CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 reviews literature from various disciplines to establish a theoretical foundation describing Thai culture. The first section reviews various conceptualizations of culture, cultural values, and cultural rituals from marketing and consumer behavior perspectives. The section then proceeds with reviews of two important sources of Thai core cultural values—Buddhism and Confucianism. The section concludes with discussions of 13 Thai core cultural values categorized as Thai National values, Ethnic Thai values, and Chinese Thai values. The second section of Chapter 2 describes origins of eight dependent consumption attitude measures used in this study. The third section reviews literature on consumption intentions as the basis for 12 consumption intention scenarios adopted for this dissertation in light of Thai core cultural values. The fourth and final section summarizes main ideas and concepts contained in Chapter 2.

2.2 Conceptualizations of Culture

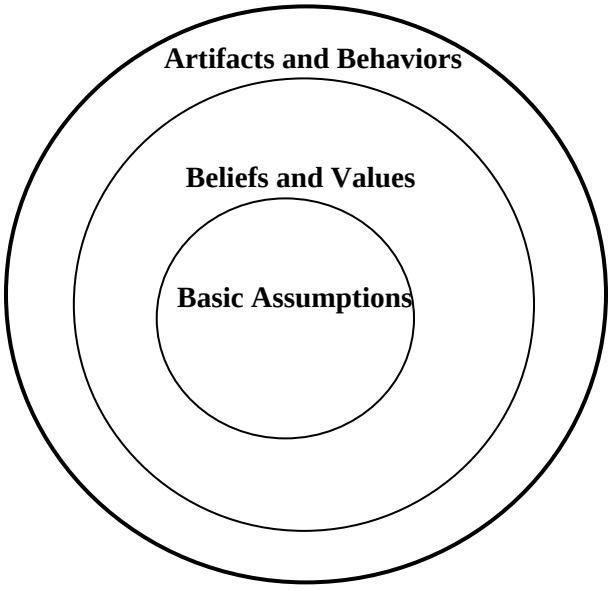
The concept of culture stretches far back in time. In the early 18th century in Germany, the word "kultur" began to emerge and to be used in the abstract sense to refer to civilization. However, the concept in a French dictionary in the 19th century was described as "cultivation, farming activity" (Hofstede 1984; Usunier 1996). In an early modern attempt to clarify and conceptualize "culture," Kroeber and Kluckholn (1952) devoted an entire article to the definitions of culture. The authors noted over 160 different definitions and as an end to the article proposed yet another! In anthropology where studies on culture are abundant, consensus on cultural terminology lags far behind other bodies of knowledge generated in the discipline (Deshpande and Webster 1989) and varies with four school of thought—structuralists, interpretevists, cognitivists, and post-structuralists (Singh 2004).

A widely accepted definition of culture in business contexts is that of Hofstede (1984). Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of mind that distinguishes members of a group or category." The definition includes systems of values as fundamental building blocks of culture and capable of influencing human behavior. For purposes of this study, Hofstede's definition is seen as the most relevant terminology of all definitions of culture and is adopted for this dissertation.

2.2.1 Culture as a Multidimensional Construct

Culture encompasses numerous phenomena ranging from abstract elements to material elements (Bao et al. 2003; Clark 1990; Engel et al. 1978; Usunier 1996; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983). Abstract elements of culture appear as values, beliefs, languages, educational systems, and social norms while material elements include buildings, paintings, sculptures, and artifacts (Schneider and Barsoux 1997). Figure 2.1 presents a multidimensional model comprising three layers that all cultures share: artifacts and behavior (outer and remote layer), norms and values (middle layer), and basic assumptions (deepest inner layer). Each layer contains traces or elements that can be extracted to help understand a culture.

Figure 2.1 Layers of Cultural Elements



The remote outer shell—artifacts and behaviors—contains pieces of information that serve as a starting point for cultural analysis by observation (Geertz 1973; Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952). For example, the practice of greeting gestures is found in this layer. In Thailand, the w*ai* (bringing two palms together with one's head slightly nodded) is used for formal as well as informal greeting occasions. In Western countries, a handshake is the normal greeting for formal occasions but for informal occasions, the greeting may be a simple waving of the hand or just saying "hello."

Observation through artifacts and behaviors may be simple but interpretation requires trained and informed researchers who understand underlying cultural assumptions. To illustrate, still with the greeting gestures example, while the *wai* is practiced as a sign of greeting, the behavior has shades of meanings based on positioning of the palms and upper body as an indication of respect. For someone higher in status, such as parents and elderly, bringing the palms all the way to the forehead with one's body slightly bent forward is given as a greeting of respect and obedience. For a greeting to someone equal in status, one would position the palms somewhere in the chest area with no need to bend the body. In paying respect to a king while seated on the floor, a greeter is on one's knees and would position the palms to the forehead and bow the head all the way to the floor. Variations in these greeting gestures and postures are quite different from the handshake as practiced by Western cultures, where the behavior is more or less a standardized practice adopted at all levels of society.

Interpreting or extracting meaning from greeting behaviors might suggest or propose that "handshake" cultures are egalitarian societies that have low power distance as compared to "*wai*" cultures having high power distance. This hypothesis based on observed behavior may appear basic, yet it demands a great deal of understanding to extract cultural meanings. Unfortunately, very few studies and theories focus on the artifacts and behavioral layer in Figure 2.1 (Erez and Gati 2004; Schwartz 1992).

In the middle cultural layer are beliefs and values. The former consist of general statements of facts and the latter are desirable goals capable of guiding behavior. To

extract meanings from this cultural layer requires data (either qualitative or quantitative), data analysis, and data interpretation. Methods of meaning extraction at this layer are through the use of personal interviews, focus groups interviews, and surveys followed by content analysis, psychoanalytical analysis, and statistical analysis (Hofstede 1984; Schneider and Barsoux 1997). Contents of this cultural layer are the heart of this dissertation and will be presented in more detail in Section 2.3.

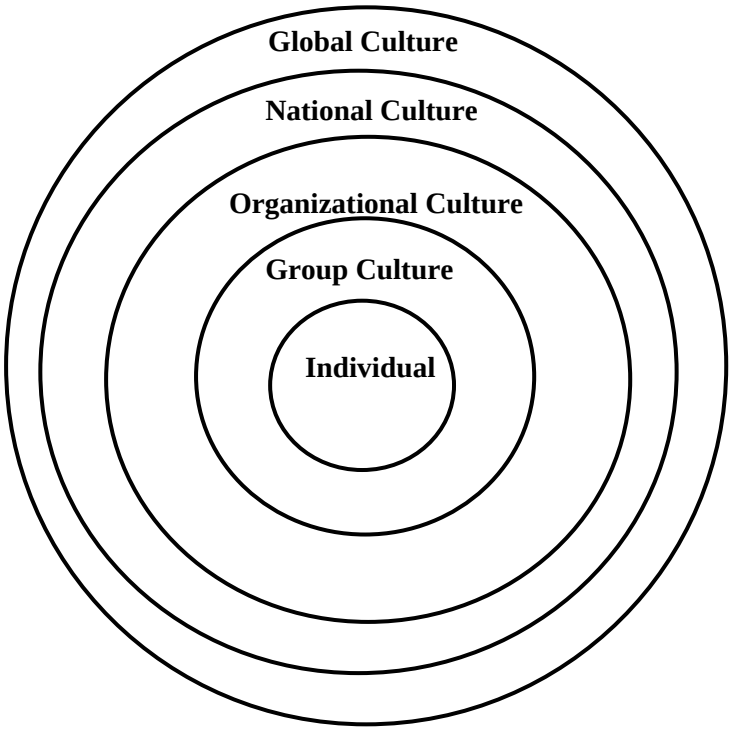
The deepest cultural layer contains basic cultural assumptions whose meanings are most difficult to uncover. This layer is relatively abstract and much of it exists at a subconscious level. Assumptions at this layer refer to basic responses expressed in a rather dichotomous fashion to fundamental human problems (Erez and Gati 2004; Schneider and Barsoux 1997). Basic responses exist along three dimensions: cognitive dimension (people think it works that way), affective dimension (people like it that way), and directive dimension (people will do it that way). Few studies focus on this layer as compared to the large number of studies found in the beliefs and values layer (Erez and Gati 2004).

Cultural elements materialize and are studied at five levels of research operation as depicted in Figure 2.2. The Figure indicates that cultural elements can be extracted to describe individuals, groups, organizations, nations, and even the world. These five levels of operation are not isolated and independent but rather interact and reinforce each other to uphold existing cultures as well as to give rise to new cultures (Schneider and Barsoux 1997).

According to Figure 2.2, the highest and broadest level that culture can be studied is global culture. Studies at this outer level are still in their infancy as compared to other levels of culture. Studies of national cultures usually focus on examining behaviors and

values of people as reflections of deeply embedded basic assumptions prevalent in a country. Studies focus almost exclusively on cultural values, specifically in the areas

Figure 2.2 Levels of Cultural Operation*



***Adapted from Erez and Gati (2004) and Usunier (1996)**

of theory development, value dimensions, beliefs and values, and behaviors, and value structures across cultural groups (Chinese Cultural Connection 1987; Hofstede 1984; Schwartz 1992). Studies of organizational culture typically study business organizations to understand antecedents and consequences of different organizational cultures (e.g. Deshpande and Webster 1989; Hatch and Schultz 1997; O'Reilly III et al. 1991). Studies of group culture can be quite varied, examining formal and informal collections of people as subcultures, religious groups, regions, and even youth gangs (Gary and Kleinman 1985).

In sum, culture differs at layers of elements as well as at levels of research operation. Researchers to be aware of these aspects in the design and execution of any study relating to culture. For purposes of the present study, the group-level cultural operation is used in an etic research approach to understanding Thai cultural values in a consumer behavior context. A description of the etic and emic research approaches follows.

2.2.2 Etic and Emic Research Approaches in Studying Culture

The etic research approach to studying culture is one of many available analysis frameworks. These frameworks include culture centered and personality centered (Clark 1990); ethnological method, use of proxies (regional affiliation), direct values influence, indirect values influence, and multi-method framework (Lenartowicz and Roth 1999); emic (Geertz 1973; Jamal 2003; McCracken 1986); etic (Hofstede 1984); and emic and combined emic-etic (Hirschman 1981; Hui and Triandis 1985). Reviewing these frameworks and the arguments by many scholars, most cultural researchers classify research approaches fundamentally as either as etic (comparative) or emic (descriptive) in nature. The two approaches possess some similarities and some differences as discussed following.

Central to the etic approach is its treatment of cognitive processes as universal and varying in degree of manifestation through behaviors (Triandis 2000). Based on this assumption, the etic method uses a “universal” or “culture-free” approach to investigate values and behaviors. For example, a belief in respect for elders exists in virtually all cultures, but particularly in collectivist cultures where the value is emphasized and manifested across different situations (Hofstede 1984**).** The etic approach often sets out to contrast and compare two or more cultures or subcultures over phenomena of interest. A good example again is the work of Hofstede (Hofstede 1984; Hofstede and Bond 1988) which examined cultural values among citizens in 53 countries along four bi-polar value dimensions (individualism/collectivism; masculinity/femininity; and high uncertainty avoidance/low uncertainty avoidance, high power distance/low power distance) and a fifth dimension, Confucian dynamism. As another example, Schwartz (1992) surveyed cultural values across 51 countries and classified them into two broad dimensions:

openness to change/conservation and self-enhancement/self-transcendence. These two studies are just two examples of etic research approaches that have contributed greatly to the body of knowledge about cultures.

