interact intricately to shape people's social identities and prospects for growth in various cultural contexts. To effectively address social inequality and promote social mobility across varied civilizations, it is imperative to comprehend these variances.

Cultural values, fundamental to individuals' behaviour and societal norms, guide perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours across various facets of life within specific cultural contexts (Hofstede, 1980). These deeply ingrained beliefs and principles are transmitted through socialization processes such as family, education, and media. Within cultures, various types of cultural values shape behaviours and societal norms. Individualism prioritizes personal goals and autonomy, contrasting with collectivism's emphasis on group harmony and social cohesion (Hofstede, 1980). Power distance reflects a culture's acceptance of hierarchical relationships, while uncertainty avoidance relates to the tolerance for ambiguity and risk (Hofstede, 1980). Masculinity values assertiveness and achievement, while femininity emphasizes nurturing and quality of life (Hofstede, 1980). Long-term orientation underscores future planning and adaptation, whereas short-term orientation emphasizes immediate gratification and tradition (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). These cultural values profoundly influence individuals' attitudes, behaviours, and consumption



patterns, shaping their preferences for products, brands, and marketing messages within diverse cultural landscapes. Understanding cultural values is crucial for businesses to develop effective marketing strategies and foster cross-cultural understanding and communication.

The relationship between cultural values and consumer behaviour is profound and complex, intertwining societal norms, individual perceptions, and consumption patterns within a cultural context (Hofstede, 1980). Cultural values, deeply ingrained beliefs and principles within a society, serve as guiding forces that shape consumers' attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions. Cultural values influence consumers' perceptions of products, brands, and marketing messages, impacting their choices and behaviours in the marketplace. Individuals interpret and evaluate products and services based on cultural norms and values, determining what is deemed desirable, acceptable, or taboo within their cultural framework. Moreover, cultural values shape consumers' decision-making processes and criteria for evaluating products and brands. For example, in cultures where collectivism is highly valued, consumers may prioritize products that enhance social connections or promote community well-being. In contrast, in individualistic cultures, consumers may prioritize products that express their unique identities and aspirations. Additionally, cultural values influence consumers' responses to marketing communication and promotional strategies. Messages that resonate with cultural values are more likely to resonate with consumers, fostering greater engagement and acceptance. Conversely, marketing efforts that clash with cultural values may encounter resistance or rejection from consumers. The relationship between cultural values and consumer behaviour is dynamic, with cultural values shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours, while consumer behaviour, in turn, reinforces and perpetuates cultural values within a society. Understanding this



relationship is essential for marketers to develop culturally sensitive strategies that resonate with target audiences and align with prevailing cultural norms and values.

Cultural values shape individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, exerting a profound influence on consumer preferences and consumption patterns. This is a great example of how cultural values can play out in everyday life. People from different cultures may value different things when it comes to products and services. For instance, a culture that values status might be more likely to purchase luxury brands, while a culture that values frugality might be more interested in finding the best deals.

From individualism to collectivism, masculinity to femininity, cultural values manifest in diverse ways, impacting individuals' product choices, brand perceptions, and purchase decisions. The following table delves into the intricate relationship between cultural values and consumer behaviour, providing insights into how businesses can navigate cultural nuances to effectively engage diverse consumer segments. By aligning marketing strategies with cultural values, businesses can foster meaningful connections with consumers and cultivate brand loyalty across cultural boundaries.

Table 2-4: Cultural Values and Consumer Behaviour

Cultural Value	Description	Impact on Consumer Behaviour	Manifestations in Consumption	Examples
Individualism	Emphasis on personal freedom and autonomy	Preference for self-expression and uniqueness	Customized products, personal branding	Solo travel, artisanal goods
Collectivism	Focus on group harmony and	Preference for shared experiences and	Family-sized products, group activities	Family dinners, team sports



	social cohesion	communal goods		
Masculinity	Emphasis on assertiveness and achievement	Preference for competitive and status-driven purchases	High-performance gadgets, luxury cars	Business suits, power tools
Femininity	Emphasis on nurturance and quality of life	Preference for comfort and emotional satisfaction	Spa treatments, comfort foods	Floral scents, cozy blankets

