

CHAPTER 3

Conceptual Framework, Propositions, and Hypotheses

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 describes a conceptual framework for this research study that links core cultural values, ritual practices, and ethnicity with consumption attitudes and consumption intentions. The framework supports a research methodology described in Chapter 4 and leads to data analyses reported in Chapter 5.

The first section of Chapter 3 presents a conceptual framework identifying the study's five constructs of interest. The five constructs are: core cultural values, ritual practices, ethnicity, consumption attitudes, and consumption intentions. The conceptual framework includes 13 core cultural values, ethnicity, seven consumption attitudes, and 12 consumption intentions. The second section of Chapter 3 contains statements and discussions of propositions and research hypotheses pertinent to this dissertation.

3.2 Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

This study is the first attempt to bring together core cultural values of Thailand's mainstream culture and its largest subculture in order to explain aspects of their consumption behavior. The study is based on a unique conceptual framework in an attempt to break away from the frequently adopted Hofstede framework used to investigate marketing phenomena in a cultural setting.

The development of Thai core cultural values in this study was based on various social science literatures, a review of which produced the conceptual framework shown in Figure 3.1. Figure 3.1 identifies the five broad conceptual foundations that underpin this dissertation and reflects four broad research questions central to this study:

- Do Ethnic Thai and Chinese Thai individuals differ in their value systems?
- Are Thai core cultural values associated with consumption attitudes?
- Are Thai core cultural values associated with consumption intentions?
- Does ethnicity influence ritual practices?

These research questions can be restated in the form of four propositions that support a large number of specific hypothesis tests. Each proposition is formally stated and supporting hypotheses illustrated in the following sections in Chapter 3. Before proceeding to these discussions, the conceptual framework in Figure 3.1 is explained.

From the top left hand corner under the Thai core cultural values column are 13 core cultural values categorized under their ethnic value groupings as suggested in the literature. Core cultural values are arranged in alphabetical order and classified as follows: Thai National values (confrontation avoidance, face saving, keng jai, mai pen rai); Ethnic Thai values (autonomous, non-competitiveness, present oriented, sanuk); and Chinese Thai values (family oriented, future oriented, risk aversion, thrift). Directly below core cultural values are ritual practices associated with Chinese New Year and Thai New Year. Ethnicity at the bottom of the conceptual framework identifies two ethnic groups—Ethnic Thai, and Chinese Thai individuals. The right side of the conceptual framework displays two concepts, consumption attitudes and consumption intentions. Consumption attitudes included are brand conscious, fashion conscious, impulse buying, materialism, money attitude, price conscious, and variety seeking. These consumption attitudes are treated as dependent variables intended to capture variance of related core cultural values, all of which are represented by metric measurements. Finally, consumer intentions are represented by 12 hypothetical scenarios (See Appendix 7, Part C), each designed to tap into a core cultural value. Consumption behavior measured at the intentions level is different from measurement at the attitudinal level in that the former is designed with a specific corresponding core cultural value in mind and is presented with discrete response alternatives.

