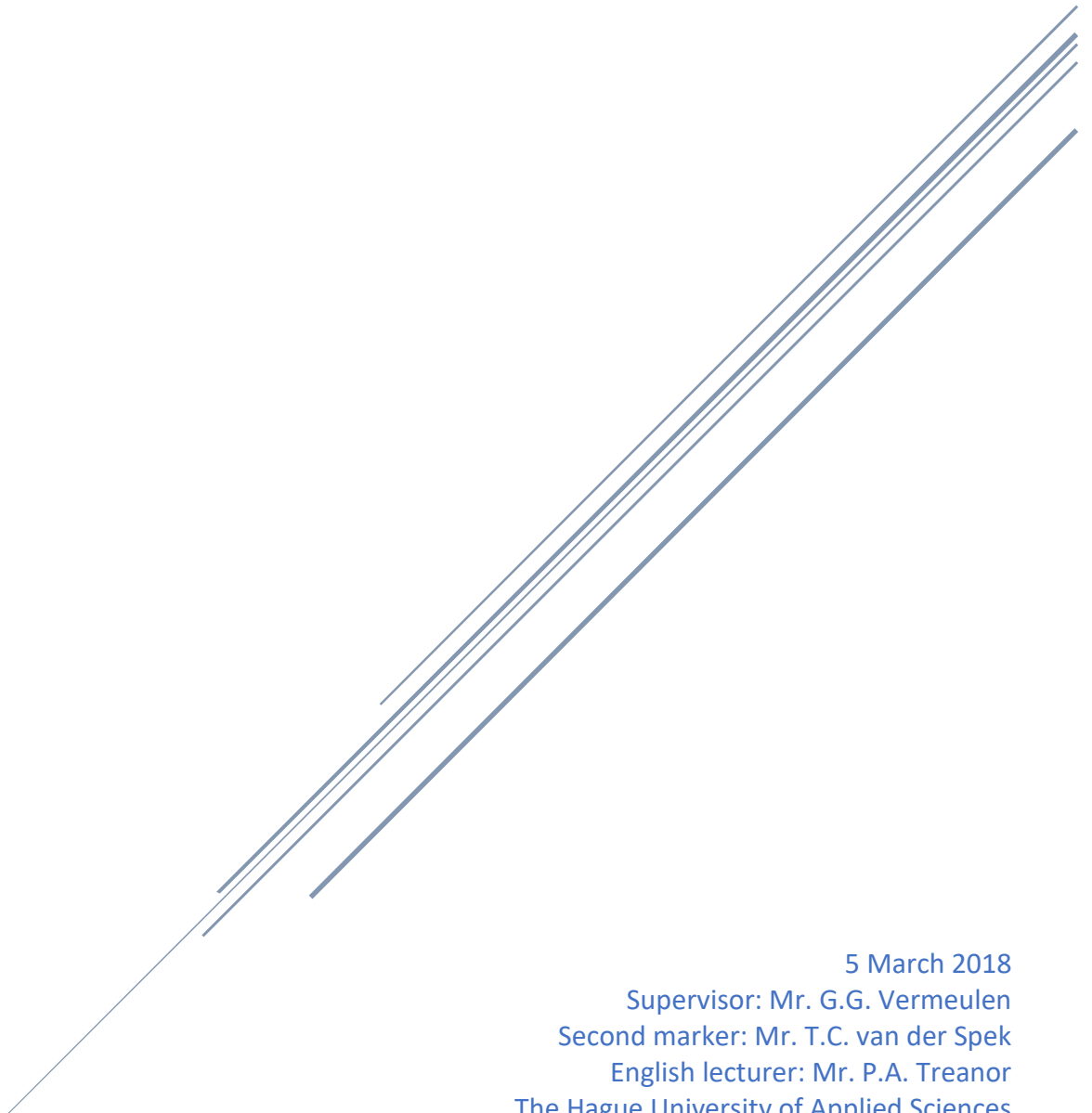


DUTCH CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AFFECTED BY DUTCH CULTURE

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Executive summary

Within this research answer has been given to the question 'How does national culture influence online consumer behaviour of native Dutch customers in the age of 20 to 30 regarding the fast fashion industry'? To research this, field research and desk research has been carried out. A new national culture model has been made up to visualize the Dutch culture, and to see which steps of consumer buyer behaviour are affected by culture.