Real-world examples of cultural values impacting consumption abound across various cultural contexts, illustrating the profound influence of societal norms and values on consumer behaviour. In Japan, a culture that values harmony, respect, and tradition, consumption behaviours are heavily influenced by cultural norms. For instance, the concept of "omotenashi," which emphasizes hospitality and service, shapes consumer experiences in industries such as hospitality, retail, and dining. Japanese consumers prioritize high-quality products and personalized service, leading to a preference for artisanal goods and bespoke experiences over mass-produced alternatives. In contrast, in the United States, a culture that celebrates individualism, innovation, and self-expression, consumption patterns reflect these values. American consumers are known for their preference for convenience, choice, and novelty. For example, the rise of e-commerce and on-demand services caters to American consumers' desire for convenience and efficiency, allowing them to access a wide range of products and services with minimal effort. Similarly, in collectivist cultures such as those found in many parts of Asia and Africa, consumption behaviours are influenced by communal values and social norms. Family and community considerations play a significant role in purchasing decisions, with consumers

prioritizing products and services that benefit the group rather than solely individual preferences. For instance, in many Asian cultures, gift-giving is an important social practice that reflects reciprocity, respect, and social status, influencing consumer spending on special occasions such as weddings, festivals, and holidays. Furthermore, cultural values also impact consumers' attitudes towards sustainability, environmental responsibility, and ethical consumption. In cultures where environmental stewardship and social justice are highly valued, consumers may seek out eco-friendly products, fair-trade goods, and ethically sourced brands. For example, the "slow food" movement in Europe emphasizes the importance of traditional food practices, local sourcing, and sustainable agriculture, reflecting cultural values of authenticity, sustainability, and community. These examples demonstrate how cultural values shape consumer attitudes, preferences, and behaviours, influencing everything from product choices and brand perceptions to shopping habits and consumption rituals. Understanding the impact of cultural values on consumption is essential for businesses seeking to effectively target and engage with diverse consumer segments in today's global marketplace.

Cultural norms, the unwritten rules and standards of behaviour within a particular cultural context, play a crucial role in shaping societal dynamics, values, and identities (Triandis, 1995). Established and reinforced through socialization processes, such as family, education, media, and religious institutions, these norms provide a framework for social order and cohesion by defining expectations for appropriate behaviour and interactions among individuals (Hofstede, 1980). They contribute to the formation of individual and group identities, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity within cultural communities. Through socialization, individuals learn to navigate and adapt to their cultural environment, internalizing cultural norms as fundamental



guidelines for behaviour. Cultural norms regulate various aspects of human behaviour, including communication, dress, manners, and social interactions, defining what is considered acceptable or appropriate within a particular cultural context (Hofstede, 1980). Moreover, these norms reflect and reinforce underlying cultural values and beliefs, shaping individuals' attitudes, perceptions, and ethical judgments (Triandis, 1995). Overall, cultural norms are integral to the functioning of societies, promoting social cohesion, harmony, and mutual understanding across diverse cultural contexts. Understanding and respecting cultural norms are essential for individuals to navigate cultural differences effectively and for societies to foster inclusivity, diversity, and cultural exchange.

Comprehending the complex relationship between cultural influences and consumer behaviour is essential for businesses striving to develop effective marketing strategies and cultivate brand loyalty. This SmartArt diagram illustrates the cyclical nature of cultural influence on consumer behaviour, highlighting the dynamic interplay between cultural values, consumer preferences, marketing strategies, and cultural perceptions. At the core of this cycle are cultural values, which serve as the foundation for individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. These cultural values directly shape consumer preferences and purchasing decisions, influencing the products they choose and the brands they favor. In response to these consumer behaviours, businesses adapt their marketing strategies to align with cultural preferences, effectively targeting their audience and shaping consumer perceptions. As marketing efforts influence cultural perceptions and values over time, the cycle completes, perpetuating a continuous feedback loop. Through this visual representation, we aim to provide insights into the intricate dynamics of cultural influence on



consumer behaviour, empowering businesses to navigate cultural complexities and develop strategies that resonate with diverse consumer segments.

