

Consumer decision-making, culture and the role of consumer involvement



Every individual is a consumer who purchases goods and services on a regular basis. Indeed, from a very young age, individuals are involved in consumer behaviour as an integral part of their everyday lives. From searching for, purchasing and consuming, through to evaluating and disposing of goods and services, consumer behaviour affects nearly every aspect of an individual's life.

The Antecedents-Involvement-Consequences (A-I-C) model is seen as a theoretical tool for understanding several aspects of consumer behaviour (Flynn and Goldsmith, 1993). This model provides the basis for a conceptual framework that includes consumer involvement as its central component between two sets of related variables, namely antecedents and consequences. The importance of consumer involvement in explaining consumer decision-making (as the consequence) has been highlighted for many years while researchers also agree that any conceptualisation of consumer involvement must also take cognisance of its antecedents. One of which is culture.

Many empirical studies have focussed on the role of national-level culture rather than on the role of individual-level culture or the so-called personal cultural orientations. While, with regard to consumer-decision making, findings from previous studies have shown that consumer decision-making is often influenced through consumer involvement, more so than the antecedents of consumer involvement.

Since the empirical evidence on the relationship between individual level culture and consumer decision-making, as well as the role of consumer involvement in the

relationship between culture and decision-making is scarce, a descriptive research study was conducted by Jeffery Ian Isaacson, a [Doctoral](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#). His study attempted to establish the nature of the relationships between two personal cultural orientations (masculinity and uncertainty avoidance - identified as antecedents for the purpose of this study), and two consumer decision-making styles (brand consciousness and brand loyalty - identified as consequences for this study), through consumer involvement.

The target population for the study encompassed consumers who resided in South Africa, and who were responsible for purchasing their own clothing. An online panel was surveyed using online self-administered questionnaires, and a final sample of 814 respondents was realised. In addition to the analysis of descriptive data, the results of the survey research were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS SEM).

Overall, the results indicated that consumer involvement does fulfil a role between personal cultural orientations and consumer decision-making styles. This role is especially evident in the individual-level relationship between a masculine cultural orientation and brand-loyal decision-making as well as brand-conscious decision-making. In order to be more effective, marketers are encouraged to tailor their activities to take into account, not only the overall level of consumer involvement associated with a particular brand or product category, but the different types of consumer involvement as well.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [DCom degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2017 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Jeffrey Ian Isaacson under the supervision of [Prof Y Jordaan](#) and co-supervision of [Prof G van Heerden](#). Dr Isaacson graduated on 7 September 2017.