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A Comparative Analysis of Personal Values of International Postgraduate Students from Asia Studying in Australian Universities: A Cross Cultural Study

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Abstract

The rising expectations of university students with regard to quality, service and value for money, and the growing diversity of student populations have challenged universities to become increasingly student focused. Marketing theory suggests that a clear understanding of customer needs and expectations is central to being customer focused and to facilitate targeting of products and services to appropriate segments. The process requires the marketer to have insights into the cultural backgrounds of customers where the study of personal values becomes a critical component in understanding consumer needs and preferences. The results of this study indicate that personal values are useful in explaining differences amongst the student cohorts with regard to age, gender and nationality. Recommendations are made with regard to developing the educational product for the international student, based on underlying value domains of Self-efficacy and Hedonism.

Introduction

This study is focussed on marketing within the context of the tertiary education environment in Australia. The international education market has shown a steady growth over the past two decades (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA), 1999) with evidence of further growth in the future. A forecast by International Development Programs (IDP) Australia estimated an average compound growth rate of 5.8% in the global demand for international education reaching around 7.2 million students by 2025 (Bohm at al, 2002). Asia is expected to continue to be the key driver of demand for higher education, whilst the Middle East, Southern and Eastern Europe are expected to become new sources of students seeking higher education overseas. Australia, still a small player in the international education market, is expected to absorb increasing numbers of students from its traditional markets in Asia, and target those markets emerging in the Middle East, Southern and Eastern Europe.

According DETYA (2000), substantial variations exist in the age of students studying in Australia, yet there is somewhat equal representation in terms of the gender distribution. A large majority of students (88%) are aged between 25-60 years, recording an average age of 37 years. Seven percent of students are aged 25 years or younger and only about 5% of students are over 60 years of age. While these demographic statistics provide a profile of international students in Australia, profiling the market using psychographics, such as personal values, can provide greater insights into consumer attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Scott and Lamont (1973) indicated that personal values can have a direct effect on the expectations of consumers on product and services and the criteria used to evaluate the
performance of these products and services. More importantly, Vinson, Munson and Nakanishi (1977), and Vinson and Gutman (1978) have shown that personal value systems have an impact on consumer dissatisfaction and suggest that an understanding of the role of culture is an essential requirement with regard to marketing concepts.

Accommodating cultural diversity has challenged universities to become increasingly customer focused and to deliver satisfaction in terms of outcomes expected by the students (Coldrake, 2001). Given the forecast growth of international student markets in Australia, the cultural diversity of student populations will likely increase, there is a need to investigate differences across cultures to enhance the competitiveness of the Australian tertiary sector in the international market.

The aim of this paper is to examine the differences in personal values among Asian international postgraduate students from China, India, Indonesia and Thailand studying in Australian universities based on nationality, gender and age and to discuss marketing implications of these differences. The focus of this study, on postgraduate students, is dictated by the limitation in research in the past on these issues and the growth potential of the postgraduate student market. The countries included in the study are also the key sources of international postgraduate students for Australia and recent statistics indicate continuing growth in student enrolments for postgraduate studies in Australia (Australian Education International (AEI), 2000).

The research question investigated in this paper is “Are there differences in personal values of postgraduate international students and if so, how do they differ in terms of nationality, age and gender?

The specific objectives of the paper are to:
- assess differences between nationalities and individual List of Values (LOV) variables;
- determine group differences between nationalities and personal value domains and their importance to each culture; and
- test and examine differences between personal values and age and gender characteristics.

This paper will firstly provide backgrounds to the concept of personal values and culture. The research methodology will be described and the results presented. The results will be discussed and conclusions made. The limitations of the study will be acknowledged and recommendations for further research will then be presented.

Literature Review
Personal values

Skinner (1971) suggested that personal values are epiphenomena, or that “they are merely words socialisers teach to children and are unrelated to guidance of behaviour or attitudes” (Homer and Kahle, 1988, p. 638). In the more contemporary literature, however, there is very little debate as to whether this is the case. It is now considered that personal values assist individuals to form their attitudes, and ultimately the behavior that they choose. Rokeach (1973, p.5) stated that values are “enduring beliefs that a particular mode of behavior or end-state of existence is preferable to opposite modes of behavior or end-state”. He proposed that the theory of personal values was relevant to all areas of life, suggesting that it is one’s personal values that will influence one’s preferred choice of behaviour in any given situation. Long and Shiffman (2000, p.216) stated that personal values “guide actions, attitudes, judgments, and comparisons across specific objects and situations”.