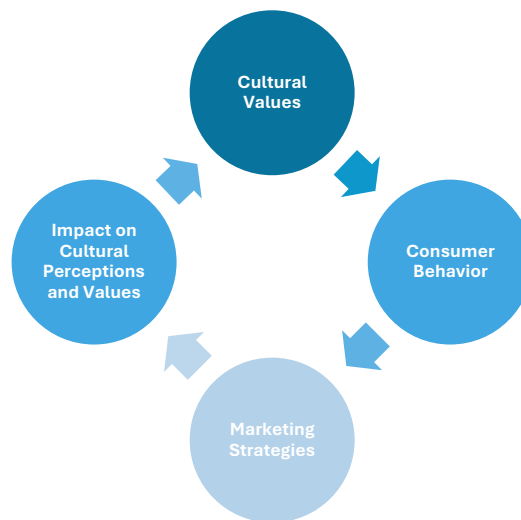


Figure 2-1: Cycle of Cultural Influence on Consumer Behaviour

Cultural norms wield a significant influence on consumer preferences and choices, molding individuals' inclinations, perceptions, and actions in the marketplace. These norms, deeply embedded within societal frameworks, dictate acceptable behaviours, desires, and taboos, thereby guiding consumer decision-making processes and consumption patterns. One way cultural norms shape consumer preferences is by delineating acceptable behaviours and consumption practices (Gelfand et al., 2008). For instance, in cultures that esteem thriftiness and moderation, consumers may lean towards pragmatic and functional products over extravagant or flamboyant alternatives. Conversely, in societies valuing status and conspicuous consumption, consumers might gravitate towards luxury items and branded merchandise as markers of social distinction. Moreover, cultural norms influence how consumers evaluate product attributes, quality, and functionality (Singelis, 1994). Certain cultural



values may accentuate tradition, heritage, and craftsmanship, prompting consumers to favor products steeped in cultural significance. Conversely, cultures emphasizing innovation and progress may prioritize cutting-edge, efficient, and forward-looking products. Additionally, cultural norms impact consumers' reception of marketing messages and promotional tactics (Schwartz, 1994). Marketing campaigns that resonate with cultural values are more likely to resonate with consumers, fostering heightened engagement and acceptance. Conversely, efforts that disregard or oppose cultural norms risk encountering skepticism or resistance, diminishing their effectiveness. Furthermore, cultural norms contribute to the formation of consumers' social identities and group affiliations, shaping their brand choices, product preferences, and consumption rituals (Oyserman et al., 2002). Consumers often seek alignment with cultural ideals and social norms through their consumption behaviours, reinforcing cultural identities and fostering a sense of belonging within their cultural cohorts. Understanding the influence of cultural norms on consumer preferences and choices is paramount for marketers seeking to effectively engage diverse audiences in the global marketplace. By acknowledging and respecting cultural differences, marketers can develop strategies that resonate with the prevailing cultural norms and values of their target demographic, thereby enhancing brand relevance and consumer engagement.

Cultural symbols are tangible or abstract representations that hold significant meaning within a specific cultural context. These symbols encompass a wide range of elements, including icons, gestures, rituals, language, colors, and artifacts, that carry shared meanings and convey cultural values, beliefs, and identity (Katz & Aakhus, 2002). They serve as potent vehicles for communication, facilitating the transmission of cultural knowledge, social norms, and collective identity across generations. Cultural symbols play a crucial



role in shaping individuals' perceptions, behaviours, and interactions within their cultural milieu, serving as touchstones that evoke emotional, social, and cultural resonance (Geertz, 1973). The significance of cultural symbols lies in their ability to foster a sense of belonging, solidarity, and shared identity within cultural communities, while also providing a means of expression, communication, and cultural continuity. Cultural symbols play a pivotal role in shaping consumer identity and brand perception by imbuing products, services, and brands with cultural meaning and significance (Holt, 2004). Consumers often use cultural symbols as markers of personal and social identity, affiliating themselves with particular cultural groups, subcultures, or lifestyles (Belk, 1988). Brands that effectively leverage cultural symbols can tap into consumers' emotional connections and cultural affiliations, fostering brand loyalty, resonance, and authenticity (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Cultural symbols also influence consumers' perceptions of brand image, personality, and values, shaping their attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions (Sirgy, 1982). By aligning with culturally resonant symbols and narratives, brands can differentiate themselves, create meaningful connections with consumers, and cultivate strong brand identities that resonate with target audiences (Escalas, 2004). To leverage cultural symbols effectively in marketing campaigns, brands must first understand the cultural context, values, and meanings associated with these symbols within their target market (Usunier & Lee, 2005). Brands can integrate cultural symbols into their marketing communications, product designs, and brand narratives to evoke emotional resonance and cultural authenticity (McCracken, 1986). This may involve incorporating culturally relevant imagery, motifs, or themes that resonate with consumers' cultural identities and aspirations (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). Brands can also collaborate with cultural influencers, artists, or organizations to co-create content or experiences that authentically reflect cultural values and traditions (Holt, 2016).



