Are "Consumer Social Responsibility" and "Consumer Ethics" Concepts Interchangeable? The Effect of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions[1]

Niray TUNÇEL[2]

Bahtışen KAVAK[3]

Aslı ÇİLLİOĞLU KARADEMİR[4]

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to measure whether Hofstede's cultural dimensions influence the interchangeability of consumer social responsibility (CSR) and consumer ethics (CE). The current study consists of two steps; (1) A questionnaire, which comprises of socially responsible consumer behavior scale (Roberts, 1996) and consumer ethics scale (Vitell and Muncy, 1992) is conducted on 111 undergraduate students. According to the results of aforementioned data revealed the items with higher factor loadings (cut-off value = .45). (2) A second questionnaire, which comprises of these items and Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Yoo et al., 2004) is conducted on 165 undergraduate students. The frequency analysis showed that a majority of the respondents classified CE items as a CE issue, CSR items as a CSR issue correctly; however, three CSR items are misclassified as a CE issue. The logistic regression results demonstrated

that power distance and individualism/collectivism are the predictors of congruence between CSR and CE scale items.

Keywords: Consumer Social Responsibility, Consumer Ethics, Hofstede's Cultural Dimension

"Tüketici Sosyal Sorumluluğu" ve "Tüketici Etiği" Birbirlerine İkame Eden Kavramlar mıdır? Hofstede'in Kültürel Boyutlarının Etkisi

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı tüketici sosyal sorumluluğu (TSS) ve tüketici etiği (TE) kavramlarının birbirlerinin yerine kullanılabilmesinde Hofstede'in kültürel boyutlarının etkisinin olup olmadığını test etmektir. Bu çalışma 2 aşamadan oluşmaktadır: (1) 111 lisans öğrencisine sosyal sorumlu tüketici davranışı ölçeği (Roberts, 1996) ve tüketici etiği ölçeğinin (Vitell ve Muncy, 1992) yer aldığı bir anket uygulamıştır. Söz konusu veriye göre daha yüksek faktör yüküne sahip ifadeler (eşik değer = .45) ortaya çıkarılmıştır. (2) 165 lisans öğrencisine bu ifadelerin ve Hofstede'nin kültürel boyutlarının (Yoo et al., 2004) yer aldığı ikinci bir anket uygulanmıştır. Frekans analizi sonuçları katılımcıların çoğunluğunun TSS ifadelerini doğru bir şekilde sosyal sorumluluk meselesi olarak ve TE ifadelerini de doğru bir şekilde tüketici etiği meselesi olarak sınıflandırdıklarını göstermektedir. Ancak, katılımcıların çoğu üç TSS ifadesini tüketici etiği konusu olarak yanlış bir şekilde sınıflandırmıştır. Lojistik regresyon sonuçları güç mesafesi ve bireycilik/toplulukçuluk boyutlarının, TSS ölçeği ifadelerinin yanlış bir şekilde tüketici etiği meselesi olarak sınıflandırılmasında önemli etkileyenler olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tüketici Sosyal Sorumluluğu, Tüketici Etiği, Hofstede'in Kültürel Boyutları

Introduction

Social responsibility is known as an 'obligation' to act for society. It is a kind of duty of every individual to take economy, ecosystems, etc. into consideration. Ethics, on the other hand, is not an obligation. Bunge (2012) explained ethics such as about the good (that is, what values and virtues we should cultivate) and about the right (that is, what our moral duties may be). Consumers' 'obligations' and 'right and wrongs' are the basics values for all societies. Consumer shapes consumerism which is full of some obligations coming from laws and right and wrong coming from the ethical values of that society consumption itself. So it should be understood what is an obligation (social responsibility), and what is right & wrong (ethics) or how much they are replaceable from the consumer point of view within a specific culture.

Researchers have tried to determine the socially responsible and ethical behaviors of the consumers. However, it is still a point at issue that which behaviors are related to social responsibility and which are related to ethics due to a lack of explicit difference between these concepts. According to Fisher (2004), there are inconsistencies in the way these two terms are used and defined. A behavior considered responsible might be ethically neutral or unsound as well as an ethically dictated action might be socially unacceptable in a given society (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987). Therefore, these inconsistencies make it difficult for consumers to evaluate their behaviors or behavioral intentions ethically or responsibly. Besides, culture is a significant factor influencing consumers' ethical decision making and behavior (Singhapakdi et al., 1994; Tavakoli et al., 2003) and also socially responsible decision making and behavior; as ethics is considered to be one of the dimensions of social responsibility (Carroll, 1979; Devinney et al., 2006).