Methodologically, etic researchers attempt to distance themselves from cultural contexts and subjects under study to prevent personal biases from affecting findings. Researchers use documented procedures to measure cultural attributes that allow for equivalent procedures to be carried out at multiple settings. Procedures employ detailed data collection instruments, random sampling, and statistical analyses that are applicable to many cultural settings and permit simultaneous comparisons of groups under study. Research findings from an etic research approach can be generalized easily to the larger population being studied (Lucas 2003; Triandis 2000). Etic studies have become an accepted norm in diverse areas of marketing research as, for example, advertising (Carolyn 2001; Hudson et al. 2002) consumer behavior (Alden et al. 1994; Sproles and Kendall 1986; Wilkes and Valencia 1985); retail environment (O'Guinn et al. 1986); role purchase decisions (Webster 1994); and public policy (McCarty and Shrum 2001).

An emic research approach studies culture from the perspective of cultural members themselves. Central to this approach is the belief that culture is best captured and comprehended as an interconnected whole or system and that no single part or element of culture can be analyzed or studied in isolation. The objective of the emic approach is to gain a complete understanding through “thick” descriptions and “culture-rich” information about wide-ranging cultural phenomena (Geertz 1973). Three terms have been used to refer to the emic approach: culture-centered (Clark 1990); ethnological (Lenartowicz and Roth 1999); and ethnographic (Adler and Adler 1987; Hill 1993).

Methodologically, an emic approach involves wide-ranging observations of behavior of members in a single cultural or subcultural group, sometimes containing as few as eight people. Emic researchers tend to ignore individual differences in the group and to focus instead on what is common among group members (Triandis 2000). Emic methodology usually takes place in the form of observations and interviews and may include direct

participation of researchers in consumption behaviors (Schneider and Barsoux 1997). The method allows a researcher to observe a culture and to immerse in a culture to understand perspectives and issues from "the native's point of view" (Triandis 2000). The method is ideal for developing rich theories and good measures of culture-specific constructs. However, findings based on an emic approach are culture-specific and may not be generalizable and meaningful beyond the specific cultural group under investigation.

Impacts of the emic approach are diverse, unique, and significant in terms of contributions to understanding the effects of culture on various consumer behavior phenomena. The emic approach is well adapted for exploratory research, theory building, and in-depth analysis (Greenfield 1996). To illustrate, several emic studies have focused on: culture and value theories advancement (Kim and Kang 2001); culture and construal of self (Markus and Kitayama 1991); ethnic migration, assimilation; and consumption patterns (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983); transfer of cultural meanings to goods (McCracken 1986); and Jewish ethnicity and consumption (Gentry et al. 1995; Hirschman 1981; Hofstede 1994; Owenby and Horridge 1997). From an academic perspective, emic research approaches have significantly contributed to all areas of knowledge pertaining to culture.

Scholars recognize the relative strengths and weaknesses possessed by etic and emic research approaches and have proposed a combined approach as superior. The combined approach provides a more complete assessment of cultural phenomena and permits generalization of results obtained from research (Brislin 1976; Deshpande and Webster 1989; Lenartowicz and Roth 1999; Malhotra et al. 1996). However, the emic-etic approach (usually performed in this sequence) is much less popular than the two individual approaches due to its greater demands on research design and researcher skills and the potential confusion of results in terms of their interpretation. Despite these issues, the combined emic-etic approach is a highly recommended alternative to existing emic and etic cultural frameworks.

In sum, three research approach frameworks have been used in marketing research to investigate and examine cultural phenomena. Primarily, the emic approach is used for theory generation while the etic approach is used for comparing and investigating cultural aspects across a wide range of cultural and marketing phenomena. A combined emic-etic approach achieves greater explanatory power but is difficult to apply. Selection between these research approaches should rest on research objectives. Consistent with research objectives of the present study, the etic approach is adopted here.

2.3 Cultural Values as Elements of Culture

Cultural values—a central elements of culture—refer to the set of implicitly and explicitly shared ideas, beliefs, and assumptions about what is desirable and undesirable in a society (Hebel 1998; Hofstede 1984; Rodriguez and Olswang 2003; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992, 1999). Thus, cultural values are "guiding principles of a person's behavior" (Chinese Culture Connection 1987) based on the “collective programming” as found in the minds of members of a culturally defined group. In marketing, cultural values terminology has been profoundly impacted by the pioneering work of Rokeach (1973), who defined cultural values as “enduring beliefs that specific modes of conduct or end-states of existence are personally or socially preferable to opposite or converse modes of conduct or end-states.” As broad determinants of individual behaviors and actions, cultural values have been an important topic to marketing academics and practitioners for some 40 years (Engel et al. 1968; Henry 1976).

2.3.1 Cultural Values and Consumer Behavior

Cultural values have been a center of academic and practitioner attention because of their motivational nature (Beatty and Talpade 1994; Lindridge and Dibb 2003). In that sense, cultural values and personal values are quite similar. What sets cultural values apart from personal values is that the former are socially driven phenomena while the latter are individually driven phenomena. Table 2.1 provides evidence of the importance that cultural values have played in various topics of academic marketing research

Table 2.1 Cultural Values Applications in Marketing Research

Phenomena	Applications
Advertising	Cultural values and advertising message types (Briley and Aaker 2006; Carolyn 2001; Gregory and Much 1997; Hudson et al. 2002; Jing and Sharon 2003; Roberts and Hart 1997); cultural values, construal of self on emotional appeal advertising effectiveness (Aaker and Williams 1998).
Acculturation and Consumer Behavior	Acculturation and shopping orientation levels due to gradual adoption of new cultural values (Owenby and Horridge 1997); cultural values and impacts on acculturation, assimilation level and consumption (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983); cultural values and impacts on ethnic strength and consumption attitudes (Deshpande et al. 1986).
Branding	Cultural values and brand creditability (Erdem et al. 2006); cultural values and brand evaluation (Eckhardt and Houston 2002); cultural values and brand management (Roth 1995).
Cognitive Aspects	Ethnicity, attitudes, and construal of self attributed to cultural group values (Hirschman 1981); Chinese cultural values survey on American sample (Ellis et al. 1985); cultural values impulsive buying (Kacen and Lee 2002); differences in cultural values, cognitive, affective, and behavioral involvement in choice strategies (Alden et al. 1989); cultural values and possession (Watson et al. 2002).
Diffusion of Innovations	Cultural values and consumer's innovativeness (Tansuhaj et al. 1991); influence of underlying cultural values of parents and siblings on innovative consumer behavior (Cotte and Wood 2004); national cultural values and adoption of innovations (Daghfous et al. 1999; Everdingen and Waarts 2003).
Environmental Concerns	Cultural values and green purchases (Chan 2001; Chan and Lau 2000).
Information Processing	Cultural values variations in country of origin effects (Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran 2000); cultural values orientation and persuasion (Aaker and Maheswaran 1997); product information and information processing attributed to cultural values differences (Alden et al. 1994).
Marketing Ethics	Cultural values and marketing education and marketing ethics (Abhijit et al. 2006; Yoo and Donthu 2002).
Product Attributes	Cultural values and automobiles purchase (Henry 1976); consumer values and product benefits (Lai 1995); cultural values and apparel segmentation (Fok and Chong 1996).
Reference Group and Purchase	Family influence on consumptions attributed to cultural values differences (Beatty and Talpade 1994; Chan and McNeal 2003; Childers and Rao 1992; Ganesh 1997); cultural values, reference groups and purchase intentions (Lee 2000).
Values Propositions, Measurements and Theory	Chinese cultural values and marketing implications (Yau 1988); List of Values measurements (LOV) as segmentation tool (Kahle and Kennedy 1989); conceptual theories of cultural values and work implications (Schwartz 1999); typology and measurements (Rokeach 1973).

One central observation that can be drawn from Table 2.1 is that many types of consumer behavior can be explained by cultural values that consciously and unconsciously operate in the background of a wide variety of consumption decisions. People learn, internalize, and develop abstract classifications of concepts and objects that have become integrated parts of their personal value systems in a consumer behavior context.

2.3.2 Four Characteristics of Cultural Values

Scholars agree on that cultural values are learned and shared, capable of providing direction and governing behaviors, relatively stable, and prevalently held in a society (Erez and Gati 2004; Hofstede 1984; Kotler 2000; Nicosia and Mayer 1976; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983; Yoo and Donthu 2002). Following sections discuss these qualities of cultural values.

2.3.2.1 Acquisition Through Learning and Sharing

Learning and sharing play a vital role in acquiring cultural values because people jointly draw meaning out of a culturally constituted world (McCracken 1986). The everyday experience that exists in the form of languages, institutions, and customs unconsciously shapes peoples' attitudes, beliefs, and values. Researchers believe that learning of these cultural elements becomes cemented and stable in the first seven years of life. These meanings or "social codes of conduct" subsequently become the "lens" through which an individual views, understands, and reacts to everyday phenomena. (Hofstede 1984; McCracken 1986).

As cultural values depend on the learning process, it can therefore be said that cultural values depend on learning transfer through cultural institutions including families, schools, and various communication media. Cultural values are taught actively and passively by many socialization agents (e.g. family, friends, teachers), all contributing to formation of the set of beliefs, values, and norms appropriate to a particular culture (Schwartz 1999). Thus, cultural learning is a continuous and a lifetime process, either formally as taught by parents, teachers, and religious authorities or informally as observed behaviors of others or from exposure to mass media. Although the nature of cultural learning understandably varies from individual to individual (Childers and Rao 1992; Donthu and Yoo 1998), the fundamental concept remains unchanged about the centrality of learning and sharing in acquiring cultural values.

The learning of cultural values is called enculturation, a process that begins at childhood. Enculturation primarily takes place through an individual's interactions with key institutions, particularly the family, peers, educational, and religious institutions (Chang 2002; Erez and Gati 2004; Faber et al. 1987; Oberg 1981; Usunier 1996). The most important institution in molding and instilling values is the most micro unit—the family (O'Guinn et al. 1986). Research findings show that parents and other family members play a central role in establishing social norms and values for children (Bao et al. 2003; Childers and Rao 1992; Rodriguez and Olswang 2003).

Several studies have examined effects of parental influence on children's behavior (e.g. Childers and Rao (1992), and Heckler, Childers, and Arunachalam (1989)). An early study that focused on family effects on children's behavior was Moschis (1985) who labeled the process as "intergenerational influence." Based on American and Thai samples, Childers and Rao (1992) found that intergenerational influence has direct impacts on consumption decisions as children will be more likely to purchase the same brands as their parents for both private and public consumptions, though this finding was most evident for the Thai sample. Other was shown the importance of intergenerational influences on price consciousness, price sensitivity, information search behavior, and store and brand loyalties.

