

ABSTRACT

This study investigates core cultural values, consumption attitudes, consumption intentions, ethnicity, and ritual practices in a sample of adult residents of Bangkok, Thailand. Objectives of this study are to identify and measure Thai core cultural values, examine core cultural value differences between Ethnic Thai and Chinese Thai ethnic groups, investigate linkages between core cultural values and consumption attitudes, investigate linkages between core cultural values and consumption intentions, and understand the role of ethnicity on ritual practices associated with New Year celebrations for Ethnic Thai and Chinese Thai ethnic groups.

Based on a review of social science literature, a conceptual framework is developed that indicates relationships among the following constructs: 14 Thai core cultural values, ethnicity, consumption attitudes, consumption intentions, and ritual practices. The framework reflects a specific approach to understanding Thai core cultural values, one that is designed to measure core cultural values that are uniquely Thai. The framework contrasts with the frequently adopted universal value approach developed by Hofstede (1984) and Schwartz (1992).

Based on the conceptual framework, 13 core cultural value measurement scales are developed and used in a field survey research design to understand consumption attitudes and consumption intentions. Results from confirmatory factor analyses on data from 401 respondents show that most core cultural value scales possess acceptable measurement properties in terms of internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity.

The scales are used as dependent variables in ANOVA to investigate four relationships stated as research propositions. Results indicate few core cultural value differences between Ethnic Thai, Chinese Thai, and Mixed Ethnic Thai ethnic groups, challenging the notion that the Chinese Thai ethnic group is culturally distinct from the Ethnic Thai group. Results show many core cultural values to be associated with consumption attitudes but only three values associated with consumption intentions. Results show strong relationships between ethnicity and ritual practice activities performed by ethnic group members during New Year celebrations in Thailand.

Discussions of study results indicate contributions to social science knowledge in the following areas: alternative value measurement framework, reliable and valid measurements of Thai core cultural values, and investigation of relationships between core cultural values and consumption-related constructs. Discussions also indicate contributions to business decision makers whose successes and failures partly depend on their abilities to understand Thai people. Contributions are particularly relevant in devising, implementing, and controlling marketing strategies and marketing communication activities.