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Erdem, Oumilli and Tuncalp, (1999, p. 137) stated that “personal values have significant implications for marketing theoreticians and practitioners alike”. They identified three main uses of personal values in a marketing context, namely: to describe the value structure of populations; to explain differences in value systems among groups or individuals who are defined a priori; or as a criterion for segmenting the population into homogenous groups of individuals who share a common value system.

Many personal values have been identified. In some of the earliest work on personal values, Vernon and Allport (1931) empirically tested a set of personal values that encompassed six constructs, namely, theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious in nature. Since the work of Rokeach in the mid-1970’s, which advanced the theory of personal values, a number of other personal values have been identified, including the need for warm relationships, security, excitement, fun and enjoyment and achievement (Kahle, Beatty, and Homer, 1986); equality, inner harmony and a comfortable life (Rokeach, 1973); private materialism (Easterlin and Crimmins, 1991) and post-materialism (David and Davenport, 1999).

In explaining how individuals use their personal values, Rokeach argued that personal values assist one to rationalise one’s attitudes and behaviours that would otherwise be personally or socially unacceptable. When individuals are confronted with situations where they are forced to make choices, Rokeach suggested that they will order their personal values hierarchically. In ordering one’s personal values systematically, or hierarchically, Rokeach believed that individuals are then able to overcome some of the conflicting situations in their lives. As such, personal values are thought to exist within fewer domains. Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) identified that the personal values of enjoyment, security, achievement, self-direction, restricted conformity, prosocial and maturity personal value domains underlie many more individual personal values. Subsequent research on personal values indicates the existence of internally and externally focused personal value domains [See, for example, Madrigal (1995); Thrane (2000); and Fall and Knutson (2001). Thus, the theory of personal values is considered to be more complex than a single value influencing a single attitude or behaviour.

Brangule-Vlagsma, Pieters and Weidel (2002) noted that personal values, and the systems in which they are often organised, are subject to both endogenous and exogenous forces. As examples of these forces, endogenous forces include becoming a parent or changing jobs whereas exogenous forces can include economic impacts or natural disasters. Kahle (1983) noted that personal values are likely to change for societies over time, represented by ‘shifts’. Shifts in personal value systems, or the ways in which personal values are organised in relation to each other, have been noticed over a 10-year period in America from 1970 to 1980 (Kahle, 1983). Inglehart (1990) also noted that shifts in personal value systems are always likely to occur, despite personal values themselves being relatively stable over time. Muller and Woodcock (1997) noted that a shift occurred in the personal value systems of the Australian ‘Early Baby Boomers’ between 1976 and 1986. Since the seminal work of Rokeach in the mid-1970’s, considerable research has been undertaken to explore the ways in which personal values can be measured. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been devised to measure personal values and the domains underlying them. Means-end analysis, which is primarily a qualitative research approach for the study of personal values, is predicated on linkages between the “physical attributes that exist in products (‘the means’), the consequences for the consumer provided by the attributes, and the personal values (‘the ends’) the consequences reinforce” (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988, p.11). Reynolds and Gutman (1988) proposed the collection of data for this purpose
using the ‘laddering’ interview technique, when the objective of the interview is to identify
the cause of the behaviour, which it is believed will be attributable to the interviewee’s
system of personal values. The interview is analysed and the researchers develop a ‘means-
end chain’ for interpretation.