Apart from the learning of cultural values through key institutions, researchers recognize several other ways that culture gets transferred, such as languages and norms being communicated through everyday experience as well as interactions with people and community (Lamal 1991). For example, Gregory and Munch (1997) found that advertisements that are consistent with familial and norms roles are viewed more favorably and produce higher purchase intentions than advertisements that are inconsistent. Cultural values also are learned through an acculturation or assimilation process that applies to the learning of new cultures, primarily by visitors and immigrants living in the host culture. As the population of interest in the present study consists of native Thai people, acculturation is not a topic of interest here. However, research has shown acculturation influences over a wide range of consumer behavior phenomena,

including the importance of product attributes (Faber et al. 1987), culture-specific consumption behavior (Webster 1994; Xu et al. 2004), and shopping orientations (Owenby and Horridge 1997).

2.3.2.2 Behavior Guidance

A unique characteristic of cultural values compared to other cultural manifestations is their ability to influence and even dictate behavior. As pointed out by Kitayama (2002), each individual's psychological processes and structures are shaped by cultural elements and organized through active effort to coordinate behaviors with relevant cultural norms. The behavioral implications of cultural values make them useful as variables not only in marketing but also in other social sciences as presented earlier in Table 2.1.

According to Kahle (1984), all values fall under social cognition and motivational realms that facilitate humans's adaptation to their environments. Humans acquire values because they satisfy needs (Schwartz 1994) and because they provide a stable and inner-oriented understanding between themselves and their environments. Without values, humans will not be able to function efficiently and effectively because they will not know what is expected them in various circumstances. Through values, humans avoid information overload from details about possible courses of conduct suitable in various circumstances (Kahle and Kennedy 1989).

All values have intensity and direction. If a person "holds" a value, this means that the value has a certain relevance to that person (intensity) and that a person identifies certain outcomes as "good" and others as "bad" (direction). For example, someone may think that having money is highly relevant (intensity) and considers "more" money as good and "less" as bad (direction). Someone else may, however, differ in their beliefs about money as to the value intensity, direction, or both. As pointed out by Hofstede (1984), a person may vary in terms of intensity and direction along the two continua of cultural values, but because the person is exposed to similar sources of values and conditions like others in a particular culture, the person will not differ drastically from others in the culture in terms of ascribed core cultural values.

A crucial component of each value is a motivational goal that influences behavior. Actions undertaken to pursue a value have particular consequences that motivate individuals to behave. For example, a person who emphasizes the value of warm relationships with others would try to discuss matters of difference rather than to take things personally against the other person, which leads to a confrontation avoidance situation.

In contrast to attitudes (see Section 2.11), values occupy a more central location within a person's cognitive system and serve as determinants of attitudes and behavior (Kamakura and Novak 1992; Schwartz 1992). This means that cultural values are more abstract than attitudes. In addition, while values are broad beliefs that transcend any particular object and product class, attitudes refer to beliefs regarding a specific object or situation. In sum, it is not surprising to learn that cultural values and attitudes are sometimes investigated jointly as they are so closely related.

2.3.2.3 Stability of Cultural Values

Another characteristic possessed by cultural values are their stability and persistence (Brangule-Vlagsma et al. 2002; Rokeach 1973). Tse, Lee, el al. (1988) investigated the persistent nature of values, finding that several Chinese values (e.g. face saving, long-term exchange relationships and restricted competition, and respect for leaders) as held among their Chinese subjects, are not only persistent but profoundly influential in decision making.

A similar study done by McNeal and Yeh (1990) examined the same issue of stability and arrived at similar conclusions. McNeal and Yeh (1990) studied American and Taiwanese children samples using income, savings, expenditures, and frequency of store visits for purchasing as dependent variables. Their findings showed that cultural differences exist between the two groups and that differences could be attributed to persistent, centuries-old cultural differences between the two groups. Finally Brangule-Vlagsma, Pieters and Wedel (2002) provide further empirical support of the stability of

values and cultural value systems, in contrast to personal values that are subject to change as a result of an individual's progression through various life stages.

Cultural values shared by members of a group can change, though the change process usually takes place in a gradual manner (Hofstede 1984; Kwok et al. 2005). Some specific conditions that produce change in cultural values include environment change (natural disasters), infrastructure change (economic shifts or shocks), advancements in technology (technological breakthroughs), and political changes (sudden political changes or civil wars) (Brangule-Vlagsma et al. 2002; Slagter and Kerbo 2000).

2.3.2.4 Prevalent Nature of Values in a Culture

Cultural values are prevalent beliefs because they reflect basic biological and secondary needs of members in a society. Values fulfill three universal requirements: needs of individuals as biological organisms, fundamentals of coordinated social interaction, and requirements for the smooth functioning and survival of groups (Ros et al. 1999). When culture and cultural values are no longer gratifying to the existence of a group or a society, they become extinct.

2.4 Cultural Rituals as Manifestations of Culture

Cultural rituals are public and private ceremonies conducted according to long existing procedures, prescribed by members of a group sharing similar values, norms, institutions, and artifacts. Cultural rituals are scripted events. They are socially standardized sequences of actions that are periodically repeated to provide meaning and symbols to members of a group. Consider Chinese New Year celebration as an example. In Thailand, the Chinese New Year celebration ritual begins with food offerings to ancestors, gatherings of family members, greetings of elderly, exchanging best wishes among family members, and a meal together (reunion) reuniting family members at the end of the day. A more universal cultural ritual practice is the birthday celebration. The birthday celebration usually is scripted similarly for people around the world, wishing "Happy Birthday," giving birthday cards, and taking out the birthday person for a meal.

Cultural rituals contain many ritualized activities that serve to symbolize the link (medium) between the culture (abstract and material cultural elements) and its people. Cultural rituals are limited in scope and duration, making them relevant to scholars, especially marketing scholars who use them as variables to apply cross-culturally over a wide range of marketing phenomena.

Cultural rituals often are contextually bound and accompanied by product consumptions of one form or another during the special occasion (Mowen and Minor 1997; Otnes and Scott 1996; Sherry 1983; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). For example, birthday and Thanksgiving celebrations entail a series of product consumptions from which the celebration and consumptions are inseparable.

Recent studies on cultural ritual manifestations have advanced scholars' understanding in many ways. Hummon (1988), McCracken (1986), Sherry (1983), Otnes and Scott (1996) and Wallendorf and Arnould (1991) have shown how cultural rituals unconsciously permeate people's ways of lives and affect consumption activities. For example, Wallendorf and Arnould (1991) found that American consumers use ritual consumption on Thanksgiving Day as a way to construct culture by enthusiastically recalling past meanings, negotiating future meanings, and displaying present meanings of family, regionalism, material abundance, gender, and age to construct an "ideal" picture of social life.

Cultural values differ from cultural rituals in that values are unbounded by context and occasions and reside at the cognitive level, ready to take place upon exposure to relevant stimuli. Cultural rituals tend to be more "static" than cultural values and often serve symbolic or religious purposes for which they reinforce centrally held values. Two similarities between the two cultural manifestations are the method of acquisition and reinforcement of self-identity. Both cultural values and ritual are obtained only through the socialization process, either by learning or by sharing of cultural beliefs or scripted activities. Apart from having shared the same source of acquisition, the two also perform

similar functions to create as well as to reinforce social values as an identity that people in the country share and unite.

2.4.1 Chinese and Thai New Year Celebration Rituals

The Chinese New Year celebration is a ritual practice for Chinese Thai people, celebrated ever since their forefathers' immigration to the Kingdom of Thailand. Chinese New Year, as a matter of fact, is widely celebrated by Chinese people around the world. Chinese New Year ritual practices usually begin on the first day of the Chinese calendar. Various ritual activities are carried out to observe and mark this important day. The celebration often continues to the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th,and 15th days following. Because preparation for Chinese New Year rituals can be very tedious, involving a great of deal of work and many people, many younger Chinese Thais have selected only the important ritual activities to mark the occasion. Activities include family members getting together for a reunion dinner on New Year's Eve as an occasion for family members and relatives to meet and renew family bonds. Then, on the first day of Chinese New Year, family members will assemble in the morning and start giving out money put in red envelopes to unmarried or junior members of family and relatives.

Just as Chinese New Year is particularly important to Chinese Thai individuals, the Thai New Year celebration—Songkran Day—is equally important to Ethnic Thais. Songkran day marks the beginning of a new Thai calendar with rituals occurring from April 13th to 15th of every calendar year. Ethnic Thai individuals usually would take this opportunity to return home to pay respect to parents. During this period, Ethnic Thai individuals will be busy carrying out various activities to observe and mark this New Year occasion. A number of activities involve religious aspects so as to provide the coming New Year with prosperity. These are, for example, visiting monks at temples, engaging in temple community services, cleaning Buddha images, and carrying sand to a temple. Several other non-religious activities carried at this time include visiting parents, elderly, and neighbors.

2.5 Ethnicity

Ethnicity studies in marketing research are a recent trend (Ogden et al. 2004). Prior to Hirschman's (1981) article, studies on ethnicity were scarce and incomplete, thus failing to capture true potential of ethnicity in marketing. Hirschman summarized three shortcomings in previous studies as: post hoc in design and descriptive in nature, failure to include diversity of other ethnic representations, and biased selection and classification of ethnicity by authors. Hirschman provides a clear distinction between ethnicity and ethnic identity. Ethnicity is an objective description and refers to a group with a common national or religious background. Ethnic identity is a subjective self-designation that reflects a person's commitment and strength of association to a particular ethnic group. Hirschman's found that respondents reporting higher Jewish ethnic identity showed greater compliance to Jewish norms and values.

2.5.1 Ethnic Groups in Thailand

According to the most recent population survey conducted in 2003, approximately 63.1 million people live in Thailand. The country's population comprises several ethnic groups, the largest of these is the Ethnic Thai group (about 75 percent), followed distantly behind by the Chinese Thai ethnic group (14 percent), Muslims (6 percent), and others (5 percent), such as Laotian, Khmer, Mon, Indian, and European groups (Office of National Statistic 2005; Slagter and Kerbo 2000; Westwood 1997). Religious affiliations are Buddhism (94.6 percent), Muslim (4.6 percent), Christianity (0.7 percent), and other (0.1 percent).

Many Chinese Thai individuals are third or fourth generation children of early Chinese immigrants who arrived in Thailand during the late 19th and early 20th centuries from the Southern China in search of fortunes, better health care, freedom, and better living conditions (Skinner 1962; Wongtes 2000). The rather smooth assimilation of Chinese immigrants into the Thai culture has been attributed to similarities in backgrounds of agrarian cultures, religious practices, and beliefs in Confucianism philosophy (Redding 1993; Skinner 1962; Tobias 1977; Wang et al. 2005).

2.6 Summary of Cultural Literature Review

Culture is more than a mundane history consisting of artifacts, values, myths, and institutions. Rather culture should be seen as containing motivational drivers that move people to think and behave in a distinctive manner. Only when viewing it this way are cultural values an effective basis that marketing scholars and practitioners can incorporate into marketing studies or marketing strategies. The influence of ethnicity is increasingly acknowledged by marketing scholars, many of whom distinguish subjective ethnicity from objective ethnicity. Ethnicity is an especially relevant concept to consumption behavior in the carrying out ritual practices within one or more ethnic groups.