A well-known typology, Hofstede's cultural dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and masculinity/femininity, cover the main components of culture (Nakata and Sivakumar, 1996). Also, these dimensions are accepted to influence the ethical perspectives of the individuals (e.g. Armstrong, 1996; Lu et al., 1999; Vitell

et al.,1993) so the social responsibility perspectives of them as ethics is considered to be one of the dimensions of social responsibility.

As it is mentioned above, it is hard for consumers to recognize which behaviors are associated with ethics and which are associated with social responsibility. However, in consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics scales, it is assumed that consumers are able to perceive the given behaviors correctly as a consumer social responsibility issue or correctly as a consumer ethics issue. At this point, a question comes to mind "Are consumers able to correctly recognize the socially responsible and ethical behaviors?", which has been an unnoticed issue in current literature.

From this point of view, the purpose of this study is to determine to what extent behaviors are considered within the scope of social responsibility and ethics and if any of them is evaluated interchangeable. Additionally, how much of this interchangeability is explained by which of Hofstede's cultural dimensions is tested. For this purpose, a two-step research design is adopted. In the first step, a questionnaire consisting of socially responsible consumer behavior scale (Roberts, 1996) and consumer ethics scale (Vitell and Muncy, 1992) is conducted on 111 undergraduate students. With an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), higher factor loaded items are revealed. In the second step, a second questionnaire with these items and Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Yoo et al., 2004) is conducted on 165 undergraduate students. The results indicated that power distance and individualism/collectivism dimensions are the predictors of the perceived interchangeability of the CSR and CE scales items.

In the light of the explanations made above, in this study firstly social responsibility and ethics concepts are introduced and evaluated from the consumer side. Then, the effect of culture on these concepts is discussed. In research design section, two-step survey conducted to answer the research questions in current study is explained in detail. Lastly, in line with the results of the analysis, interchangeability of ethics and social responsibility concepts are discussed along with Hofstede's cultural dimensions and some recommendations for further researches are exhibited.

Are "Consumer Social Responsibility" and "Consumer Ethics" Concepts
Interchangeable? The Effect of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

39

Social Responsibility and Ethics

There is a debate in the literature on ethics and social responsibility (e.g. Robin and Reidenbach, 1987; Fisher, 2004). On the one stream, ethics and social responsibility are sometimes mutually inclusive so that ethical behavior may be considered as socially responsible behavior. Carroll (1979; 1991) and Devinney et al. (2006) claim that ethics is one of the dimensions of social responsibility besides economic, legal, and philanthropic dimensions. On the other stream, in a given society actions that can be defined as social responsible may be ethically neutral or unsound. Similarly, actions that would be dictated by moral philosophy could be seen as socially unacceptable (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987) since social responsibility includes 'obligation', but ethics includes relativity as 'right-wrong' values. According to Fisher (2004), there are inconsistencies in the way ethics and social responsibility are defined and used. A behavior considered responsible might be ethically neutral or unsound as well as an ethically dictated action might be socially unacceptable in a given society (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987).

Besides, there is a lack of explicit difference between these concepts. Therefore, it is not clarified that which behaviors are related to social responsibility and which are related to ethics. Also, these inconsistencies make it difficult for consumers to evaluate their behaviors or behavioral intentions ethically or responsibly.

The number of discussion on social responsibility and ethics in marketing has increased and most of them have been descriptive (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987) and mostly focus on the seller side of the exchange relationship. Murphy and Laczniak (1981), after reviewing the research in marketing ethics, state that vast majority of studies had examined ethics relating to business or marketing situations, while only five percent of the studies examined ethics in consumer situations. As the consumers are the key participants in the business process and excluding them from ethics issue can lead to an imperfect understanding or that process (Vitell et al., 2001).

Many marketers have considered social responsibility and ethics to be significant issues within marketing field but the question is "how do the actual consumers view these matters?" (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001).