The most commonly used quantitative measures of personal values are the Rokeach Value
Survey of Rokeach (RVS) (1979) and the List Of Values of Khale (1983) and Veroff,
Douvan and Kulk (1981). These instruments are in the public domain and have been used
extensively in research on personal values, and have used items from the RVS to develop a
scale that has subsequently been tested cross-culturally. Daghfous et al. (1999) stated that
there is some agreement amongst researchers on the LOV’s superiority in relation to the
RVS. Criticism has, however, been levelled at quantitative measures of personal values as it
has often been found that respondents find it difficult to differentiate between personal values
based on the level of importance they ascribe to them. McCarty and Shrum (2000) proposed a
method to assist in overcoming this issue that familiarises respondents with the list of
personal values being used before they are asked to rate their importance of them. These
authors, using both the LOV and the RVS, demonstrated that this approach to the collection
of data on personal values improves the interpretability of the results obtained. In their study,
the LOV outperformed the RVS in terms of its interpretability of results.

The LOV consists of nine personal values, namely a sense of belonging, sense of
accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, warm relationships, excitement, being well-respected,
security, self-respect and self-fulfilment. Seven- or nine-point Likert scales are generally used
for data collection. Studies using the LOV, in a number of consumption scenarios and
cultures, have identified intrinsically-oriented and extrinsically-oriented personal value
domains [see for example, Thrane (1997a); Jago (1997); and Fall and Knutson (2001)]. The
intrinsically-oriented personal value domain is generally associated with achievement-based
personal values, such as to have a sense of accomplishment or to have security. The
extrinsically-oriented personal value domain is, on the other hand, generally associated with
how individuals relate to others. To be in warm relationships and to be well-respected, for
example, are often found to be associated with this personal value domain. In some studies, a
hedonistic personal value domain, comprised of to have fun and enjoyment and to have
excitement, has emerged. Some criticism, however, has been directed at the LOV in terms of
its validity across cultures and its use in consumption scenarios. Many of the results obtained
using the LOV in western cultures have been consistent and its use in these contexts seems
appropriate.

Personal values have been studied in a number of consumption scenarios, including that of
frequency programs (Long and Schiffman, 2000); retail outlets (Erdem et al., 1999); special
events (Hede, Jago and Deery, 2004; Jago, 1997); beer and smoking consumption (Kropp,
Lavack, and Holden, 1999); television consumption (McDaniel, 2002); and ski destinations
(Klenosky et al., 1993; Thrane, 1997a). Since the seminal work of Schwartz and Bilsky
(1990), when the structure of personal values in a cross-cultural context were investigated,
interest in the differing roles of personal values across cultures has grown.

Culture
The academic literature is replete with cross-cultural research explaining the behavioural
characteristics of different nationalities based on their values and beliefs. Kluckhohn and
Strodtteck (1961), Hofstede (1980) and Triandis (1995) are among the leading researchers
who have studied comparative differences between cultures of the world. Marketing theorists agree that culture, as well as values, are underlying determinants of consumer behaviour.

The empirical evidence suggests that the estimation of the impact of cultural background on the evaluation of the quality of service of a firm or institution would provide valuable input for international market segmentation and resource allocation across different service quality dimensions. It is argued that if there is a variation in the relative importance attached to the different service quality dimensions, then resource allocation should be guided by such differences. Cultural differences and international market segmentation have been the subject of controversy over the degree to which marketing activities could or should be standardised globally and the degree to which they should be localised (Levitt, 1983). Standardisation, an important aspect of globalisation, can cause problems in services, given their unique characteristics. Lovelock and Yip (1996) categorised services into (a) people processing services that involve tangible actions to customers in person (b) possession-processing service that involve tangible actions to physical object, and (c) information-based services that create value through collection, manipulation, interpretation and transmission of data. People processing services, where there is a high degree of interaction between the customers and service personnel, in particular are most strongly influenced by cultural elements (Furrer et al, 2000).

University education is a service characterised by a high degree of interaction between students and the universities as service providers. Given the cultural diversity of the target student groups in this study, it is logical to expect variances in the level of importance given to services provided by the university and as a result, differences in the satisfaction outcomes by nationality of the students in relation to their university life.