Additionally, brands can leverage cultural events, festivals, or rituals as opportunities to connect with consumers and reinforce brand narratives that align with cultural symbols and themes (Kimmel & Kitchen, 2004). By strategically leveraging cultural symbols, brands can create meaningful connections with consumers, foster brand loyalty, and drive engagement in today's diverse and culturally rich marketplace.

Market segmentation including social and cultural insights requires a thorough comprehension of the various demands, tastes, and behaviours of consumer groups within particular cultural contexts. This strategy acknowledges that social identities, cultural origins, and shared experiences all play a complex role in shaping consumers' attitudes and actions. These factors also affect how they perceive brands, goods, and marketing messages (Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). Through the integration of social and cultural insights into market segmentation, marketers may create strategies that are more precisely targeted and resonate with certain consumer groups, hence strengthening engagement and relationships. In order to discover norms, values, symbols, and behaviours relevant to the target market, a thorough cultural study is the first step in this process. This gives marketers important insights into consumer behaviour and preferences within various cultural settings. Then, to represent cultural subtleties and sensitivities and acknowledge the variety that occurs both inside and between markets, segmentation based on cultural criteria such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, and subcultural connections is used (Hofstede, 1980). Furthermore, the segmentation criteria are further refined to capture consumers' values, attitudes, and behaviours shaped by their social environments through the use of social identity segmentation, which takes into account factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, occupation, education, family structure, and lifestyle preferences (Usunier & Lee, 2005).



Marketers may learn more about the psychological profiles and motives influencing consumer behaviour by using psychographic segmentation, which explores consumers' personality traits, values, interests, and attitudes (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). Customization of marketing tactics thus include avoiding stereotypes and cultural appropriation and adjusting product offers, branding, message, and promotional activities to resonate with the cultural values, beliefs, and ambitions of target groups (Belk, 2005). To ensure compatibility with cultural norms and expectations, localization of products and services involves tailoring offers and distribution channels to target groups' cultural preferences and consumption patterns (Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006). Through an understanding of the social dynamics and cultural nuances influencing consumer behaviour, marketers may create more effective and relevant tactics that connect with target consumers in international markets.

Engaging consumers from a variety of origins and identities requires marketing communications to be specifically tailored to appeal to different social and cultural groups. Through identification and comprehension of the distinct values, beliefs, and inclinations of different demographic groups, marketers can craft messages that are compelling, relatable, and pertinent to a wide range of people. The understanding of cultural variety and the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to marketing communication lies at the foundation of customizing marketing messaging. According to Usunier and Lee (2005), marketers need to conduct extensive study in order to get a deeper understanding of the cultural subtleties, communication methods, and values of various social and cultural groups. This entails being aware of the customs, symbols, linguistic preferences, and cultural norms that appeal to particular groups of people. Equipped with this knowledge, marketers may create messaging that accurately portray the cultural identities and goals of their target

markets (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). This might entail using language, images, music, or symbols that are appropriate for the target groups' cultural backgrounds. Peñaloza and Venkatesh (2006) suggest that advertising that showcase a varied cast, multicultural locations, or inclusive narratives can effectively establish a connection with consumers from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, marketers need to make sure that their messaging respect cultural variances and stay away from stereotypes and false information that might insult or alienate particular groups (Belk, 2005). Sensitivity to cultural differences and cultural awareness are essential for creating communications that appeal to a variety of audiences. Marketers may gain consumers from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds' confidence and credibility by exhibiting cultural sensitivity and diversity in their communications. Marketers should examine the social identities and values of their target consumers in addition to cultural factors (Sirgy, 1982). Consumers are more likely to engage emotionally with messages that are in line with their societal ideals, goals, and lifestyles than those that don't. For example, advertisements that highlight family values may strike a chord with parents and other caregivers, while efforts that promote environmental sustainability may appeal to eco-conscious consumers. All things considered, creating marketing messaging that appeal to a wide range of social and cultural groups necessitates a thorough comprehension of the distinctive traits and inclinations of target consumers. Marketers can design inclusive, effective, and successful campaigns that engage a variety of audiences by utilizing cultural insights, honoring cultural diversity, and matching message to consumer values and identities.

Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" campaign is a prime example of successfully integrating social and cultural influences into marketing. In 2011, Coca-Cola launched a campaign in Australia where they replaced their iconic logo with

popular Australian names, nicknames, and terms of endearment on their Coke bottles and cans (Harrison, 2011). This personalized approach aimed to encourage consumers to share Coca-Cola with friends and family, leveraging the cultural value of social connections and personal relationships. The campaign resonated strongly with Australian consumers, leading to increased brand engagement, social media sharing, and sales. Building on this success, Coca-Cola expanded the campaign globally, customizing the labels with names and terms relevant to different cultural markets, further enhancing consumer connection and brand relevance (Coca-Cola, 2014). In Malaysia, Coke Cola took it a step further by integrating social and cultural elements by focusing on youth through music, local slang expressions in daily conversation and sharing photos in social media with hashtag #share a coke. By integrated social and cultural influences to create a unique and engaging experience for young consumers. It demonstrates the power of localization in connecting with a specific market and building brand loyalty.

Nike's "Dream Crazy" campaign, featuring former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, also exemplifies the successful integration of social and cultural influences into marketing. Launched in 2018, the campaign celebrated athletes who dared to dream big and challenge conventions, embodying Nike's brand ethos of empowerment and social justice (Nike, 2018). By featuring Kaepernick, who sparked controversy by kneeling during the national anthem to protest racial injustice, Nike embraced social activism and aligned itself with the cultural values of equality, diversity, and social change. Despite facing backlash from some consumers, the campaign received widespread attention and praise for its bold stance on social issues. Nike's willingness to take a stand on cultural and social issues resonated with its target audience, leading to increased brand loyalty and sales (Edwards, 2018). These case studies demonstrate how brands



can effectively integrate social and cultural influences into marketing campaigns to connect with consumers on a deeper level, drive engagement, and enhance brand relevance and resonance.

In order to stay relevant and competitive in the market, marketers and companies need to understand the complex interaction of social and cultural factors as consumer behaviour continues to alter in reaction to societal and cultural transformations. The importance of comprehending and utilizing social and cultural dynamics in marketing strategies is highlighted by emerging trends like the pervasive influence of digital and social media platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), the rise of ethical and sustainable consumption (Auger et al., 2003), the demand for personalized experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), and the globalization that leads to cultural fusion (Tomlinson, 1999). In order to respond to shifting cultural trends and consumer preferences in a genuine manner, marketers must have cultural competency and sensitivity (Usunier & Lee, 2005). Consumers appreciate authentic brand values and creative involvement that speaks to their cultural identities and experiences, therefore authenticity, transparency, and innovation are crucial (Belk, 2005). In order to successfully navigate the complexities of cultural diversity, future research should also concentrate on cross-cultural consumer behaviour (Hofstede, 1980), digital and social media influences (De Vries et al., 2012), ethical consumption (Sheth et al., 2011), and practical cultural adaptation strategies (Lee et al., 2011). Businesses may build closer relationships with a range of consumer groups and achieve success in the global marketplace by adopting these insights and strategies.

In order to effectively traverse the intricacies of today's global economy, marketers and businesses must have a thorough understanding of the enormous impact that social and cultural factors have on consumer behaviour. We have looked at the complex interactions between social and cultural elements and



how they affect consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchase decisions throughout this chapter. First, we looked at the many social and cultural factors such as family dynamics, socioeconomic status, cultural values, and norms that influence consumer behaviour. We investigated the ways in which these elements impact consumer attitudes, beliefs, and actions, highlighting the significance of cultural sensitivity and comprehension in marketing tactics. Understanding consumer behaviour requires taking social and cultural factors into account for a number of reasons. First of all, the social and cultural circumstances of consumers' lives have a profound influence on their identities, attitudes, and behaviours, which in turn shapes their choices and ways of making decisions. Through recognition and acceptance of these factors, marketers may create more successful and relevant tactics that appeal to a variety of consumer categories. Furthermore, cultural competency and sensitivity are necessary in today's globalized and multicultural society to establish genuine connections with consumers and promote brand loyalty and trust. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of studying how social and cultural factors affect consumer behaviour. Businesses hoping to thrive in the global marketplace must increasingly grasp these impacts as consumer demographics and cultural factors continue to change and vary. In an increasingly diverse world, marketers may create strategies that connect with consumers across cultural divides and propel success by investigating new trends, adjusting to cultural shifts, and doing ongoing study and inquiry. In conclusion, research on the social and cultural factors that shape consumer behaviour is not just a useful academic pursuit but also a practical necessity for companies hoping to prosper in the competitive and varied market of today.



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