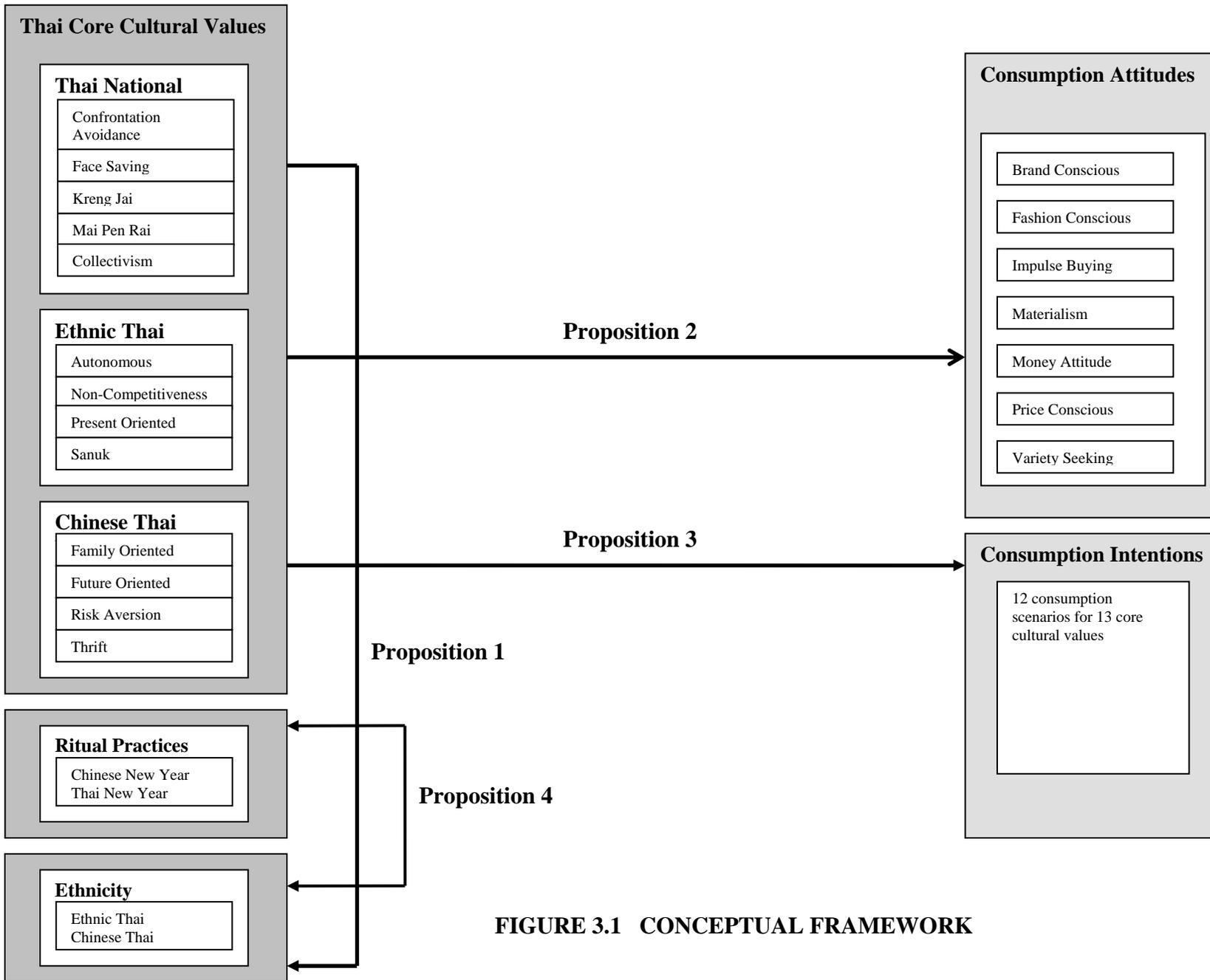


FIGURE 3.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual definitions of the 13 core cultural values and consumption attitudes are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Conceptual Definitions of Study Constructs and Origins of Measures

Conceptual Definitions and Origins	
Thai National Values	
Confrontation Avoidance	A belief that a person should avoid getting into conflicts with others. (Morris et al. 1998)
Face Saving	A belief that a person should exhibit behaviors and actions known to others that will accrue esteem, regard, and good opinion.
Kreng Jai	A belief that a person should be self-effacing, respectful, humble, and considerate of others to avoiding troubling or upsetting others.
Mai Pen Rai	A belief that a person should discount a difficult situation by a rationalization that the situation doesn't really matter or that nothing really matters.
Collectivism	A belief that a person should be well-integrated into one or more cohesive in-groups throughout their lives (Hofstede 1984).
Ethnic Thai Values	
Autonomous	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.
Non-Competitiveness	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.
Present Oriented	A belief that a person should show continual regard for conditions and events of today and little concern about conditions and events from yesterday or for tomorrow (Chetthamrongchai and Davies 2000).
Sanuk	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. (Farmer and Sundberg 1986)
Chinese Thai Values	
Family Oriented	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. (Heller 1976)
Future Oriented	A belief that a person should show continual regard to unseen future conditions and events and little concern about conditions and events occurring yesterday or today. (Chetthamrongchai and Davies 2000)
Risk Aversion	A belief that a person should avoid ambiguous situations where results can have serious consequences.
Thrift	A belief that a person should be restrained in acquiring and using economic resources to achieve goals. (Yamauchi and Templer 1982)