Consumer Social Responsibility and Consumer Ethics

There are few different definitions for social responsibility of consumer with different concerns. Webster Jr. (1975: 188) defines the socially conscious consumer "as a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change." This definition is weakly focused on environmental context. The other studies, (eg: Constantini and Hanf, 1972; Tognacci et al., 1972; Anderson et al., 1974; Buttel and Flinn, 1978; Murphy, 1978) however, have clearly underlined environmental concerns. For instance, in Buttel and Flinn's (1978) study, environmental awareness of households is measured; air and water pollution issues are focused.

Besides, Roberts (1993: 140) added a social dimension to the social responsibility with the definition as "one who purchases products and services perceived to have a positive (or less negative) influence on the environment or who patronizes businesses that attempt to effect related positive social change". Similarly, Mohr et al. (2001: 47) defines the socially responsible consumer behavior as "a person basing his or her acquisition, usage, and disposition of products on a desire to minimize or eliminate any harmful effects and maximize the long-run beneficial impact on society". As seen from the above definitions, consumer social responsibility is environmental and society based.

As come to the measurement, many scales have been developed to measure the socially responsible consumer behavior. Firstly, a scale developed by Berkowitz and Daniels (1964) and further tested by Berkowitz and Lutterman (1968) adopting the scale of Gough et al. (1952) and Harris (1957) measure individual's traditional social responsibility. Therefore, it can be expected that socially conscious individuals, whose orientations are reflected in a variety of socially responsible behaviors, would expose

social consciousness in consumption decisions. The most comprehensive work on socially responsible consumer behavior has been done by Roberts (1993), who develops a 40-item scale using two dimensions: societal and ecological concerns. In his further studies of Roberts (1995; 1996) shorter version of this scale (18-item) is used.

Consumer ethics is on the other hand; focus on "right" or "wrong" beliefs, attitudes and behaviors etc. in the purchasing process. According to Hunt and Vitell (1986) the process starts when the individual perceives a situation as having ethical content then; the next step is the perception of various alternatives that can be followed to resolve the ethical problem. Once having the evoked set of alternatives, two kinds of evaluation will take place: Deontological and teleological. In deontological evaluation, the individual evaluates the intrinsic rightness or wrongness of the behaviors implied by each alternative comparing the behaviors within a group of deontological norms consisting of personal values, general beliefs (honesty, stealing, cheating and etc.), issue specific beliefs, deceptive advertising, and rules of behavior. The teleological evaluation consists of the perceived consequences of each alternative for different stakeholder groups, the probability that each consequence will arise to each stakeholder group, the desirability or undesirability of each consequence and the importance of each group.

Researchers have different approaches to measure consumer ethics. Vitell and Muncy (1992) creates consumer ethics scale that consists of some ethical judgements and has four dimensions named as actively benefiting (at the expense of seller), passively benefiting (at the expense of others), deceptive legal practices and no harm/indirect harm. These dimensions have direct or indirect harm to the society can be considered either as unethical or socially irresponsible. There are very specific behaviors that have ethical implications and one of them is ecologically related consumption as in socially responsible behavior. Antil (1984), for example, stated that the relationship between perceived consumer effectiveness and ecological concern indicates the consumer's lack of belief that he can be effective in the reduction of pollution is indeed an

effective deterrent to his becoming personally concerned about ecological issues in consumption. And, this ecologically related consumer is the socially conscious consumer who feels strongly that he/she can do something about pollution and tries to consider the social impact of his/her purchases (Webster Jr., 1975).

From the above discussion, both socially responsible consumer and consumer ethics have social concerns that have some negative or positive consequences for others. Therefore, it can be stated that again there is a connection and differentiation between these two concepts.

Effect of Culture on the Discrimination of Consumer Ethics and Consumer Social Responsibility

A group of individuals who share distinctive values, norms and concepts form a specific culture. Culture is recognized as one of the most critical variables influencing ethical decision-making process (Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Ralston et al., 1994; Singhapakdi et al., 1994). Differences in consumer ethics may be due to cultural distinction (England, 1975; Hunt and Vitell, 1986). That is to say, differences in the structure of the mind may differ from one culture to another (Hofstede, 1991). Therefore, ethical values are an important component of culture (Rawwas et al., 2005). They determinate what is right and wrong within a society (Hofstede, 1980). Culture determines individuals' values, and in accordance with these values, their behaviors are formed (Rawwas, 2001).