Methodology
Questionnaire development

A questionnaire was developed for this study that included questions covering a range of concepts, including personal values, satisfaction, behavioural intentions and demographics. Not all the results or analyses of the data collected are reported on in this paper, as this study focussed on the relationships between gender, age, nationality and personal values. Personal values were measured with the LOV using a seven-point scale, where ‘1’ represented strongly disagree and ‘7’ represented strongly agree. The LOV consists of nine statements relating to personal values, namely a sense of belonging, sense of accomplishment, fun and enjoyment, warm relationships, excitement, being well-respected, security, self-respect and self-fulfillment. Whilst some criticism has been directed towards the LOV, in terms of its validity across cultures, it has demonstrated high levels of validity since its development and therefore its use in this study is justified. For example, Daghfous, Petrof and Pons (1999) and Steenkamp, Ter Hofstede and Wedel (1999) have investigated the role of personal values in predicting consumer innovativeness across a number of cultures; Chung-Tung Lowe and Corkindale (1998) investigated the role of personal values in determining responses to advertising. The questionnaire was piloted with a group of international students at one of the universities participating in the study. The results of this aspect of the study indicated that the questionnaire was manageable by all four cultures.

Sample and data collection methods

Data were collected from a sample of postgraduate students from China, India, Indonesia and Thailand in a cross-section of universities in Victoria, Australia. A total of five universities participated in the study. The data collection method was aimed at reaching every international postgraduate student belonging to the four nationality groups in the universities
participating in the study. The International Offices of each of the universities generated unique data bases of post-graduate students whose nationalities were those of interest to this study. A total of 2514 questionnaires were sent to students directly from the International Offices.

**Data analysis**

Given the aim of this study and the research questions that were posed, and to ensure equality of variance across the student groups for the same variables and the reliability and validity of predictions (Hair et al, 1995), the sample for this study was reduced to an approximate uniform sample sizes with regard to nationality and university. This was achieved by employing a systematic random sampling approach. Univariate data analysis was undertaken to develop a preliminary profile of the sample.

Following this, multivariate data analyses were employed. Factor analysis was undertaken of the personal values data to determine the underlying personal value domains. To measure sampling adequacy, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was employed. Bartlett’s test of sphericity was then used determine the appropriateness of factor analysis for application to the data. The factor scores were then used to test for differences across the nationalities with regard to their personal values systems. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) tests were employed to examine the differences between the nationalities based on their personal values, gender and age. ANOVA is a statistical technique used to determine, on the basis of one dependent measure, whether samples are from populations with equal means (Hair et al. 1995). In this study, ANOVA was employed to estimate if significant differences were evident between the nationalities in relation to the variables that make up the LOV. MANOVA was used to assess group differences across multiple metric dependant variables simultaneously.

**Results**

A total 573 useable questionnaires were received providing response rate of 24.3 per cent. The systematic random sampling approach aimed at ensuring equality of variance across the student groups (Hair et al, 1998) resulted in a sample size of 371. This comprised approximately 90 cases for each nationality across the five universities.

The majority of the sample (70.4%) was aged below 30 years. The age category 25-29 was the largest group representing 40% of the total sample. Thirty percent of students were below 25 years. Students from India were the youngest in the sample compared to all other student groups, accounting for 52.7% of the 21-24 year age category and 34% of the age category less than 30 years. Students from China, on the other hand, were generally older accounting for nearly 38% of all students aged between 30-34 years, and 73% of all students over 35 years. In comparison, students from Indonesia and Thailand were generally aged between 25-34 years. For example, 36.2% of Indonesian students and 30% of Thai students fell into the age group between 25-29 years, while another 31% of Indonesian students and 22.5% of Thai students belonged to the age category of 30-34 years.

The gender distribution of the sample was 196 males and 175 females, representing 53% and 47% respectively of the sample. While the sample of students from China and Indonesia had roughly equal proportions of males and females, higher male representation in the Indian sample (60 males representing 63% of all Indian students, and 37% of all males in the total sample), and higher female representation of 52 students in the Thai sample (nearly 60% of all Thai students, and 30% of all females in the total sample) was a significant feature in the gender distribution.
Following the descriptive analysis of the data, a factor analysis was conducted to establish the communality of variables of the personal values data. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) (.839) measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the data met this criteria and Bartlett’s test of sphericity ($p = .000$) also indicated the appropriateness of the data for use in factor analysis. The factor solution comprised two factors with eigenvalues greater than one. The first factor explained 55.3 per cent of the variance and the second factor explained 18.2 per cent of the variance. (see Table 1). Overall, the two-factor solution explained 73.5 percent of the variance.