Now that theoretical concept of culture, study approaches, and cultural elements have been discussed, it is appropriate to proceed to a discussion of Thai core cultural values.

2.7 Buddhism and Confucianism Bases of Thai Culture

Thai culture and Thai values are based in the Buddhist religion and Confucian philosophy. The two share many features aimed at promoting inner peace, harmony, sensitivity to others, and personal wisdom. Buddhism and Confucianism are the two oldest social institutions in Thailand and have coexisted peacefully in creating a unique set of core cultural values.

2.7.1 Buddhism and Its Role in Thai Culture

Scholars have long agreed that many Thai behaviors reflect Buddhist values and virtues (Coughl 1960; Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1996; Limanonda 1995; Mulder 1981; Redding 1993; Selmer 1996; Wongtes 2000). It is thus imperative to understand core doctrines of Buddhism, existing in Thailand since King Ramkamhaeng in the Sukothai era (1253-1350 A.D.).

The Buddhist religion was founded by an Indian prince, Siddhartha Guatama, who refused to live a comfortable life behind palace walls and lived instead as a commoner in an attempt to discover the "absolute truth" of the human universe. Lord Buddha saw impermanence in all things with humans facing constant suffering in their lives. At birth, life begins with pain and suffering (whether mother, child, or father) in both physical and emotional forms. At the end of life, comes death or complete emptiness. Lord Buddha personally showed the way to end constant suffering by addressing desires (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), and delusion or ignorance (*moha*) as dominant causes of sufferings. By practicing *dharma* and constant meditation, Lord Buddha achieved liberation from suffering and the cycle of birth-death-rebirth (*samsara*), achieving nirvana as the ultimate goal of all Buddhists.

At the heart of Buddhism lie three concepts—*Dharma*, *Karma*, and *Samsara*. *Dharma* is best explained through the "Four Noble Truths" as the reality of all existence, summarized as: impermanent nature of all things; life and suffering are inseparable and caused by desire; suffering ceases only by removing desire; and removing desire is possible through knowledge gained in following the "Eight-Fold Path." The Eight-Fold Path breaks the link between suffering and desire through moral discipline and detachment, consisting of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (Mole 1973). *Dharma* stresses cultivating awareness of the consequences of one's actions, compassion, wisdom, exercise of rationality over aversion, and the promoting of self-reliance.

Karma refers to an individual's intentional actions and their consequences as accumulated in the present life and in future reincarnations (Slagter and Kerbo 2000). According to the concept of *karma*, actions in past lives determine an individual's place in the present life; good or bad actions taken in the present life will determine an individual's status in the next incarnation (Pfanner and Ingersoll 1962; Slagter and Kerbo 2000). The concept has important implications to the Ethnic Thai way of life, particularly among those living in rural areas. An example of a belief based on *karma* is that despite one's best attempts on a task or project, the final outcome depends not so

much on the quality of one's efforts but more on one's accumulated *karma* in this life and in previous lives.

The *Samsara* cycle subjects humans to an endless cycle of birth-death-rebirth as long as they have yet to reach nirvana. Rebirth in the next life can take place in various forms from low life forms to humans, all depending upon accumulation of an individual's earned merits. Humans can put an end to the *samsara* cycle by practicing *dharma*. With enough accumulated merits and good deeds, one would never again be born and would conquer the *Samsara* cycle.

In sum, the Buddhism religion acts as a moral foundation for all Thais, promoting courtesy, inner peace, spiritual well-being, benevolence, compassion, self-reliance, and tolerance. These virtues have become incorporated into Thai core cultural values, such as confrontation avoidance, kreng jai, mai pen rai, and autonomous (Runglertkrengkrai and Engkaninan 1987; Slagter and Kerbo 2000), discussed later in this chapter. In the next section, Confucianism is reviewed to conclude discussion of the two most important contributing sources of core cultural values in Thailand.

2.7.2 Confucianism and Its Role in Thai Culture

All Thais are influenced by Confucianism philosophy but the impact is strongest for the Chinese Thai group. In fact, many Oriental cultures including China, Korea, and Japan share a high level of Confucianism heritage (Carolyn 2001; Chung and Pysarchik 2000; Hofstede 1984; McGill 1995; Westwood 1997; Xiao 1999).

Kong Fu Ze or better known as Confucius (551-499 B.C.) lived during the Chou dynasty, an era best known for moral laxity (Monle and Ruhe 1992). Confucius devoted his life to teaching fellow humans about the importance of moral education, filial piety, benevolence, work ethics, social harmony, and one's relative position to others (Redding 1993). Confucius believed that people possess two conflicting motivational forces—innate desires and moral spirit—that fight to overpower each other. Desires are pleasure oriented, impulsive, and self-centered while moral spirit is responsible, reasoned, and

other-centered. When pursuit of desires is unrestricted, then lack of concern for others, exploitation, and selfishness take reign over the individual. The result is personal isolation, social apathy, and animalism, making people no different from animals. Thus, everyone should strive to become an ideal person (noble and refined) by leading a virtuous life, as did Confucius himself. The ideal person is morally responsible and does his or her duty unselfishly with genuineness and truthfulness, for the benefit of society, and beginning with immediate family members.

Confucius's idea of a better society can be summarized as: human heartedness (e.g. moral thought and conduct, benevolence, noble conduct); filial piety (e.g. loyalty to parents and family members); consciousness of one's position to others (e.g. superior, inferior, equal rank); virtue derived from one's tasks and approach to life (e.g., conspicuous consumption is taboo, hard work is appraised); and importance of ritual in life (e.g. wedding ritual, New Year ritual, death ritual) (Chinese Culture Connection 1987; Hofstede and Bond 1988; Huang and Charter 1996; Lin and Chi 2007; Taylor 1998; Taylor and Gary 1995). The five ideas support value system structures found in Asian cultures, especially in Oriental cultures (Yau 1988).

With both Ethnic Thai and Chinese Thai individuals being collectivist in orientation, they share many common values and life approaches, similar to other collectivist cultures (Anderson 1970; Coughl 1960; Hofstede 1991; Schneider and Barsoux 1997; Triandis 1995; Usunier 1996). Hofstede (1991) describes collectivist cultures as emphasizing the roles of people as members of groups, as well as the rules and principles concerning social shaming and social sanctions. Collectivist cultures possess qualities or values as prescribed by Confucian principles, including confrontation avoidance, face saving, high power distance, loyalty, family oriented, thrift, filial piety, and respect for authority (Carolyn 2001; Ho 1987; Hofstede and Bond 1988; Nakata and Sivakumar 1996; Schwartz 1999; Triandis 1995; Usunier 1996).

2.8 Thai National Core Cultural Values

This section and the two that follow describe 13 cultural values that characterize Thai culture. The values are central, fundamental, and predominant in Thai culture and are termed core cultural values. The 13 values were rigorously selected (described in Chapter 4) from a list of 27 values compiled from an extensive review of literature including historical accounts, newspapers, and academic studies. Core cultural values describe beliefs common among all Thais, albeit to varying degrees based partially on ethnicity. The first five core cultural values to be discussed are common to all Thai Nationals including Ethnic Thais, Chinese Thais, and Mixed Ethnic Thais. The values are confrontation avoidance, face saving, kreng jai, mai pen rai, and collectivism. The next four (Section 2.9) are based primarily on Buddhist teachings, termed Ethnic Thai core cultural values, and include autonomous, non-competitiveness, present oriented, and sanuk. The last four (Section 2.10) are Confucian oriented, termed Chinese Thai core cultural values, and include family oriented, future oriented, risk aversion, and thrift.

2.8.1 Confrontation Avoidance Value

The confrontation avoidance value is "*a belief that a person should avoid getting into conflicts with others.*" Overt expressions of conflict either through speech or behavior are considered undesirable, negative, inappropriate, and immature acts in Thai society to the extent that these behaviors can seldom be tolerated and often lead to social sanction (Gao et al. 1996; Triandis 1995; Westwood 1997). The confrontation avoidance value has been noted in Thai and foreign literatures as a strong preference to work out differences rather to resort to clashes, arguments, and discord (Coughl 1960; Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1996; Jacobs 1981; Kirkbride and Tang 1992; Knutson et al. 2003; Redding 1993; Rungfapaisarn 2001; Swierczek and Onishi 2003). The value is based on various cultural forces but most importantly Buddhism and Confucianism (Mole 1973; Redding 1993).

Consistent with Lord Buddha's teaching, exaggerations in emotion (aversion) or in behavior of all forms are to be avoided because they erode spiritual harmony and

integrity and drive people to inhuman acts. Confrontation breaks the second and seventh rules of the Eight-Fold path: right intention and the right mindfulness, respectively. The right intention rule can be described as commitment to ethical and mental self-improvement, which divides into three types of right intentions. Of these three types, one subrule that may be affected is the intention of harmlessness to others, urging one not to think or act cruelly, violently, or aggressively but try instead to develop compassion for others. The right mindfulness rule can be described as urging individuals to be aware of self and state of mind: a person who practices *dharma* should always be mindful of one's emotion and not get carried away by aversion.

The Confucianism philosophy with its rules of relationships also emphasizes the value of social harmony, urging individuals to adapt to the collectivity, to control their emotions, to avoid conflict, and to maintain inner harmony (Carolyn 2001; Hofstede 1984; Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1996; Jan 1996; Kirkbride and Tang 1992; McGill 1995; Redding 1993; Westwood 1997). Explicitly stated within the Confucian rules of relationship are five levels of role obligations and expectations that map out how individuals should treat each other in a well-defined social hierarchy (Tan and Chee 2005). Each person has a clear role, obligation, and expectation with which they should come to respect one another. Based on this networked society, confrontation avoidance is always preferred over conflict.

The confrontation avoidance value promotes social harmony in Thai society and is pervasive across all interaction situations. The value functions as an emotional counter-mechanism that prevents misunderstandings and instabilities from occurring in a hierarchically ordered society.

The confrontation avoidance phenomena has been an unexplored topic in the marketing discipline but has long been the subject of interest in management and psychology (Blake et al. 1986; Kirkbride et al. 1991; Kwok 1988; Morris et al. 1998). For purposes of current research, a measurement scale consistent with defined conceptualization and research context is found in the work of Morris et al. (1998). Morris et al. argued that

collectivist cultures tend to avoid explicit discussions of any conflict. However, people in Western cultures tend to compete assertively with other people to convince and dictate a preferred resolution of the conflict. The two keywords “avoid” and “compete” represent the differences in cognitive styles with which Asian and Western cultures differ when dealing with interpersonal friction. For purposes of current research, only the avoidance dimension will be discerned as the study deals only with collectivist cultures of Ethnic Thais and Chinese Thais. Five items have been adapted from Morris et al. (1998) with one additional item designed by the author for measuring the confrontation avoidance value.

2.8.2 Face Saving Value

The face saving value is defined as “*a belief that a person should exhibit behaviors and actions known to others that will accrue esteem, regard, and good opinion.*” The concept of face has long been regarded as an important cognitive construct not only in Thailand but in most Asian cultures (Hu 1944; Kirkbride and Tang 1992; Maisrikrod 1999; Nakata and Sivakumar 1996; Redding 1993; Skinner 1962).