In a similar manner cultural factors have an important effect on social responsibility as well (Singhapakdi et al., 2001). In addition, culture affects social responsibility through ethics which is considered to be a dimension of social responsibility (Carroll, 1979; Devinney et al., 2006).

So the present study investigates empirically the cultural effect on consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics with the point of consumer view.

The above explanations show that consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics are used interchangeably. But the existing literature pro-

Are "Consumer Social Responsibility" and "Consumer Ethics" Concepts
Interchangeable? The Effect of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

43

vides some evidence that they are different from the point of salesperson or company views. This study promises to give some from the consumer side which has a big gap should be filled out. Besides, how the cultural differentiation influences the consumers' classification of a behavior as socially responsible or ethical dilemma will have tried to be explored.

Research Design

The purpose of the study is to find answer to the following research question:

"How much of consumer social responsibility behavior and ethical behavior inter-changeability are explained by which of Hofstede's cultural dimensions?"

The sample of the first step is of 111; in the second step, the sample consists of 165 business administration students aged between 18-24.

The research has been conducted in the following two steps:

Step 1:

In this step, it is attempted to determine the scale items that will be used in the second step. To this end, participants responded a questionnaire, which consists of consumers' ethics scale (Vitell and Muncy, 1992) and socially responsible consumer behavior scale (Roberts, 1996). Besides, the items are converted into an active form from the passive form. That is, instead of a statement that says "changing price-tags on merchandise in a retail store", it is stated as "I can change price-tags on merchandise in a retail store" because in Roberts' (1996) scale the statements give an active role to the respondents. Therefore, compatibility between these two scales is obtained in terms of the way the statements are expressed. Five Point Likert Type scale is used to measure consumer ethics and consumer social responsibility concepts.

Then, the item reduction by Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is conducted in order to pick the items, which have higher factor loadings. Firstly, the appropriateness of the data for EFA is tested with KMO and

Bartlett's Test. For the social responsibility scale, it is found that KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is .841 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant at .05 level (p = .000). For the consumer ethics scale, it is confirmed that KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is .884 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant at .05 level (p = .000). With these results, appropriateness of the data for EFA is verified. Then, with Principal Component Analysis (PCA), each item's factor loadings are extracted in both social responsibility and ethics scales.

For the social responsibility scale, higher factor loading items related to environment, recycling and company issues are taken; for the consumer ethics scale, higher factor loading items related to each dimension that is actively benefiting, passively benefiting, deceptive "legal" practicing and no harm/indirect harm, are taken. The underlying reason of it is to see if the consumers are able to perceive the items that refer to the different situations, correctly as an ethical or a social responsibility issue. For instance, in consumer ethics scale, only if the actively benefiting ethical items were selected, the results would be limited for the classification of actively benefiting ethical items correctly as an ethical issue or incorrectly as a social responsibility issue. Thus, the perception of the consumers for the other ethical issues would be underestimated.

The items will be used in next step are given in Table 1 and Table 2 with their factor loadings and descriptive statistics. The cut-off point for factor loadings is determined as .45 so the items that have factor loadings more than .45 are selected.

Table 1. Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior Items (SRCBI)

Selected Items	Factor Loadings	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Buying the products that cause the least environment pollution	.757	4.50	.76
2. Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people	.680	4.30	.90
3. If possible, buying the product that has recycling package	.679	4.25	.85
4. Giving effort to buy only the recycling products	.546	3.09	.93
5. Using recycling box or in some way recycling some of the household trash	.514	3.61	1.20
6. Not buying the products from the companies' workers of which work under bad working conditions	.512	3.88	1.09
7. Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups	.459	4.11	.94

KMO Measure of Adequacy: .841, χ^2: 745.67, df: 136, p: .000, % of explained σ^2: 61.41

Table 2. Consumer Ethics Items (CEI)

Selected Items	Factor Loadings	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Reporting a lost item as "stolen" to an insurance company in order to collect the money	.674	4.38	.92
2. Downloading an album from internet instead of buying it	.660	2.21	1.04
3. Returning an item after finding out that the same item is now on sale.	.564	3.71	1.18
4. Observing someone shoplifting and ignoring it	.522	4.14	1.05
5. Drinking a can of soda in a supermarket without paying for it	.505	4.08	1.21
6. Using a long distance access code that does not belong to you	.467	2.90	1.26

KMO Measure of Adequacy: .884, χ^2: 1243.43, df: 253, p: .000, % of explained σ^2: 62.54

Step 2:

The purpose of this step is to specify:

-If the consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics items specified in the first step are evaluated as interchangeable or discriminated correctly.