Table 1 displays the LOV items that load on each of the factors and their respective factor loadings. Given that the items that loaded on the first factor were associated with self-control, it was labelled Self-efficacy. Those LOV items that loaded most highly on this factor were ‘to be well respected’, ‘to have self-respect’ and ‘to have self-fulfilment’. As ‘to have fun and enjoyment’ and ‘to have excitement’ relate to a hedonistic personal value domain, the second factor was labelled Hedonism.

Table 1: Factor Analysis of Values: factor Scores and Variance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOV items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Hedonism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being well respected</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have self respect</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have self-fulfilment</td>
<td>.764</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a sense of Accomplishment</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a warm relationship with others</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a sense of belonging</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have security</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have fun and enjoyment in life</td>
<td></td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have excitement</td>
<td></td>
<td>.683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of variance explained</strong></td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>18.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*KMO .839 Bartlett’s Coefficient .000

Nationality

A significant difference (.001) across the values constructs of Self-efficacy and Hedonism was obtained using MANOVA with regard to the nationality grouping of the students. Further investigation using ANOVA found that each variable of each construct varied significantly (.001) according to nationality grouping. The differences are highlighted in Table 2 which shows the relative importance of the values for the national groupings based on mean score for each personal value.

Table 2: Relative importance of personal values by nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal value domain</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Nationality Importance</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor One: Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being well respected</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have self respect</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have self-fulfilment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a sense of accomplishment</td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a warm relationship with others</td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have security</td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor Two: Hedonism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have fun and enjoyment in life</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have excitement</td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7
Students from India ranked very highly on values associated with *Self-efficacy*, followed by Indonesian students, while Indonesian and Thai students attached greater importance on values associated with *Hedonism*. On average, Chinese students appear to attach relatively low importance to both factors. In terms of the individual variables, *security* was more important to Indonesian students as was *fun and enjoyment in life* while *excitement* was more important to Thai students.

**Gender**

MANOVA highlighted significant differences (.001) for Indonesian and Indian students with regard to gender on the constructs of *Self-efficacy* and *Hedonism* respectively. ANOVA was used to provide further insights into these results. Table 3 shows the mean scores and the levels of significance of the individual variables for each construct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal value domain</th>
<th>Nationality &amp; Gender</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor One: Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being well respected</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>6.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have self respect</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>6.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a warm relationship with others</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>6.89**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have security</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>6.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance level: ****.0001, ***.001, **.01, *.05, ns - not significant

ANOVA results indicated that there are significant gender differences at varying levels in relation to a number of personal values among the student cohorts. For example the differences among Indian students were significant at .05 for the values *being well respected* and *to have a sense of accomplishment*, while the values *to have fun and enjoyment in life*, *to have security* and *to have excitement* were highly significant at .0001, .001 and .01 respectively. This contrasts with differences at a significance level of .05 for Chinese students for the values *to have self respect* and *to have self-fulfilment*. For each of the variables differences were more pronounced for females than males as shown by the mean scores. No significant differences were evident using ANOVA for Indonesian or Thai students.

**Age**

MANOVA results showed that there are significant differences (.001) within age categories among Indonesian and Indian students for the Self-efficacy construct and Thai students in relation to the *Hedonism* construct. There were no significant differences in relation to the Self-efficacy construct among Chinese or Thai students, similarly with regard to the *Hedonism* construct no significant differences on age was found among Chinese, Indonesian and Indian students.
Further analysis using ANOVA of the variables related to Self-efficacy and Hedonism constructs revealed that there are significant differences (.05) for values of being well respected and to have self respect for Indonesian students and to have excitement among Thai students. No significant differences were found among students from other countries of origin.