Face is a multidimensional construct encompassing a person’s ego and reputation achieved through success and ostentation (Hu 1944). Gao, Ting-Toomey and Gudykunst. (1996) and Hu (1994) consider face in two dimensions: *lian* (face) and *mianzi* (image). *Lian* face refers to something that represents the confidence of society in the integrity of the ego’s moral character whereas *mainzi* image refers to the reputation achieved in life through success and display of wealth. Similar to Chinese Thais, Ethnic Thais also pay great attention to personal intangible assets associated with face and find ways to protect and enhance one’s public and private reputation. Redmond (1999) and Redding (1993) note that both Ethnic Thais and Chinese Thais are given “face” at birth and that their social stability is more important than their social development, so much so that negative changes to face are deemed undesirable and even threatening to the donors of face (i.e., parents and family). O’Hair, Wang and Chao (1990) find that protecting one’s face is so important that Chinese respondents in their study were reluctant to reveal any negative emotions. Tse et al. (1988) find that Chinese managers were apt to continue funding for

product development even after serious questions surfaced about project viability. Researchers have termed the obsession of protecting face among Chinese individuals as "dysphoria" (depression, sadness, irritability), a fear that threatens to bring shame to one's self and family (Kleinman and Good 1985).

Holmes and Tangtongtavey (1996), Coughl (1960), Komin (1991), and Philips (1974) note the prevalence and importance of face in Thai culture and that face can be both gained or saved. As an example, individuals might observe expensive items owned by a neighbor (e.g. car, motorcycle, van, truck, home), feel that face has been compromised, and buy similar or more expensive things so that they too can enjoy the face associated with possession of status objects. In Thai culture, letting others know that "I can afford just like you" is particularly important, especially when one is in a social "spot-light." Similarly, Thai people rarely appreciate critical remarks made in public because they believe that such acts seem an attack on another person's credibility and a loss of face.

Based on the literature review, no face saving value measurement is currently available and the author must develop a new measure in accordance with discussion in this section.

2.8.3 Kreng Jai Value

The kreng jai value is defined as "*a belief that a person should be self-effacing, respectful, humble, and considerate of others to avoiding troubling or upsetting others.*" The value of kreng jai is an elusive concept for non-Thais to understand in terms of what the value really means and when it actually applies (Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1996; Komin 1991; Redmond 1999; Rungfapaisarn 2001). This is thought to be due to the complexity of timing appropriateness, assessment of involved level of indebtedness, and ambiguity of the term itself (Redmond 1999). The kreng jai value can be traced to the Buddhist concept of "self-help" and the Confucian concept of social harmony.

A Buddhist tenet affecting the kreng jai value is a teaching that urges people to help themselves as much as possible and to look to others for support only after trying their own very best (Department of Public Relations 1983; Maisrikrod 1999; Mulder 1992).

Seeking help from others violates the "self-help" tenet and jeopardizes or disturbs the otherwise peaceful relationship of the party being asked for favor. The result can be misunderstanding, reluctance, and discomfort (Maisrikrod 1999; Phillips 1974).

Confucius taught that the state of *he* (harmony) can be achieved only if people are other-oriented and maintain appropriate role relationships (Gao et al. 1996). Based on Hofstede (1984)'s study, Thailand is characterized as a country high in power distance with a value of 64 (relatively high value), meaning that Thai people acknowledge that their society is hierarchically ordered. Hierarchy in Thailand goes a step further with the indigenous concept of the patron-client relationship or subordinate-superior relationship (Cooper and Cooper 1990; Holmes and Tangtongtavy 1996; Neher 1990). This relationship expresses the idea that an inferior person should be considerate or kreng jai toward someone higher in social hierarchy (e.g. relationship between junior and senior, son and father) and also extends to relationships between people of equal status and occasionally to relationships between senior and junior.

In short, identities of Thai Nationals are embedded hierarchically where everyone is somehow interrelated and the seeking of help from others should always be mindful of one's social relationships (Goodwin and Tang 1996; Joy 2001; Mulder 1992; Redmond 1999; Wen 2003). The kreng jai value functions almost like a social blueprint that people observe in all social interactions.

Based on the literature review, no kreng jai value measurement scale could be found and the author must develop a new measure in accordance with discussion in this section.

2.8.4 Mai Pen Rai Value

The mai pen rai value is defined as "*a belief a person should discount a difficult situation by a rationalization that the situation doesn't really matter or that nothing really matters*" (Jacobs 1981; Mulder 1992; Phillips 1974). The value finds extensive applications across diverse circumstances in Thai culture, when events do not turn out as anticipated. In the face of such happenings, Thai people usually shrug it off and accept a

pat on the back as an expression of mai pen rai. Two influential sources of the mai pen rai value come from Buddhism in the form of the karmic rule of law and the concept of detachment.

Thais regularly accept what comes as it may, believing that undesirable events could have been brought on by the unavoidable cosmic law of *karma* (Kirsch 1981; Klausner 1997; Komin 1991; Limanonda 1995; Mulder 1992; Slagter and Kerbo 2000; Wongtes 2000). Thus, unpleasant surprises, failures, and misfortunes are less the fault of the individual involved but due more to earlier misdeeds committed in a previous life or the present life (Slagter and Kerbo 2000; Wongtes 2000). Thus, the mai pen rai value is used as an "exit" strategy in the individual's coping with unanticipated turns of events that occur in daily life (Limanonda 1995; Phillips 1974).

Another origin of the mai pen rai value comes from a Buddhist teaching stressing personal detachment. According to Lord Buddha, all forms of life ultimately fade away and follow the *samsara* cycle. With the detachment tenet in mind, everything (e.g., sorrow, fame, objects, wealth, relationships) is temporarily "given" and nothing is really "ours," because death is a condition of complete emptiness. The only way to put an end to suffering is not to cling too much to the state of existence. According to the First Noble Truth, life merely adds up to sorrow and suffering (*dukha*), union with unpleasant things is suffering, separation from pleasant things is suffering, and not obtaining what one wishes is suffering. Through detachment, one minimizes and tames the ego or self and its associations that are the roots of all endless sufferings. Through moderation in thoughts and emotions detachment is achieved and this idea is expressed as the mai pen rai value.

Based on the literature review, no mai pen rai value measurement scale could be found and the author must develop a new measure in accordance with discussion in this section.

2.8.5 Collectivism Value

The collectivism value refers to "a *belief that a person should be well-integrated into one a more cohesive in-groups throughout their lives."* Two of the most widely cited cross-cultural value investigation studies are by Hofstede (1984) and Hofstede and Bond (1988). The study examined cultural values of over 117,000 people working at IBM offices across 53 nations. From his analysis of intercorrelations among scores aggregated to the national level, Hofstede derived four bi-polar cultural value dimensions: (individualism/collectivism; masculinity/feminity; high uncertainty avoidance/low uncertainty avoidance, and high power distance/low power distance). The last dimension has been adopted to extend Hofstede's work by specifically investigating the collectivism value based upon the Ethnic Thai, Chinese Thai, and Mixed Ethnic Thai respondents in this study.

Collectivism can be broadly characterized as the tendency to emphasize goals of the group over personal goals, to stress conformity and in-group harmony, and to define the self in relation to the group (Hofstede 1984). The incorporation of collectivism in this study replicates and extends work of Hofstede beyond IBM employee respondents. Because Hofstede's original measure was designed to capture work values, it was adapted by Yoo and Donthu's (2002) to better capture the general value of collectivism. The adapted measure of collectivism is far more compact than the original and was adopted for this study.

2.9 Ethnic Thai Core Cultural Values

This section reviews literature on four core cultural values thought to be prevalent among Ethnic Thais. The values can be traced back to religious beliefs based on Buddhist teachings and principles since the early days of Buddhism's reception in Thailand (Coughl 1960; Limanonda 1995; Redding 1993; Skinner 1962). The four values are autonomous, non-competitiveness, present oriented, and sanuk.

2.9.1 Autonomous Value

The autonomous value is defined as "*a belief that a person should take an action based on personal will and individual freedom and should consider reciprocal obligations and expectations to be flexible rather than regimented*." The autonomous value is a prominent core cultural value prevalent in countless situations in the Thai way of life (Slagter and Kerbo 2000). As an example at work, factory managers regularly see or learn that employees are leaving without a word and that workers often come and go as they wish. Excuses often are unacceptable, such as they feel it is time to drop by a home in the countryside or they simply feel like changing jobs. Lacking of a strong sense of time orientation is another example reflecting the autonomous value, where an appointment may be delayed without notification for an hour or longer (Cooper and Cooper 1990). Yet another example is the failure of professional and citizen drivers to observe traffic rules and road safety precautions despite catastrophic losses of lives that result.

The autonomous value can be best reflected by an old Thai folk-saying that "*one who can do as one likes is a genuine Thai*" (Mole 1973; Rabibhadana 1996; Slagter and Kerbo 2000). The value stems from various Buddhism Theravada emphases toward individual' initiatives either in *dharma* practices or in encouragements of individual merit-makings. Also, the "loosely structured" context of Thai social fabric as well as a broad tolerance of behaviors have made the Ethnic Thai approach to life autonomous (Limanonda 1995; Maisrikrod 1999; Phillips 1974; Redmond 1999; Thomlinson 1971). The autonomous value can be loosely translated as "freedom," but this translation really does not capture the concept. Comparing autonomous and freedom, the former is not so much a freedom *for* something as in the Western cultures, rather it is a freedom *from* something that seems to describe the term among Thais (Redmond 1999).

Embree (1950) was among early scholars discovering the uniqueness of Ethnic Thai attitudes toward social flexibilities. Based on his Bang Chan village project, Embree described the value among Ethnic Thai villagers as follows: "while obligations are recognized, they are not allowed to burden one unduly." Consistent with this observation

is Komin's (1991)'s conclusion that it is always the "person" or the "situation" over "logical principles" that matters in the Ethnic Thai universe. Holmes and Tangtongtavey (1996) and Swierczek and Onishi (2003) found that Ethnic Thai subordinates prefer great flexibility and feel uncomfortable if management applies company rules too strictly. Schwartz (1994) surveyed teachers from 38 nations, finding that the Thai teacher sample scored 3.62 on autonomy, just below the United States sample at 3.65. To sum, literature indicates that Ethnic Thais are rather autonomous individuals and that the value is best comprehended in terms of freedom from rules, obligations, and authorities.

In terms of value measurement, the autonomous value has been largely an unexplored research concept in marketing. However, the value has received quite a bit of attention in the psychology discipline as early as 1908 (McDougall 1908). Among researchers who have carried out studies related to the autonomous value are Kurtines (1978); Lifton (1983) and Hirschfeld, et al. (1977). For this dissertation, the author has adapted two items of Hirschfeld et al.'s (1977) measure of autonomy. Based on the literature review in this section along with Kurtines (1978), Lifton (1983), and Hirschfeld et al. (1977), the author developed five additional items designed to measure the autonomous value ascribed by Ethnic Thai individuals.