-If Hofstede's cultural dimensions are the predictors of the interchange-ability of the consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics items.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions are measured with CVSCALE (Yoo et al., 2004), Turkish version of which is taken from Turhan's (2009) master thesis. The reason for selecting CVSCALE is that the dimensions of this scale are accepted to be equivalent to Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions. Moreover, CVSCALE has Confucian Dynamism dimension that is not included in this study. The items are placed with a Five Point Likert Type scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In the second part, the re-spondents are asked if the items selected in the first step, are accepted as consumer social responsibility or consumer ethics. Cronbach Alpha for CVSCALE's each cultural dimension is: .840 for uncertainty avoidance, .861 for individualism/collectivism, .775 for masculinity/femininity, .836 for power distance. Crobach Alpha for the scale as a whole is .827.

Data Analysis and Findings

First of all, a frequency analysis is conducted to see the number of par-ticipants who are/are not able to discriminate the social responsibility and ethics items revealed in the first step (given in Table 1 and Table 2) correctly. If more than fifty percent of the participants classify a/an social responsibility/ethics item incorrectly as an/a ethics/social responsibility item, that item is admitted as interchangeable. As a result, it is found that most of the social responsibility and ethics scale items are classified correctly except three items, which are "Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people", "Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against minorities" and "Not buying the products from the companies, workers of which work under bad working conditions". These items are considered to be ethical issues by a majority of the respondents even if they are considered to be social responsibili-ty issues in the literature. Therefore, it can be said that respondents are more likely to misclassify the social responsibility items as consumer ethics items.

Are "Consumer Social Responsibility" and "Consumer Ethics" Concepts
Interchangeable? The Effect of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

47

The relevant table (Table 3) that exhibits frequencies is given below. The bold items with their frequencies represent misclassified items by the respondents.

Table 3. Frequencies of Social Responsibility and Consumer Ethics Items Classification

ITEMS	Social Responsibility	Consumer Ethics
Buying the products that cause the least environment pollution (SR)	137	28
Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people (SR)	**81**	**84**
If possible, buying the product that has recycling package (SR)	143	22
Using recycling box or in some way recycling some of the household trash (SR)	142	23
Giving effort to buy only the recycling products (SR)	142	23
Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups (SR)	**39**	**126**
Not buying the products from the companies workers of which work under bad working conditions (SR)	**48**	**117**
Drinking a can of soda in a supermarket without paying for it (CE) Drinking a can of soda in a supermarket without paying for it	11	154
Using a long distance access code that does not belong to you (CE)	22	143
Reporting a lost item as "stolen" to an insurance company in order to collect the money (CE)	14	151
Observing someone shoplifting and ignoring it (CE)	18	147
Downloading an album from internet instead of buying it (CE)	27	138
Returning an item after finding out that the same item is now on sale (CE)	26	139

SR: Social responsibility

CE: Consumer Ethics

After this step, a logistic regression was conducted for each misclassified items to see whether this misclassification is explained by Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which are individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. To examine if there is multicollinearity between independent variables, VIF (≈1) and tolerance (≈0.9) values are checked. It is revealed that there is not multicollinearity between independent variables. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Analysis Results

Dependent binary variables: 0: SR 1: CE	Omnibus Test of Model Coefficient Sig.	Uncertainty avoidance (B)/Sig.	Collectivism/ İndividualism (B)/Sig.	Masculinity/ Femininity (B)/Sig.	Power Distance (B)/Sig.
Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people (SR)	**.032****	-.565/.040	.170/.451	.162/.336	**.409/.033**
Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups (SR)	**.065*****	.092/.764	**.629/.017**	-.227/262	-.188/.385
Not buying the products from the companies workers of which work under bad working conditions (SR)	.403*	292/.325	-.333/.191	-.261/.153	.107/.596

* Model is **not** significant at .10 level

**Model is significant at .05 level

***Model is significant at .10 level

First of all, as it is shown in Table X, misclassification of the item *"Not buying the products from the companies' workers of which work under bad working conditions"* as a consumer ethics item, is **not** explained by

cultural dimensions. Besides, misclassification of the item *"Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people"* is explained by power distance dimension. Moreover, misclassification of the item "*Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups"* is explained by collectivism/individualism dimension.