Table 3.1 (Continued) Conceptual Definitions of Study Constructs and Origins of Measures

Consumption Attitudes	
Brand Conscious	The extent to which a consumer focuses on buying well-known products. (Shim and Gehrt 1996 and Donthu and Gilliland 1996)
Fashion Conscious	The extent to which a consumer focuses on having up-to-date styles, especially as pertains to clothing. (Donthu and Gilliland 1996; Shim and Gehrt 1996)
Impulse Buying	The extent to which a consumer buys spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically. (Rook and Fischer 1995)
Materialism	The extent to which a consumer holds attaches importance to the possessions in one's life. (Richins and Dawson 2000)
Money Attitude	The extent to which a consumer uses money to impress and influence others as a symbol of success. (Roberts and Sepulveda 1999)
Price Conscious	The extent to which a consumer focuses on buying products that are low priced, on sale, or at least good value for money.
Variety Seeking	The extent to which a consumer focuses less on repeat purchase, induced by the utility or disutility the consumers derive from the change itself.

3.2.1 Research Propositions and Hypotheses

Figure 3.1 indicates four research propositions are present in this study. Each is described in the following sections.

3.3.1 Associations Between Core Cultural Values and Ethnicity

The first proposition is that differences in core cultural values exist based on ethnicity. Ethnic Thai and Chinese Thai ethnic groups have their own unique environments with value systems shaped by distinct customs, traditions, history, philosophy, religious beliefs, education systems, and familial influences. Among these are values, defined in Chapter 2 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. The first proposition supports 13 research hypotheses, one for each core cultural value shown in Table 5.25.

3.3.2 Associations Between Core Cultural Values and Consumption Attitudes

The second proposition is that core cultural values are associated with consumption attitudes. Chapter 2 defined attitudes as learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way. Attitudes are formed partly based on values as instilled in the socialization and learning processes. Hence, Thai core cultural values are possible determinants of various consumption attitudes. The second proposition supports 78 hypothesized relationships as indicated in Table 5.24.

3.4 Associations Between Core Cultural Values and Consumption Intentions

The third proposition is that core cultural values are associated with consumption intentions. Chapter 2 defined intentions as beliefs about likelihoods that behavior will occur. Discussion described observed relationships between intentions and behaviors as generally positive, strong, and significant. Brief discussions and formal hypothesis statements related to the third proposition appear in the following 13 subsections.

3.4.1 Confrontation Avoidance Value and Confrontation Avoidance Consumption Intentions

As described in Chapter 2, 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; Kirkbride and Tang 1992; Swierczek and Onishi 2003). This value is attributed to a number of factors but chief among them are the Buddhist religion and Confucian philosophy (Mole 1973; Redding 1993). Thus, regardless of ethnicity, Thai National individuals (Ethnic Thai, Chinese Thai, and Mixed Ethnic Thai) have grown up under an environment that promotes inner and social harmony in a person, thereby reducing potential friction and personal agitation. With Buddhism and Confucianism pervading society, Thai National

individuals are therefore expected to absorb the confrontation avoidance value and try to avoid confronting others.

Confrontation avoidance intentions in a consumption setting are likely common when one purchases defective products, uses low quality products, or feels unfair treatment by manufacturers or service providers. Intentions might involve complaint behavior to a second party, return of defective products, or demand for refund of a purchased product or a new replacement. All would involve some degree of confrontation. It is therefore appropriate to state the hypothesized relationship between the core cultural value and behavior as follows:

H1: The confrontation avoidance value associates with confrontation avoidance consumption intentions.