2.9.2 Non-Competitiveness Value

The non-competitiveness value refers to "*a belief that a person should avoid discerning the progress of others relative to one's own progress and should favor actions and behaviors that avoid personal rivalry*." Thailand has an undemanding climate, abundant natural resources, a high level of stability, and governments whose administrative style is somewhat compromising (Sheehan 1996). Thus, lifestyles of many Thais are uncomplicated, based on a view that tomorrow will be the same as today and the day after. Lifestyles of Thai commoners in particular are simple and easy, watched over by a benign yet caring Royal Government.

The absence of worries and pressures diminished the idea of competing among many Thais. An example that reflects this non-competitiveness attitude is the widespread

aspiration of working as civil servants despite low pay. The career choice is attractive because of job stability, limited pressures regarding productivity, and entitlements to various benefits such as free healthcare and steady income upon retirement (Skinner 1962). Another contributing factor to the non-competitiveness value is the country's agrarian cultural background. In Northeast Thailand, where the majority of Ethnic Thais live (about 21 million people), daily life revolves around seasonal harvests where heavy work occurs only during planting and harvesting seasons, with limited or no activities scheduled in between (Wongtes 2000). Most off-field activities take place in the form of routine activities, such as caring for homes and temples, raising young ones, doing charity, and practicing *dharma* at temples. In sum, Ethnic Thais find themselves to be rather relaxed individuals with a non-competitive, passive lifestyle (Mulder 1981).

Only one non-competitiveness value measurement scale, Ryckman et al. (1990) could be located. However, the scale is designed for measuring a hypercompetitiveness value from a Western cultural perspective and reverse coding the items would not be not meaningful for the collectivist culture Thai context. Therefore, only one measurement item was adapted from Ryckman et al.'s (1990) study for implementation here. With reference to literature reviewed in this section, the author developed seven additional items for measuring the non-competitiveness value.

2.9.3 Present Oriented Value

The present oriented value is defined as *"a belief that a person should show continual regard for conditions and events of today and show little concern about conditions and events from yesterday or for tomorrow."* The tendency of Thais to seek present or immediate gratification has been noted by several scholars (Skinner 1962; Slagter and Kerbo 2000; Weerayudh 1793). Ethnic Thais learn to enjoy life and to live life in the present and face little pressure to do otherwise. Sources contributing to development of the present oriented value are somewhat similar to those for the non-competitiveness value, the agrarian culture and the lack of social pressure. Other sources come from Buddhism bases.

Traditionally, Thailand's economy has been dominated by the agricultural sector with a large proportion of export revenue coming from agricultural products, mainly rice. This domination has shifted and for the past few decades the country has seen contributions to Gross Domestic Product from non-agricultural sectors surpass those from agriculture. In particular, contributions from the production of automobiles, IT products, and textiles have seen a sharp rise. Still, statistics from the Central Bank of Thailand show that the agriculture sector currently employs about 40 percent of the Thai labor force. Many scholars note that social class plays an important role in an individual's time orientation—that individuals with a lower class, agricultural background tend to be present oriented while individuals of the middle and upper classes tend to be future oriented (Schmidt et al. 1978; Wongtes 2000).

The present oriented value also has been influenced by the Buddhist concept of *karma* discussed earlier. *Karma* refers to the belief that one's accumulated and merits and misdeeds can either improve and deteriorate one's present status (Keyes 1977; Phillips 1974) The belief in *karma* is particularly prevalent among Ethnic Thais who live outside major cities. Belief for *karma* is best captured in the following statement:

> *In Buddhism…I cannot know what the future holds in store because I do not know what my past sins and good actions have been. Anything could happen to me; sudden changes or alterations of fortune are to be expected, for my present existence is determined by past karma (regarding which I know nothing). I may be a pauper today, tomorrow a prince. Today I am in perfect health, but tomorrow I may suddenly be struck down by a fatal disease* (Keyes 1977).

In marketing literature, doubts of one's ability to influence a desired outcome as a result of external forces (e.g. attributed to faith or *karma*) have been termed "external locus of control." Individuals who perceive themselves to be influenced by an external locus of control have a greater tendency than people who perceive an internal locus of control to be present oriented (McCarty and Shrum 2001; Rotter 1966; Triandis 1995). Based on Keyes (1979)'s observation along with the relevant literature presented in this section, it

can be said that the present oriented value is indeed prevalent in the Ethnic Thai universe of core cultural values.

Only one existing scale measuring the present oriented value could be found (Chetthamrongchai and Davies 2000). Upon inspection of the scale, all five items appear to be relevant to the current research study and the scale is therefore adopted as the study's present oriented value measure.

2.9.4 Sanuk Value

The sanuk value refers to as *"a belief that a person should engage in good fun in an activity or behavior that is not too complicated and enjoy the passing moment."* Sanuk is similar to the concept of "fun" in English, except that sanuk involves a motivational component to engage in something in a light manner that not only is enjoyable but also emotionally beneficial (Benedict 1952; Phillips 1974). Another difference is that in Western cultures fun is generally separated from tasks whereas in the Thai culture, fun and pleasure often derive in the context of task related activities.

The sanuk value manifests itself in everyday experience, important life events, and in important religious and royal functions. For example, at the end of the Royal Plowing Ceremony held each year to give blessing to agriculture, Thai people rush onto the field in great excitement to collect rice grains (mixed with seed stock to ensure good harvest) to bring home for auspiciousness. To many Thais, the thrill of rushing in mass to collect rice grains is considered good fun and emotionally worthwhile. Experiencing boredom or stress either at work or at large, Thai people often would avoid emotional discomfort with a sanuk related activity. The sanuk value also finds use in situations where individuals want to avoid emotional extremes.

Scholars believe that the sanuk value is shaped by Buddhist teaching in the concept of moderation of all things (Cooper and Cooper 1990; Slagter and Kerbo 2000; Wongtes 2000). The teaching stresses the ability to strike a balance between being extreme and being inactive. In fact, Lord Buddha stated that striving too hard to be a good Buddhist is

itself a form of desire (*lobha*) and will result in delusion. Emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, it is best that one be consistent, avoid extremes, and not expect too much of oneself (Slagter and Kerbo 2000). Starting from childhood, Thais are taught Buddhism precepts until they appear as if by second nature. Children learn and share many fun activities with friends and learn that sanuk can occur anywhere when they are with friends. At home, children again are exposed to the same value through daily patterns of behavior (e.g., having a good laugh when watching a soap opera while busy at some task). With exposure to the sanuk value from various socialization agents, it becomes firmly integrated into the Thai way of life, especially in the countryside where lives often revolve around many sanuk activities (e.g. cloud making ceremony or "*nang maeo.*")

Based on the literature review, in terms of sanuk value measurement, a related scale developed by Farmer and Sundberg (1986) measures boredom proneneess. The scale measures a construct similar to the sanuk value in that some items reflect engaging in good fun in an activity or behavior (reverse scored in the scale). Because the scale was designed primarily for measuring boredom proneness, only three measurement items qualify as reflecting the sanuk value for the present study. With reference to literature review under this section along with Farmer and Sundberg's (1986) article, the author developed five additional items for measuring the sanuk value.

2.10 Core Cultural Values of Chinese Thai Individuals

Evidence shows that Chinese people immigrated to Thailand as early as the thirteenth century, often coming for trade purposes (Skinner 1962). The early volume of immigration depended on several factors, including fare prices and economic conditions in Southern China and Southeast Asia. More recently, mass immigration of Chinese people to Thailand was the result of problems or difficulties in China, such as natural disasters (e.g. drought, flooding) and overpopulation problems (e.g. plague, social conflict) that took place in areas of Fukian, Hainan, and Kwangtung (Coughl 1960; Skinner 1962). Being descendants of Chinese immigrants, Chinese Thais hold values similar to those held by Mainland Chinese, especially those from the southern region (Skinner 1962). Two bases of these values are the doctrines of Buddhism (Mahayana

sect) and the philosophy of Confucianism (Carolyn 2001; Coughl 1960; Redding 1993; Skinner 1962).

The previous paragraph by no means argues that Ethnic Thais are unaffected by Confucian philosophy and its ethics. Rather, the paragraph recognizes that the value systems of Ethnic Thais had long been exposed to the Buddhism world view before Confucianism came about in Thai culture (Redding 1993). Therefore, core cultural values of Chinese Thais are expected to differ from those of Ethnic Thais based on their Confucian origins (Coughl 1960; Redding 1993). The four values discussed here are family oriented, future oriented, risk aversion, and thrift.

2.10.1 Family Oriented Value

The family oriented value refers to "*a belief and a devotion that a person should protect and care for everyone in one's immediate family to the best of one's ability.*" The family has long been the cornerstone of Chinese individuals and Chinese society (Redding 1993; Xiantian 1985) and the family oriented value is shared by Chinese people living around the world (Ekblad 1996; Redding 1993). The value was manifested as early as the 5th century BC in the form of family lineage awareness. At that time, royal Chinese families and aristocrats began using family names to differentiate and glorify themselves among the ranks of nobility and to establish family traditions (Norman and Habermann 1996). In contrast, Ethnic Thais did not use family names until 1912 when they were introduced by decree during the reign of Rama VI.

Chinese Thais believe that interrelations with others, especially family members, are continuous and that once a relation is established, it can hardly be broken (Yau 1988). Thus, a Chinese Thai person will think of himself not as a separate individual but as an extension of a long family line or as a brother, father, husband, or son, but hardly ever as just himself (Bao et al. 2003; Gao 1998; Hwang 1987; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Triandis 1989).

The high level of family awareness can be attributed to a Confucian philosophy that provides a broad and clear-cut framework where duties and obligations are mutually expected of each family member. The heart of this framework is known as the *wu lun* or "five cardinal relations," three of which deal with family members. Arranged in order of importance, the five relationships are emperor-minister, father-son; husband-wife; elder brother-younger brother; and friend-friend (Carolyn 2001; Gao et al. 1996; Redding 1993; Tobias 1977; Usunier 1996; Wong and Ahuvia 1998). The most important family relationship is that between father and son, a relationship dictated by conformity to role expectations as prescribed by filial piety (Gao et al. 1996; Ho 1987; Ho and Lee 1974). The *wu-lun* and filial piety concept emphasize concern for one's family such that everyone in one's family, including relatives, are either directly or indirectly related to one another (Joy 2001; Yau 1988).

Another contributing factor to the high regard of family relationships among Chinese Thais is the security and protection that a family provides (Usunier 1996). Throughout the history of China, the family rather than the state has been the dependable "safe-haven" that guarded against potential threats to family members. Even though such insecurities and threats have greatly diminished today, trust still is given to family members and remains a feature of the Chinese cognitive universe (Gao et al. 1996; Skinner 1962). Thus, Chinese Thai descendants of Chinese immigrants still abide by norms that emphasize a concern for family members.

2.10.2 Future Oriented Value

The future oriented value refers "*a belief that a person should show continual regard to unseen future conditions and events and exhibit little concern about conditions and events occurring yesterday or today*." Early Chinese immigrants brought with them not only a rich cultural heritage, life philosophies, and traditions but also ambitions to amass wealth over time. With a strong appreciation for harsh and uncertain living conditions, Chinese people developed survival traits, practices, and values that combated a frequent lack of security and prevalent natural disasters. One of those values is the future oriented

value, a source of behavioral guidance for Chinese descendants in Thailand (Skinner 1962).