Discussion

The results of this study show that people are able to discriminate consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics issues from each other. However, There are three items that respondents are confused are "*Not buying the products from the companies' workers of which work under bad working conditions*", "*Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people*" "*Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups*", which are social responsibility issues but are considered as ethical issues by a majority of respondents.

Besides, it is revealed that Hofstede's cultural dimensions are effective on explaining concept confusion between consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics. "*Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people*" item's misclassification is affected by power distance dimension and "*Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups*" item's misclassification is affected by individualism/collectivism dimension.

In the frame of the abovementioned results, this study provides evidence from the consumer side that social responsibility and ethics are perceived as different issues. Although there is already a theoretical separation of these concepts in literature, there is still an ongoing debate that social responsibility and ethics concepts are mutually inclusive (Carroll, 1979, 1991; Devinney et al., 2006). On the other hand, actions that are regarded as socially responsible may be ethically neutral or unsound and actions that are dictated ethically may be socially unacceptable (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987). However, these inferences are based on the theoretical approaches in which the consumer side is missing. Thus, the current

study brings the perspective of the consumers and empirically verifies the theoretical separation of these concepts from the consumer side.

Moreover, culture, as a determinative factor on individuals' behaviors (Rawwas, 2001), structure of mind (Hofstede, 1991), ethical decision-making process (Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Ralston et al., 1994), social responsibility attitude (Singhapakdi et al., 2001), is found to be effective on the consumers' misclassification of a behavior as a social responsibility or an ethical issue. In this respect, the current study is the first to highlight empirically that the consumer perception of what is a social responsibility or an ethical issue is related to the cultural factors. Therefore, a revision of the items considering the cultural differences may be necessary not only for consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics scales selected in this study but also for others, which would benefit reliability and validity of the studies.

As it is mentioned above, power distance dimension is a predictor of the misclassification of social responsibility items as an ethical issue. Power distance at individual level refers to what extent an individual accepts the unequal distribution of power in a society (Clugston et al., 2000). Therefore, individuals with high-power distance scores are more likely to be contented with the unequal distribution of power which is contradicting for the long-term concerns of the society. For the corporate side, in their study, Waldman et al. (2006) found that managers, who devalue power distance, tend to express managerial skills related to social responsibility. Accordingly, for the consumer side, it may be suggested that a high-power distance scored individual may be less likely to take the issues in the scope of social responsibility. That might be the reason that the social responsibility item "*Always buying the products that cause the least harm to other people*" is misclassified as a consumer ethics item by high-power distance scored consumers.

Moreover, it is found that the social responsibility item "*Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups*" is misclassified as an ethical item, which is explained by individualism/collectivism dimension, where collectivists are more likely to classify

Are "Consumer Social Responsibility" and "Consumer Ethics" Concepts
Interchangeable? The Effect of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

51

the item as an ethical issue. As it is stated before, social responsibility is identified as an obligation to act for society whereas ethics is more about what is good or bad. Collectivism suggests cooperation, helpfulness and consideration of group benefit. Also, collectivists have a motivation to sacrifice individual interests if it is "good" for the group (Laroche et al., 2001). It may be stated that collectivists are more likely to act for the group benefit not because it is an obligation but because they believe it is good for the group. Thus, collectivists tend to classify the item "*Not buying the products from companies that discriminate against any minority groups*" as a consumer ethics issue.

Limitations of the Study

The sample of this study consist of Hacettepe University business administrations students who are selected conveniently. Thus, the results may differ for the students from other universities/departments and for other populations.

Another issue is that in this study, consumer ethics is measured by Vitell and Muncy's (1992) scale and consumer social responsibility is measured Roberts' (1996) socially responsible consumer behavior scale. The results are limited to the consumer ethics and social responsibility classification of the respondents related to the items of these scales. Thus, the respondents' classification may change for different measurement instruments.