3.4.2 Face Saving Value and Face Saving Consumption Intentions

As described in Chapter 2, face is a multidimensional construct that encompasses a person's ego and reputation through success and ostentation. The face concept has long been regarded as an important construct not only in Chinese culture but in all Asian cultures (Hu 1944; Skinner 1962).

The Thai National individuals are given "face" at birth (e.g. pride of parents, pride of family continuity, pride of ego) and have learned that their social stability is more important than their social development. Negative changes to face are threatening and undesirable not to only oneself but also to the donors of face (e.g. parents and family). Face gained brings about pride to personal ego as well as to significant others whereas face lost brings about opposite effects. Collectivist individuals like Thai Nationals rarely view themselves as separate entities but as extensions to one or more groups with which they identify. As a result, Thai Nationals attempt to save face at all costs to protect this intangible asset from social damage, something that can be dreadful to the well-being of a person and significant others.

Face saving intentions in consumption settings are likely common whenever the consumer's ego is threatened. For example, a disconfirmed expectation of a major purchase such as a home, car, home entertainment center, or home furniture would produce face saving intentions to prevent disclosure of the embarrassing information to relevant group members. Intention to save face might involve activities aimed at protecting or neutralizing one's own ego or embarrassment, such as refusal to discuss a buying mistake, beat around the bush before changing the conversation to a less sensitive subject, or simply to keep quiet and let embarrassment fade away. All activities would involve an attempt to salvage one's reputation and personal ego. Based on this discussion, it is appropriate to state the hypothesized relationship as follows:

H2: Face saving value associates with face saving consumption intentions.

3.4.3 Kreng Jai Value and Kreng Jai Consumption Intentions

Kreng jai involves being considerate toward others and requires a person to exercise high levels of courtesy toward others as well as sensitivity before and after contact. Such emphasis in courtesy toward others as found in the Thai culture is largely rooted in Buddhism and Confucianism as both address the need to be sensitive to others. The kreng jai value has been partly shaped by the "self-help" concept stated under one of Buddhist principles that urges people to help themselves as much as possible before getting help from someone else. Confucianism is instilled early in childhood, when children are taught to be other oriented and to be courteous in order to promote social unity and harmony as a whole. The kreng jai value is taken a step further in Thailand where the value also has been shaped by the unique custom of patron-client relationship rule where someone inferior is supposed to be kreng jai toward any superior, suggesting the hierarchical status at all levels of Thai society. Based on the relevancy and influences of Buddhism and Confucianism in the Thai cognitive universe, all Thai National individuals are therefore expected to abide by the kreng jai value.

Kreng jai intentions in a consumption setting are likely common whenever a person tries to be considerate to avoid troubling or upsetting others in a consumption related activity. A few examples of consumption settings pertaining to the value are situations where a person has little choice but to comment on newly purchased items belonged to a boss or acquaintances out of necessity or buying a product or service out of a sense of obligation. A person may accept a free sample of a new product in a store and buy that product even if the person liked the product only a little. Intentions in line with such a circumstance involve acting out of reluctance yet in a manner to please and avoid upsetting the other party in terms of their product belief or pride associated with the product. Based on this property, it is appropriate to state the hypothesized relationships as follows:

H3: Kreng jai value associates kreng jai consumption intention.

3.4.4 Mai Pen Rai Value and Mai Pen Rai Consumption Intentions.

As described in Chapter 2, the mai pen rai value has been influenced by a number of different social forces. One primary source is Buddhism, where two of its central principles—karmic rule of law and detachment—have left a marked imprint in terms of the mai pen rai value. The value is often used as an exit or coping strategy by Thai Nationals to deal with an unexpected turn of events or an undesirable outcome of an event.