China has undergone countless dramatic changes in its social, economic, and political systems (Xie et al. 2003). These changes, particularly the political changes, often were violent and the new ruling regime often oppressive against those loyal to the overthrown dynasty. One of the most well-known recent incidents is the tragedy of Tiananmen Square occurring in 1989 (Weiming 2000). The tragedy sent a clear message not only to those planning movements against the ruling party but to all Chinese citizens who must live and play only by the rules. Non-political factors also are responsible for the development of the future oriented value. China is known as a country that is often affected by unpredictable acts of nature including floods, droughts, earthquakes, and landslides (Ember and Ember 1992; Gabrenya and Hwang 1996; Redding 1993). These insecurities mean nothing but incessant threats to personal life and family belongings.

Thus, over the centuries, Chinese people have learned to be on guard against the unexpected and to prepare for "rainy days." The concept dates at least to Confucius who saw from Chinese history that one should be future oriented by having money in reserve in the case of troubled times (Wang et al. 2001; Wen 2003). Consistent with this teaching is the wording of an ancient Chinese proverb, "hard working creates earlier spring" (*ren qin chun lai zao)* (Robertson and Hoffman 2000; Wang et al. 2005). With few basic needs in personal security guaranteed, Chinese people embrace the future oriented value by accumulating financial reserves and devising plans of action to manage unknown future risks.

Concern for uncertainty is not the sole contributing cause of future oriented value. Other influential sources are the deep-seated ideas of Confucius that once were made official in a several Chinese provinces and that left huge impacts on Chinese culture. Confucian influence was particularly strong during the Han dynasty, at times reaching to complete domination over many aspects of Chinese society (Taylor and Gary 1995). Confucius preached about the need to build useful knowledge for human beings; to attain great

achievement in the world so as to contribute to future generations in order to glorify one's own family as well as to command respect of oneself (Aufrecht 1995; Lin and Chi 2007). This kind of orientation on future advancements points Chinese individuals in a direction where tomorrow will be better than today. It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that among mankind's history of innovation, China was one of a few countries to have ushered in a new era, contributing such innovations as the invention of papermaking, compass, and gunpowder.

From the literature review, an existing scale measuring the future oriented value was located (Chetthamrongchai and Davies 2000). Five items from this scale along with an additional item developed by the author are used as the future oriented value measurement under this research.

2.10.3 Risk Aversion Value

The risk aversion value refers to "*a belief that a person should avoid ambiguous situations where results can have serious consequences.*" The value is brought about through collectivism.

Well embedded in a social context, Chinese individuals are expected to conform to certain behavioral codes where deviance is questioned and sanctioned by family, friends, colleagues, and bosses. Risk-taking behaviors challenge the group's interests, especially when the outcome of an action jeopardizes close significant others. Therefore, risk-taking behaviors are not appreciated and often discouraged wherever possible not only in the Mainland Chinese culture but also in the Chinese culture in Thailand. Based on Hofstede's (1984, 1988) findings, all collectivist Asian cultures exhibit similar patterns in possessing high levels of uncertainty avoidance tendency. Of the 53 countries studied, Japan ranked 7th; Korea ranked 16th; and Taiwan ranked 26th on the uncertainty avoidance dimension.

Because Mainland China was not among countries included in Hofstede's study, McGrath et al. (1992) conducted an additional study investigating China on the

uncertainty avoidance dimension. The study found that China's uncertainty avoidance score and its ranking of the value were higher than those for Taiwan. In a separate study done by Cheung and Chow (1999), the authors hypothesized that Mainland China respondents would show higher uncertainty avoidance than Hong Kong and Taiwan respondents. However, the study found that that managerial values in these cultures were no different in terms of uncertainty avoidance, further evidence that Oriental cultures are equally risk averse. Based on the literature, the risk aversion value is therefore likely an endorsed value among Chinese Thai individuals (Wen 2003; Yau 1988; Zhou et al. 2002).

Based on the literature review, no risk aversion value measurement scale could be found and the author must develop a new measure in accordance with discussion in this section.

2.10.4 Thrift Value

The thrift value refers to "*a belief that a person should be restrained in acquiring and using economic resources to achieve goals*." This value has its roots in Chinese culture and Confucianism. In Chinese culture, a child is taught from an early age to value money, to bargain, and always to have money in reserve in case of the "rainy days." One good example that reflects this teaching is when Chinese Thai children are encouraged and if not compelled to deposit money received as gifts in red envelopes during Chinese New Year day either at a bank or with their parents. Thrift ethics instilled in early lives make adult Chinese Thais conscious of their spending habits and careful with their money. These characteristics have led Chinese Thais to accumulate wealth in Thailand (Coughl 1960; Skinner 1962), to the point where Chinese Thais control about 80 percent of all Thai commerce today. Chinese Thais are accustomed to managing their money to grow their businesses.

Redding (1993) and Tse (1996) attribute a thrift orientation among Chinese individuals to lengthy subsistence living experiences throughout history. Because income could not be earned easily, the only means to stay afloat in difficult times was to restrain spending and consequently, a thrift value ensued. A similar explanation holds in Thailand. Chinese

immigrants in Thailand initially received little support and assistance from the Royal Government and were in many ways regarded as socially and economically inferior to Ethnic Thais. As a result, the thrift virtue as exercised back home in China proved useful and effective in coping with economic pressures in a foreign country. Early Chinese immigrants passed the thrift value on to family members by way having them recite the word "thrift" until it became second nature (Coughl 1960). Although conditions for Chinese Thais today in Thailand have changed greatly for the better, a centuries-long value such as thrift dies hard. Many Chinese Thais still remember the word that their parents taught them, that wealth cannot guaranteed to last, and that strong thrift ethics should be practiced alongside hard work (Coughl 1960).

One other contributing factor is the indirect influence of Confucianism where Chinese minds have been influenced by the mentality governed by mentality of family name glorification. According to Confucianism, one of the obligations children have to their parents (besides continuing the family line) is to bring status to the family name by virtue of their achievement, and to quite literally give meaning to the lives of parents (Huang and Charter 1996). This can be in the form being elected or appointed as high ranked officials (nobleman-like or elite class). However since such reality seldom takes place, the appropriate achievement in one's lifetime is to make a name for one's family through hard work and thrift. Thus, wealth is accumulated and viewed as an achievement measurement yardstick.

Examples of behavior involving the thrift value are numerous. For example, Wang et al. (2001) found that despite measures attempting to shore up China's emerging residential property market, Chinese buyers were still reluctant to enter the market. The authors explain this finding by noting that Chinese consumers tend to enjoy things that they already possess (including housing) and continue to use outdated products that are still in working condition. The latter is just only a glimpse of the thrift value at work, not to mention that Mainland China has one of the highest saving rates in the world. In Thailand, countless stories are told about how Chinese immigrants arrived during the period of 1880-1910 with a roll of bedding and a little cash and turned into a well-to-do

and even rich people. The top three rich tycoons in Thailand that get ranked annually in the Forbes magazine are all Chinese Thai.

In sum, the money ethic ascribed by both Confucianism through work ethics (e.g., value of money and thrift) and by parents' teachings play crucial roles in contributing and shaping the thrift value prevalently held among Chinese Thai individuals.

In measuring the thrift value, the frugality measurement scale developed by Lastovicka et al. (1999) was adopted in this study. The scale reflects the definition proposed under this study in that it pertains to a restraint in acquiring and using economic goods and services to achieve longer-term goals. Along with the similarity in construct conceptualization, the scale reflects considerations of Buddhism, Chinese cultural heritage (Taoism), economic, self-help, and psychological perspectives that are central elements in this dissertation. All eight measurement items are adopted as a thrift value measurement.

2.11 Summary of Core Cultural Values

Based on the preceding literature review, Thai core cultural values are based directly and indirectly on Buddhist and Confucian teachings, whose origins are centuries old. That the values have persisted over history can only be explained by the idea that people find the values useful. Values (and their accompanying behaviors) simplify everyday life, create and maintain social relationships, provide a sense of well-being and worth, and move individuals toward ideals and goals that are considered relevant to all Thais, with some values seen as more relevant to the Ethnic Thai or Chinese Thai subcultures.

Thai people both share and differ on several core cultural values with respect to values that characterize many East Asian cultures (Wong and Ahuvia 1998). Among the core cultural values that reflect similarities with other East Asian cultures are the confrontation avoidance, face saving, kreng jai, and mai pen rai values. Four core cultural values are thought to be relatively unique to Ethnic Thai individuals, namely the autonomous, non-competitiveness, present oriented, and sanuk values. Chinese Thai individuals are thought

to hold values that reflect traditional Chinese heritage and the Confucian world-view, which are the family oriented, future oriented, risk aversion, and thrift values.

2.12 Attitudes

Values and attitudes are closely related. To review, values are enduring beliefs about modes of conduct and end-states that people and societies prefer over opposite modes of conduct and end-states. Values are learned and shared, capable of directing behavior, and stable over time. Values have properties of centrality, intensity, and direction.

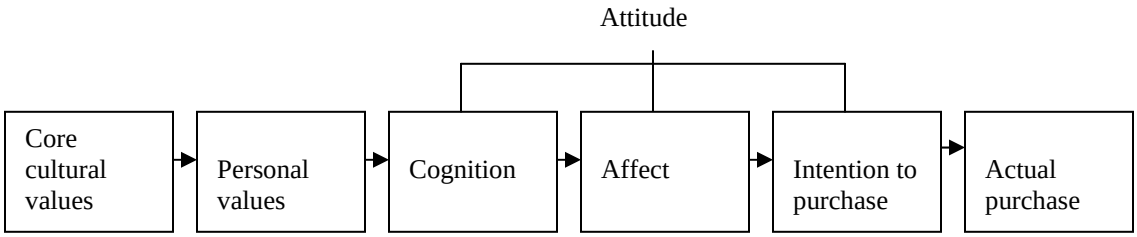
Many of these characteristics are common as well to attitudes. Attitudes are "learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way" (Allport 1935). The definition indicates that attitudes are learned and capable of directing response behaviors, just like values. Similarly, attitudes have properties of intensity and direction. However, attitudes differ from values in their object specificity and stability. That is, an attitude is triggered by a specific object or class of objects rather than existing as a central, enduring belief that affects a person's views on many issues. Further, an attitude is more susceptible to change than a value. Most importantly, attitudes are conceptualized as consequences of values.

Attitudes are widely recognized to have three underlying components that develop in sequence: cognitive beliefs about characteristics of the object, affective feelings of like or dislike toward the object, and behavioral or action intentions regarding the object.
Attitudes develop over time through a learning process and are affected by values (as instilled through socialization processes such as family and peer group influences), information, experience, and personality (Acock and Fuller 2001; Assael 1995; Schiffman and Kanuk 1997). Attitudes do not become significant until a problem is recognized and problem-solving behavior commences. Under given circumstances, an attitude is subject to change but the probability of change varies inversely with attitude strength or centrality. Other basic determinants of attitude strength are the amount of stored information and past experience regarding the attitude object. Attitudes serve four psychological functions: 1) adjustment—attitudes serve as a means to reach a desired

goal or to avoid an unwanted outcome, 2) ego-defensive—attitudes are formed to protect and enhance the ego, 3) value expressive—attitudes are formed to give concrete expression to basic values, 4) knowledge—attitudes provide a frame of reference for understanding and adapting to the world.