Besides, the current study confirms that power distance and individualism/collectivism dimensions are effective on the misclassification of the social responsibility items as an ethical issue. However, these pioneering results should be validated by future studies with broader and diversified samples. Furthermore, Hoftsede's cultural dimensions are measured by the scale of Yoo et al. (2004) so the use of different ones may give different results.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study selects the students of business administration departments as the main population. These students are familiar with the consumer ethics and consumer social responsibility concepts and to what behaviors they are related to, from their courses. Therefore, they are able to discriminate these two concepts. If a similar study is conducted to a different main population, results would differ and maybe these two concepts would not be discriminated.

Additionally, the effect of cultural dimensions on consumer social responsibility and consumer ethics vary for different countries. Therefore, a similar study in a different country may give different results.

References

Anderson Jr, W. Thomas, Karl E. Henion, and Eli P. Cox III. (1974), "Socially vs. Ecologically Responsible Consumers", AMA Combined Conference Proceedings, Vol. 36, Spring and Fall, 304-311.

Antil, John H. (1984), "Socially Responsible Consumers: Profile and Implications for Public Policy", Journal of Macromarketing, 4(2), 18-39.

Armstrong, Robert W. (1996), "The Relationship Between Culture and Perception of Ethical Problems in International Marketing" Journal of Business Ethics, 15(11), 1199-1208.

Berkowitz, Leonard and Louise R. Daniels. (1964), "Affecting the Salience of the Social Responsibility Norm: Effects of Past Help on the Response to Dependency Relationships", The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 68(3), 275-281.

Berkowitz, Leonard and Kenneth G. Lutterman. (1968), "The Traditional Socially Responsible Personality", Public Opinion Quarterly, 32(2), 169-185.

Bunge, Mario (2012), Treatise on Basic Philosophy: Ethics: The Good and The Right (Vol. 8), Springer Science & Business Media.

Are "Consumer Social Responsibility" and "Consumer Ethics" Concepts
Interchangeable? The Effect of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

53

Buttel, Frederick M. and William L. Flinn (1978), "The Politics of En-
vironmental Concern the Impacts of Party Identification and Po-
litical Ideology on Environmental Attitudes", Environment and
Behavior, 10(1), 17-36.

Carrigan, Marylyn and Ahmad Attalla (2001), "The Myth of the Ethical
Consumer-Do Ethics Matter in Purchase Behaviour?", Journal of
Consumer Marketing, 18(7), 560-578.

Carroll, Archie B. (1979), "A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of
Corporate Performance", Academy of Management Review, 4(4),
497-505.

Carroll, Archie B. (1991), "The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsi-
bility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakehol-
ders", Business Horizons, 34(4), 39-48.

Clugston, Michael, Jon P. Howell and Peter W. Dorfman (2000), "Does
Cultural Socialization Predict Multiple Bases and Foci of Commit-
ment?", Journal of Management, 26(1), 5-30.

Costantini, Edmond and Kenneth Hanf (1972), "Environmental Concern
and Lake Tahoe:" A Study of Elite Perceptions, Backgrounds, and
Attitudes", Environment and Behavior, 4(2), 209-242.

Devinney, Timothy M., Pat Auger, Giana Eckhardt and Thomas Birtch-
nell (2006), "The Other CSR: Consumer Social Responsibility",
Leeds University Business School Working Paper, No. 15-04, 1-12.

Fischer, Josie (2004), "Social Responsibility and Ethics: Clarifying the
Concepts", Journal of Business Ethics, 52(4), 381-390.

Friedman, Milton (1962), Capitalism and Freedom, Chicago: University
of Chicago Press.

Gough, Harrison G., Herbert McClosky and Paul E. Meehl (1952), "A
Personality Scale for Social Responsibility", Journal of Abnormal
and Social Psychology, 47(1), 73-80.

Harris, Dale B. (1957), "A Scale for Measuring Attitudes of Social

Responsibility in Children", The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 55(3), 322-326.

Hofstede, Geert (1980), Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values. London: Sage

Hofstede, Geert, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov (1991), Cultures and Organizations: Software of The Mind, Vol. 2, London: McGraw-Hill.

Hunt, Shelby D. and Scott Vitell (1986), "A General Theory of Marketing Ethics", Journal of Macromarketing, 6(1), 5-16.

Lu, Long-Chuan, Gregory M. Rose, and Jeffrey G. Blodgett (1999), "The Effects of Cultural Dimensions on Ethical Decision Making in Marketing: An Exploratory Study" Journal of Business Ethics, 18(1), 91-105.