The karmic rule of law states that one's faith or destiny is not entirely crafted by man, but rather by some supernatural forces like karma, which are personal deeds or misdeeds that one has accumulated from the previous and present lifetimes. This religious belief reflects a mentality where errors or misfortunes can be allowed and attributed to some supernatural uncontrollable factors, thereby handling uncertainties. While the karmic rule of law deals primarily with factors beyond one's control, the detachment concept reminds people to think of all things on earth as subject to deterioration and impermanence. All things (e.g. fame, sorrow, happiness) eventually fade away and therefore there is no point in trying to stick firmly to the state of being (e.g. being overly satisfied and happy in triumphant over others, feeling rejected over the loss to others, or

dejected over the loss of loved ones). Detachment teaches all Thai Nationals not to cling much to their states of existence. Based on Buddhism and these two sub-principles, Thai National individuals are likely to act in accordance with the mai pen rai value whenever a situation warrants it.

Mai pen rai intentions in a consumption setting are likely common whenever a consumer decides to avoid a burdensome situation as nothing much can be really be altered. For example, buying a defective product, discovering that a product breaks down after only a few usages, realizing that one has been overly charged for a service already received, and cancellation of a concert tour all represent situations where the value could operate. Intentions in line with these examples involve doing nothing, demanding a refund or replacement of the defective product, and demanding compensation for the loss. Based on this discussion, the hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H4: Mai pen rai value associates with mai pen rai consumption intentions.

3.4.5 Collectivism Value and Collectivism Consumption Intentions

Collectivism is included as a construct of interest to replicate Hofstede's (1984, 1988) studies and see if Thai culture remains collectivist in nature despite being subjected to various Western values. With both Ethnic Thai and Chinese Thai individuals being part of a collectivist culture, they are therefore expected to conform to the value and act accordingly.

Collectivism based intentions in a consumption setting are likely common whenever a consumer feels the need to conform to norms of society as well as to expectations of significant others. Buying a product that must be shared, buying a gift, and using a highly visible product in public are examples of consumption situations where the collectivism value might operate. Intentions in line with such circumstances might involve adhering to the choice of relevant others in society or asking a friend for advice rather than relying on one's own judgment. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H5: Collectivism value associates with collectivist consumption intentions.

3.4.6 Autonomous Value and Autonomous Consumption Intentions

The autonomous value and autonomous behavior found among Ethnic Thai individuals have been of interest to Western scholars since Embree (1950) who concluded that Ethnic Thais are rather autonomous individuals. Autonomous individuals are described by high degree of flexibility in obligations and attitudes. This is partly due to two ideas as described in Chapter 2, religious initiative—Buddhism—and social structure of Thai society. The former stresses at the individual level the need to work on one's own to salvation whereas the latter is a depiction of Thai society where behaviors are based on a loosely structured system of rights and obligations that permit Ethnic Thais to be rather autonomous. While obligations can be expected between Thai individuals, they are not allowed to burden individuals unduly and commitments can go unfulfilled at any time.

Autonomous intentions in a consumption setting are likely common whenever a consumer feels that one's freedom has been suddenly limited. A financial obligation that comes due during a tight time period, a relocation of a restaurant dining table for some VIPs, or a deadline imposed for making a car or house purchase are examples of settings where the autonomous value might operate. Response intentions to such situations might involve a decision of not taking any action, complying as necessary but with the least effort possible, or complying with full effort even though it may be difficult. The second and third intentions involve the loss of some degree of autonomy. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H6: Autonomous value associates with autonomous consumption intentions.

3.4.7 Non-Competitiveness Value and Non-Competitiveness Consumption Intentions

As described in Chapter 2, the non-competitiveness value has a variety of contributing sources, including Thailand's comfortable climate, abundance of natural resources, and economy. The Ethnic Thai way of life has for centuries revolved around farming and fishing, with few elements of competitiveness associated with this lifestyle.