The key finding is that there appears to be two distinct trends with regard to the importance attached to the personal values within the two constructs as indicated by the respective means scores. For example in the case of the values in the Self-efficacy construct, the importance ratings of Indonesian students are high among younger and older age groups with middle age groups showing relatively lower level of importance. However, in relation to the Hedonism construct, there appears to be an inverse relationship between age and the value to have excitement where the importance attached to the value declines with the increase in age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal value domain</th>
<th>Nationality and Age</th>
<th>21-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35+</th>
<th>21-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor One: Self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being well respected *</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>Ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have self respect *</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>Ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Two: Hedonism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have excitement *</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance level: * .05, ns - not significant

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study provide opportunities for the marketers of tertiary education to hone their communications and services to the psychographic needs of students with various cultures. The results of this study provide insights into the differences in personal values of postgraduate students from Asia and how they vary by nationality, age and gender. The two factor solution (Self-efficacy and Hedonism) with 73.5 percent explained variance indicates a high reliability of the LOV across all national groups. Whilst there has been some discussion in the literature about the application of the LOV in cross-cultural studies, the results of the factor analysis of the LOV items indicate the LOV explains a large proportion of the variance. Given this, subsequent analysis in this study with the LOV and the LOV factors are predicated on a solid foundation.

The findings also suggest significant differences between student groups in relation to the LOV items highlighting some distinctive features in relation to their nationality, age and gender. MANOVA results indicate significant differences (.001) among all student groups by nationality in relation to the value constructs Self-efficacy and Hedonism. For example, the results in Table 2 would suggest that whilst students of an Indian and Indonesian background are moderately predisposed to hedonistic values, they seem to place more importance on personal values that are underlying the domain of Self-efficacy. With this information, marketers should consider highlighting the opportunities that can be had at their university to fulfil related personal value goals – this could be achieved in brochures and web-based communication. In developing products for Indian and Indonesian students, self-paced learning approaches may be an appropriate means of enabling these student cohorts to feel that they are in control of their learning experiences whilst in Australia.
The ANOVA results corroborate with MANOVA on nationality differences with regard to individual LOV items in each of the constructs with a significance level of .001 though ANOVA highlights other differences in relation to individual LOV items. The rankings of the individual LOV items were high (>5 out of 7) indicating the recognition of these values by all nationality groups. However, Indian students appear to place greater importance on values in the Self-efficacy construct than other student groups while Indonesian and Thai students seem to indicate greater importance to values in the Hedonism construct. Among the individual LOV items to have security within Self-efficacy construct and to have fun and enjoyment and to have excitement within the Hedonism construct appear to reflect the overall value perceptions of the students.

With regard to Age and Gender, the differences are significant only among Indonesian and Indian students according to MANOVA for the constructs considered in totality. However ANOVA results indicate a more disparate picture among student groups when the individual variables that make up each of the constructs are considered separately. While Being well respected, to have self respect, to have security and to have fun and enjoyment appear to be the predominant values where significant differences are found, Chinese students in particular seem to be more concerned with values of, to have self respect and to have security reflecting the influence of the cultural heritage related to Confucianism. Indian students also seem to display similar values of respect as the Chinese students, but differ from their orientation towards Hedonism values shared with Indonesian and Thai students.

This information highlights the need for education providers to focus on the traditional values that international students may have when they offer their services. Whilst the LOV was treated as generic tool to measure students’ values across a range of cultures, cultural values appear to influence the attitudes that students have of the personal values in the LOV. For example, even though international students may be undertaking education within a foreign educational system, it may be useful to consider incorporating some of the cultural aspects of their own educational systems, particularly in the early stages of their education in Australia, to enhance their experience.

Limitations and Future Research
The main limitation of the study relates to the sample which consisted of a limited number of Asian groups. Further, the study was undertaken in one state of Australia and further research could address this sampling issue. Some caution is, therefore, required with regard to the generalisation of the results to other states of Australia, and international students in general, which may experience different student cultural groups. This research, however, provides a platform for further research in this area of marketing. Future research could employ samples with greater diversity with regard to nationality, which would provide more opportunities for comparative analysis. Whilst this study investigated students using personal values, as a means of profiling and as a point of comparison, future research could investigate the role of personal values in the consumption process, especially with regard to student satisfaction with services delivered by tertiary institutions.

References


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