Mohr, Lois A., Deborah J. Webb and Katherine E. Harris (2001), "Do Consumers Expect Companies to Be Socially Responsible? The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Buying Behavior", Journal of Consumer Affairs, 35(1), 45-72.

Murphy, Patrick E. (1978), "Environmentally Concerned Consumers: Demographic Dimensions", Research Frontiers in Marketing: Dialogues and Directions, 316-320.

Murphy, P. and G. Laczniak (1981), "Marketing Ethics: A Review with Implications for Managers, Educators and Researchers", Ed. B. M. Enis ve K. J. Roering, Inside Review of Marketing, Chicago: AMA, 251–266.

Roberts, James A. (1995), "Sex Differences in Socially Responsible Consumers' Behavior", Psychological Reports, 73(1), 139-148.

Roberts, James A. (1995), "Profiling Levels of Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior: A Cluster Analytic Approach and Its Implications for Marketing", Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 3(4), 97-117.

Are "Consumer Social Responsibility" and "Consumer Ethics" Concepts
Interchangeable? The Effect of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

55

Roberts, James A. (1996), "Will the Real Socially Responsible Consumer Please Step Forward?", Business Horizons, 39(1), 79-83.

Rawwas, Mohammed YA. (2001), "Culture, Personality and Morality: A Typology of International Consumers' Ethical Beliefs", International Marketing Review, 18(2), 188-211.

Rawwas, Mohammed YA, Ziad Swaidan and Mine Oyman (2005), "Consumer Ethics: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Ethical Beliefs of Turkish and American Consumers", Journal of Business Ethics, 57(2), 183-195.

Robin, Donald P. and R. Eric Reidenbach (1987), "Social Responsibility, Ethics, and Marketing Strategy: Closing the Gap Between Concept and Application", The Journal of Marketing, 51(1), 44-58.

Singhapakdi, Anusorn, Kiran Karande, C. P. Rao and Scott J. Vitell (2001), "How Important Are Ethics and Social Responsibility? - A Multinational Study of Marketing Professionals", European Journal of Marketing, 35(1/2), 133-153.

Singhapakdi, Anusorn, Scott J. Vitell and Orose Leelakulthanit (1994), "A Cross-Cultural Study of Moral Philosophies, Ethical Perceptions and Judgements: A Comparison of American and Thai Marketers", International Marketing Review, 11(6), 65-78.

Tavakoli, A. Assad, John P. Keenan and B. Cranjak-Karanovic (1003), "Culture and Whistleblowing an Empirical Study of Croatian and United States Managers Utilizing Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions", Journal of Business Ethics, 43(1-2), 49-64.

Tognacci, Louis N., Russell H. Weigel, Marvin F. Wideen and David TA Vernon (1972), "Environmental Quality: "How Universal Is Public Concern?", Environment and Behavior, 4(1): 73-86.

Turhan, Ayça (2009), "Kültürün Tüketici Yenilikçiliği Üzerindeki Etkisi Üzerine Bir Uygulama", Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.

Vitell, Scott J., Saviour L. Nwachukwu, and James H. Barnes (1993),

"The Effects of Culture On Ethical Decision-Making: An Application of Hofstede's Typology." Journal of Business Ethics, 12(10), 753-760.

Vitell, Scott J. and James Muncy (1992), "Consumer Ethics: An Empirical Investigation of Factors Influencing Ethical Judgments of the Final Consumer", Journal of Business Ethics, 11(8), 585-597.

Vitell, Scott J., Anusorn Singhapakdi and James Thomas (2001), "Consumer Ethics: An Application and Empirical Testing of the Hunt-Vitell Theory of Ethics", Journal of Consumer Marketing, 18(2), 153-178.

Waldman, David A., Mary Sully de Luque, Nathan Washburn, Robert J. House, Bolanle Adetoun, Angel Barrasa, Mariya Bobina et al. (2006), "Cultural and Leadership Predictors of Corporate Social Responsibility Values of Top Management: A GLOBE Study of 15 Countries", Journal of International Business Studies, 37(6), 823-837.

Webster, Frederick E. (1975), "Determining the Characteristics of The Socially Conscious Consumer", Journal of Consumer Research, 2(3), 188-196.

Yoo, B., N. Donthu, and T. Lenartowicz (2004), "CVSCALE: The Five-Dimensional Measure of Personal Cultural Values", Working Paper.