With a traditional mentality of an agrarian culture where activities as usual occur regularly each season, there is little reason for competition between enterprises as most outputs are commodity products and usually sold as is. Thus, Ethnic Thais over the years have developed a mentality that "life comes around, life goes around" seasonally. Added to this agrarian mentality is the high level of comfort found in the country where the Royal Thai government has always been accommodating to its people, especially to Ethnic Thai individuals as the majority ethnic group and important key voters in any election. Having been raised in a comfortable environment where virtually everything one needs can be obtained within one's reach, there is a tendency for Ethnic Thai individuals to adopt a rather passive lifestyle that nurtures and embraces the non-competitiveness value.

Reflections of the non-competitiveness value in a consumption setting are likely common whenever a consumer feels the need to engage in product or service consumption based on the consumption behavior of others. A few examples where the non-competitiveness value is found would be deciding whether or not to buy a training course to improve oneself, deciding whether or not to emulate the role model of a successful businessman who enjoys great material comfort, deciding whether or not to upgrade a factory's tools to remain competitive with others, or deciding whether or not to continue bidding or dropping out from an ongoing auction. Intentions in line with such circumstances might involve taking the easy way out by avoiding the need to challenge anybody, choosing entertainment over some self-improvement programs, and buying an education degree online rather than sitting for entrance examination tests. All would involve some degree of the non-competitiveness value. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H7: Non-competitiveness value associates with non-competitiveness consumption intentions.

3.4.8 Present Oriented Value and Present Oriented Consumption Intentions

As described in Chapter 2, sources contributing to the present oriented value are in many ways similar to the non-competitiveness value in that chief among them are the agrarian economic and cultural background and the belief in the karmic rule of law.

With a seasonal mentality as a result of strong agrarian roots, life seems simple enough to Ethnic Thai individuals in that tomorrow will be like today. There is therefore little reason for one to prepare beyond the present state because thought of the future is too abstract, something which is far-fetched and has been this way since ancient Thailand. Scholars have pointed out that social class plays a crucial role with regard to time orientation. Societies with a large base of people coming from a strong agriculture background like Thailand, tend to be present oriented, whereas societies that consist more of middle to upper class are more likely to be future oriented (Schmidt et al. 1978; Wongtes 2000). Another contributing factor to the development of the future oriented value is an external locus of control factor like the karmic rule of law. Contrary to the internal locus of control as found in many Western countries, Ethnic Thais are external locus of control people who have long believed that their lives are shaped in part by accumulated merits and misdeeds (karma) that accompany them when they are born into the world. Believing in karma, Ethnic Thai individuals more or less submit to external forces where the future is not something that one can chart out but that depends on one's own merits. Therefore a focus on the present state becomes a primary concern to Ethnic Thai individuals.

Present oriented intentions in a consumption setting are likely common whenever a consumer becomes focuses on immediate circumstances or shows little regard for future events following a purchase decision made today. Examples for the present oriented value include buying something on a whim, being excessively materialist, and engaging

in excessive credit card usage. Intentions in line with this present oriented value can be in the form of being impatient with the wait for an unavailable product or service and buying whatever is available. All involve little cognitive effort on the part of buyers to understand and appreciate any following consequences. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H8: Present oriented value associates with present oriented consumption intentions.

3.4.9 Sanuk Value and Sanuk Consumption Intentions

As described in Chapter 2, tendency to engage in something fun to relieve boredom, reduce tension, or simply enjoy the moment is widespread among Ethnic Thais. Scholars believe that the sanuk value is indirectly shaped in part by the Buddhist concept of moderation of all things, stressing the ability to strike a balance between being extreme and being inactive. Emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, it is best that one be consistent, avoid extremes, and not to expect too much of oneself. The sanuk value thus finds pervasive usage in all situations whereby a person can “switch” into fun-oriented mode to prevent experiencing boredom, fatigue, or even an emotional extreme. Based on the literature, it is therefore appropriate to hypothesize that Ethnic Thai individuals endorse the sanuk value and behavior.

Sanuk intentions in consumption settings are likely common whenever a consumer feels the need to engage in good fun activities, especially activities that are unbound by complications so as to enjoy the passing moment as much as possible. For example, an individual might choose an entertainment-oriented TV program over a knowledge-based program, bowling with friends over a self-improvement exercise program, or selecting a pleasant shopping mall over a crowded market. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H9: Sanuk value associates with sanuk consumption intentions.