Based on these psychological functions, one would not be surprised to find that attitudes are closely related to behavioral intentions (Assael 1995; Engel et al. 1973). Recalling that an attitude is formed by values as general as core cultural values, values serve as a basic determinant of attitudes and behavior (Fukukawa et al. 2007). Figure 2.3 summarizes relationships of the already discussed constructs—values, attitudes, and behaviors—central to this dissertation.

Figure 2.3 Psychological Components Preceding Purchase Behavior



2.12.1 Consumption Attitudes

The present study examines the effects of core cultural values on seven consumption attitudes. Each consumption attitude—brand conscious, fashion conscious, impulse buying, materialism, money attitude, price conscious, and variety seeking—is described in following sections. Each attitude has an acceptable measurement scale that was adopted for the present study. Additional details about the seven consumption attitudes and their measurement scales can be found in referenced articles.

2.12.2 Brand, Fashion, and Price Conscious Attitudes

Brand conscious refers to a characteristic measuring a consumer's orientation toward buying more expensive, well-known national brands (Sproles and Sproles 1990; Sproles and Kendall 1986). Fashion conscious is defined as the extent to which a consumer focuses on having up-to-date styles, especially as pertains to clothing. Price conscious is defined as the extent to which a consumer focuses on buying products that are low priced, on sale, or good value for money.

Brand, fashion, and price conscious measures were developed as part of the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) by Sproles and Kendall (1986) in an attempt to understand and profile consumers. The theory was originally developed by Kolb (1976). Since its first appearance, CSI has been used in investigations to characterize consumers in several cross-cultural contexts including China, India, Greece, South Korea, and New Zealand (Durvasula et al. 1993; Fan and Xiao 1998; Hafstrom et al. 1992; Lysonski et al. 1996). The CSI has been used as an alternative to three other available methods: psychographic approach, consumer typology approach, and consumer characteristic approach. Each has its own strengths and its own weaknesses, such as measurement length and unrelated desirable measurements (Sproles and Kendall 1986). Unlike existing approaches, the CSI approach describes consumer characteristics from cognitive and affective orientations specifically designed to measure consumer decision-making.

In total, the CSI measures eight beliefs that describes consumption decision-making styles: brand conscious, confusion from overchoice, fashion consciousness, brand-loyal orientation toward consumption, impulsiveness, price consciousness, perfectionism (high quality consciousness), and recreational. Of the eight beliefs, brand conscious, fashion conscious, and price conscious are adopted as consumption attitudes in this study. The three constructs have been found to be related to learning styles (Sproles and Sproles 1990). The largest number of correlations found between the CSI dimensions with the five learning styles was the price conscious belief: "Serious Analytical Learner" (0.14); "Active Practical Learner" (0.21); "Observation Centered Learner"(0.10); "Passive Accepting Learner"(0.14), and "Concrete Detail Fact Learner" (0.17). This is followed

by the fashion conscious belief where significant relationships were found with three learning styles: “Observation Centered Learning” (0.16); “Passive Accepting Learner” (0.16); and “Passive Accepting Learner” (0.14). Only one significant correlation was found between the brand conscious belief with “Non-adaptive Learner” (0.10).

In a separate study by Donthu and Gilliland (1996), the CSI was adopted to explain and profile infomercial shoppers. Based on the study, infomercial shoppers were found to be less risk averse, more price conscious, and more convenience seeking than non-shoppers. They were also more brand conscious, innovative, impulsive, and variety seeking than non-infomercial shoppers. The implication based on the above cited studies is that of the eight CSI consumer beliefs, the three used in this dissertation are most central and relevant to an academic investigation examining consumers’ consumption attitudes.

2.12.3 Impulse Buying

Impulse buying refers to “a consumer’s tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically” (Dennis and Gardner 1993; Dennis and Hoch 1985; Rook and Fischer 1995). Impulse buying often is associated with “being bad” in that the behavior involves negative consequences in personal finance, post-purchase trauma or dissatisfaction, social reactions, and overall self-esteem (Rook and Fischer 1995; Rook 1987).

Whether or not consumers buy on impulse depends partly on the degree to which they possess impulse buying beliefs and on their normative judgments or beliefs that forbid or permit a particular impulsive purchase. In accordance with theory, a consumer is more likely to make an impulse purchase when the person experiences an impulse buying stimulus and evaluates the prospective purchase as appropriate. In this condition, both belief and normative influences are harmonious, thereby making the impulsive purchase likely. However, if negative normative evaluations take reign in a purchase situation, the belief tendencies may be obstructed and even a highly impulsive buyer will be less likely to act on impulse. The impulsive buying measure developed by Rook and Fisher (1995) differs from several others in that it is a theoretically driven and validated measure.

A number of studies of impulse buying have used the Rook and Fisher measure and find correlations with Internet usage and online impulsive purchase (Zhang et al. 2006), normative influences (Kwak et al. 2006) and cultural values, such as individualism and collectivism (Kacen and Lee 2002).

2.12.4 Materialism

Materialism is defined as extent to which a consumer attaches importance to the possessions in one's life (Richins and Dawson 1992). Individuals holding strong materialistic beliefs often attach such a high degree of importance to possessions that they acquire and value possessions beyond any notion of economic utility. Instead, possessions are acquired because they reflect the wealth or income of their owners and thereby raise the status of owners within some relevant reference group. Or, possessions are acquired simply because they provide their owners with a strong sense of satisfaction, happiness, and enjoyment. In the extreme case, materialism can be seen as a near religious pursuit of possessions (Bredemeier and Toby 1960) and as a source of meaning in life (Richins and Dawson 1992), or a lifestyle.

Three domains of materialism are recognized: acquisition centrality, the role of acquisition in happiness, and the role of possessions in defining success (Richins and Dawson 1992). The materialism measure developed by Richins and Dawson (1992) showed robust measure properties as indicated by a number of conventional requirements. For the role of acquisition in the happiness dimension of materialism, coefficient alpha ranged from 0.74 to 0.78. The scale also met confirmatory factor analysis guidelines in that adjusted goodness-of-fit indices ranged from 0.86 to 0.88. The scale showed good nomological validity; it was able to predict outcomes that are in line with existing theories, such as negative correlations between materialism and willingness to contribute to charity organizations or for churches (self-centeredness). Based on the study, the materialism scale also was found to be negatively related to satisfaction as theorized.

The materialism measure was modified and adapted to a six-point Likert scale to suit with the length of the current study and to maintain consistency. Due to the scope of this study, only the role of acquisition in happiness dimension of materialism is included here.

2.12.5 Money Attitude

Based on related literatures about money, Yamauchi and Templer (1982) conceptualized money attitude as encompassing three broad content areas: security, retention, and power-prestige. A factor analysis of the money attitude scale produced five factors: power-prestige, retention-time, distrust, quality, and anxiety. Because the full version of money attitude scale contains 29 items, only the first factor—power-prestige—was adopted as the money attitude measurement in the current study. The latter dimension was used over other dimensions due to its high factor loading as well as relevancy of the dimension to the current study.

Money attitude based on the power-prestige dimension is defined as the use of money to impress and influence others as a symbol of success. An individual who scores high on this dimension of money attitude has a tendency to attach oneself to the importance of status seeking, competition, external recognition, and acquisition (Yamauchi and Templer 1982). Scale reliability for the adopted money attitude scale is 0.80. The test-retest reliability of the scale is also acceptable at 0.88. Scale validities also have been established through correlations of factors with related measures: machiavellianism, status concern, time competence, obsessionality, paranoia, state anxiety, and trait anxiety. Additional validities also were established through a separate study done by Roberts and Sepulveda (1999). Findings from these two studies indicate that correlations between money attitude items and other related measures were in line with theory

2.12.6 Variety Seeking

The variety seeking measurement was adopted from Donthu and Gilliland (1996) and Donthu and Garcia (1999). Variety seeking refers to a consumer's tendency to focus less on repeat purchase, induced by the utility or disutility the consumer derives from the

change itself. Variety seeking can be studied at various levels. Some scholars (Kahn et al. 1986; Ratner and Kahn 2002) focus solely on the behavioral perspective, such as actual switching behavior data (e.g. actual activities) while others are only interested in learning about the phenomena from a cognitive perspective (Donthu and Gilliland 1996; 1999). In this study, the variety seeking measurement from Donthu and Gilliland (1996) was slightly modified to fit with the current study. Scale reliabilities were reported in the acceptable range; coefficient alpha was 0.80 in Donthu and Gilliland (1996) and 0.84 in Donthu and Garcia (1999).

2.13 Consumption Intentions

Unlike core cultural values and consumption attitudes that are primarily made up of beliefs, consumption intentions deal with the likelihood that a behavior will occur. Two prominent theories—the theory of reasoned action by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and the theory of planned action by Ajzen (1991) dominate this area of knowledge. The latter theory has received considerable attention in the field of consumer behavior due to its relevancy and robustness in explaining relationships between intentions and volitional behaviors (Farley et al. 1981; Sheppard et al. 1988). The theory states that performance of volitional behaviors (actions taken based on will) depends on intentions which, in turn, depend on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Achievement of behaviors (Ajzen 1985) thus depends jointly on motivational intentions and non-motivational factors in terms of requisite opportunities and resources to perform behaviors (e.g., time, money, skills, and cooperation of others).

Reported associations between consumption intentions and consumption behaviors almost always are positive and significant. While numerous studies and their associations could be described, the best reference on the topic to date is a meta analysis by Shepard, Harwick, and Warshaw (1988). Summarizing results of 87 separate studies with a total sample of 11,566 people, the researchers find the average correlation between intentions and behaviors to be 0.53, significant at $p < 0.01$. However, the 95 percent confidence interval for the average correlation is quite large at 0.15 to 0.92, with the range being a function of several research design moderators. These moderators include

measurement considerations, the type of behavioral activity under study, and the presence of choice among behavioral alternatives. The present study used findings regarding relationship moderators in its research design for the consumption intention scenarios described in Chapter 4.

2.14 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 describes the foundation of this dissertation in terms of a literature review relevant to five constructs—core cultural values, ritual practices, ethnicity, consumption attitudes, and consumption intentions. Core cultural values are formed from various social institutions as well as from physical and economic environments. Despite Buddhism being religion and Confucianism being philosophy, the two cultural institutions share many common features in terms of teachings as well as advice about good life approaches. Buddhism and Confucianism permeate all corners of Thai society and consciously and subconsciously affect everyday behaviors of Thai people.

Core cultural values influence behavior both directly and indirectly. Values affect behavior directly in terms of learned prescriptions and proscriptions. Values affect behavior indirectly via attitudes and intentions. Core cultural values in this study are expected to be associated with eight consumption attitudes—brand conscious, fashion conscious, impulse buying, materialism, money attitude, price conscious, variety seeking—and 12 consumption intentions scenarios. The nature of these associations are discussed next in Chapter 3.