3.4.10 Family Oriented Value and Family Oriented Consumption Intentions

The family has been an important social institution for Chinese people for a long period of time. The family is reflected in many Chinese Thai ritual practices that convey respect and unity among all family members. For example, Chinese Thais observe many important family functions: grandparent's sixty year-old celebration, Chinese New Year celebration, family reunion on important days, ancestral worshipping duties of family members, and the practice of splitting personal salary to parents.

According to literature summarized in Chapter 2, the high level of family orientation can be attributed in part to long-standing Chinese traditions that are deep-rooted in Confucianism. Traditionally, Chinese people believe that relationships with others, especially among immediate family members are continuous and can hardly be broken (Yau 1988). Another contributing factor that prompt Chinese people to embrace the family oriented value are the lessons learned from early generations where security can be obtained reliably from family members.

Family oriented intentions in consumption settings are likely common. For example, remembering the birthday of a family member by giving special attention or treatment, choosing a product or a product feature designed for a family rather than solely for one's self, and quitting bad habits for family sake. Response intentions in such circumstances might involve buying a birthday cake or card, taking out family members out for a meal, buying a safe car for family usage over a sports car, choosing a family style resort for a vacation, and quitting or refraining from smoking on family request. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H10: Family oriented value associates with family consumption intentions.

3.4.11 Future Oriented Value and Future Oriented Consumption Intentions

As described in Chapter 2, Chinese people have developed a future oriented value because of social insecurity problems, frequent natural disasters, and Confucianism. Each has contributed toward the future oriented value in Chinese-Thai culture.

Because social insecurity (e.g. regime changes, social uprisings, lack of government attention) and natural disasters (e.g. flooding, severe drought, earthquake) were the norm throughout Chinese history, Chinese people had little choice but to help themselves in protecting their own interests. To do this, Chinese people have developed the future oriented value as a mechanism to help them anticipate and manage all type of risks. As a result, the risk aversion value functions much like a “shield” that protects individuals from unexpected losses in order to secure stability and continuity of oneself as well as of other family members. One other important factor is the Confucian philosophy that Chinese individuals are taught from early age to be patient, hardworking, and to try to be educated in order to ensure good living in old ages. Consistent with Confucius’s teaching is the ancient Chinese proverb, “hard working creates earlier spring” (*ren qin chun lai zao*) (Robertson and Hoffman 2000; Wang et al. 2005). Confucius also laid groundwork for the deeply embedded future oriented value through his emphasis in the importance of scholarly learning, an important and necessary condition under which future oriented value can flourish.

Based on the literature, Chinese Thai individuals as descendants of Mainland Chinese are therefore expected to share the future oriented value to the same extent as their forefathers.

Future oriented intentions in consumption settings are likely common whenever a consumer becomes interested not only in immediate causes and consequences but also in unseen future conditions with regard to a product or service. This can be, for example, willingness to delay purchase on some logical basis, engaging in the purchase of big-ticket items only when one is really ready to be committed (e.g. homes, cars, expensive holiday trips), and a type of product that has high resale value. Response intentions in

such circumstances might involve being patient with the long-awaited product purchase instead of compromising on product choices, buying a car that has a high resale value or high fuel economy, and using a credit card only when there is enough to pay expenses incurred. All would involve some degree of consideration with regard to product consumption in the post purchase. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H11: Future oriented value associates with future oriented consumption intentions.

3.4.12 Risk Aversion Value and Risk Aversion Consumption Intentions

As described in Chapter 2, Chinese people are expected to conform to behavioral codes where social deviance is questioned and sanctioned by reference groups members (such as family, relatives, close friends, colleagues, bosses) (Usunier 1996). Risk-taking behaviors are regarded as challenges to the group's interest and existence such that risk related values and behaviors often are discouraged.

In Asian culture, a Chinese individual views oneself as always interconnected with significant others (Gao 1998; Ho 1987). Because the self is embedded in the context of the community, any behaviors deemed as inappropriate to the self can also be just as highly questionable for the group that one identifies with. Risk becomes something that a Chinese individual is uncomfortable living with and risks must be assessed and managed. The value is evidenced by widespread practices for both Chinese individuals and organizations to build some reciprocal social network like *guanxi* so as to manage unanticipated social risks and market volatilities. Based on ideas discussed in Chapter 2 and this section, it is apparent that Chinese Thai individuals will act no differently from Mainland and Overseas Chinese in that they are attentive to all risk related situations.

Risk aversion intentions in a consumption setting are likely common whenever the setting involves substantial physical, financial, or social uncertainty. For example, spending 40,000 baht on a new motorcycle is more risky than spending the same amount of money on a vacation in Singapore; investing 200,000 baht in a small retail shop is more risky

than investing the same amount in a savings account; buying a new decorative rug for one's home that all guests will see is more risky than buying a new bed for the same amount of money. Other examples involving the risk aversion value in a consumption setting include watching an unplanned movie, purchase of a new product innovation, and buying branded products offered at highly discounted prices. Intentions in such circumstances might involve avoiding the risky choices or collecting information about unknown consumption choices and their outcomes. Both would involve avoiding or reducing risk. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H12: Risk aversion value associates with risk aversion consumption intentions.

3.4.13 Thrift Value and Thrift Consumption Intentions

As discussed in Chapter 2, subsistence living and Confucianism are among the contributing factors to development of the thrift value found in Chinese cultures. The thrift value is, as a matter of fact, one of the most stereotyped traits of Chinese individuals described by Western scholars.

Chinese individuals are known to be thrifty. Scholars have attributed this to the norm of having to live through a long periods of uncertainty with few social securities available. This thrift value is passed from generation-to-generation through parental influence. The value is a pervasive “defensive” weapon that Chinese people use to combat poverty. One other broad but equally powerful influence on the thrift value is Confucianism. The need for glorification of family name becomes a necessary ground to harbor strict money management skills used by Chinese individuals to accumulate, invest, and earn in excess in order to become a measurement yardstick of their success. The same need holds for Chinese Thai whose ancestry had instilled the thrift value as early as the time of immigration to Thailand. Examples of the thrift value at work in Thailand can be found aplenty, as story after story can be told of how Chinese Thai individuals have risen to stand the forefront of Thailand's modern society and become much revered business elites.

Thrift intentions in a consumption setting are likely common especially when a person feels the need to be restrained in acquiring and using economic resources to achieve goals. For example, a person might reuse or adapt old personal belongings for other usages and continue to use old products for extended periods of time, such as a mobile phone, computer, or car. Response intentions in such a circumstances might involve a commitment to purchase only when there is a legitimate, rational justification for the purchase. This includes getting replacements only if it is worth the purchase, acquiring product replacements only at the targeted price to be bargained for, or to return a good to a store because one feels the product is a waste of money. All would reflect intentions of restraint and economic justification for money spending. The hypothesized relationship is posited as follows:

H13: Thrift value associates with thrift oriented consumption intentions.

3.5 Associations Between Ethnicity and Ritual Practices

As described in Chapter 2, ritual practices are highly scripted events where people can fulfill their cultural traditions. Ritual practices are socially standardized sequences of actions that are periodically repeated, to provide meaning and symbolize cultural beliefs and feelings. Ritual practices often are contextually bound and accompanied by product and service consumptions of one form or another, based on the special occasion. Based on these ideas, the fourth proposition is that ethnicity associates with ritual practices. The proposition supports eight hypotheses as indicated in Tables 5.40 and 5.41.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 describes a conceptual framework depicting proposed relationships of the study's five central constructs—core cultural values, ritual practices, ethnicity, consumption attitudes, and consumption intentions. Along with the conceptual framework, discussions of hypothesized relationships in the form of propositions and hypotheses also are underscored within this Chapter.