It is important to investigate this because the fast fashion industry has grown considerably in recent years, just like e-commerce. Because these two have grown a lot, and they play a major role in contemporary Dutch society, it is interesting to investigate whether culture influences this. This makes it clear how the Dutch culture behaves and how to respond to this.

To see which steps of consumer buyer behaviour can be influenced by culture, a new national culture model has been drawn up. The definition of culture consists of four dimensions; meaning of a person, relationship with time, relationship with rules and institutional collectivism. Meaning of a person shows whether a country is autonomous or collectivistic, relationship with time shows whether a country is oriented in the short or long term, relationship with rules shows whether a society is prevented from buying articles by rules or principles, and institutional collectivism shows whether public goods are distributed fairly in a country.

Subsequently, the steps of consumer buyer behaviour were examined, and which steps could be influenced by culture. This showed that the steps 'problem recognition', 'evaluation of alternatives' and 'purchase' are influenced by culture. Based on the field research is examined how the target group responds to certain situations and based on these outcomes it was determined how the dimensions of Dutch culture can be filled in.

The outcome is that the Netherlands is an autonomous country. Decisions are made based on the interests of the individual and not on group interests. Furthermore, the Netherlands is a country that is neutral in relation to time. On the one hand a product is bought in the short term, but the long term is considered when a product is purchased, the quality must be good. Furthermore, the Dutch are not stopped by rules or principles, the autonomous character is strengthened by this. Finally, there is a lot of equality in Dutch society. Respondents indicate that they are neutral in the area of division of public goods.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Consumer buyer behaviour is something businesses always look at because it can help businesses to improve targeting their efforts (Myers, 2017). Over the past years we've seen a shift in consumer buyer behaviour, going from a more traditional way of shopping to an online based experience. In 2015 71% of the Dutch consumers already bought something online (CBS, 2016). Also, the money which is spent on e-commerce has increased in the last years, and the prediction is that this amount will increase even further in the coming years. In 2016 the turnover was more than 20 billion euros (Ecommerce News, 2017). Therefore, it is interesting to investigate this part of consumer buyer behaviour more. It is a growing market in which many opportunities can be found.

Consumer behaviour is affected by culture. In different countries, different kinds of consumer behaviour can be found, because they have different norms and values (Durmaz, Celik, & Oruc, 2011). This report will investigate how the Dutch culture affects the Dutch online consumer behaviour. It will look at a specific group of consumers, namely people between 20 and 30 years old. This group is chosen because these people are able to choose what they buy themselves (a six-year old child cannot always choose what they buy because they do not have an income and the parents make the buying decision). Also, this group can be loyal customers for a long time as this group is likely to live for many more years. In addition, this group is the group in which the most people - percentagewise - have access to internet (CBS, 2016). As a result, the research will be more reliable than whether the research is applied to a group in which more people fall outside the group of people who have internet access.

Furthermore, the fast fashion industry is the branch which is chosen to look at in this research. This term refers to the way of clothing which is mostly based on recent trends. The goal of fast fashion is to respond quickly to the changing trend and desire of the customer, and to produce this in a cost-reduced way (Investopedia, 2018). This branch is growing quickly due to the growing GDP and the growing e-commerce, which makes it easier for customers to obtain clothes. Besides, trendy clothes are affordable due to the fast fashion industry (Deadal Research, 2015). Examples of fast fashion industries are Zara, H&M and Forever 21. Businesses have to respond to the fast fashion trend because they have to keep up with the demand of the consumers to remain success (Fibre2Fashion, n.d.).

The reason to investigate this branch is because people do not need an explanation of staff in stores on how to use the product, and the buying decision is not affected by the ease of use of the product. It is also a product everyone needs, and therefore the whole research group is reached by this research question. The research question which will be handled is: 'How does national culture influence online consumer behaviour of native Dutch customers in the age of 20 to 30 regarding the fast fashion industry?'

To answer this question, it is important to find out what the Dutch culture looks like, and the term culture needs to be defined. The term will be defined by making up a new cultural theory, in which the term consumer buyer behaviour is applied too. This cultural theory shall be used to illustrate what the pillars of the Dutch culture are. To determine whether this culture theory is correct, market research will be done.

Eventually, the outcomes of the market research about Dutch consumer behaviour will be analysed and there will be looked if aspects of culture are linked to decisions in the consumer buyer behaviour. Finally, a conclusion will be given, and the research question will be answered. An advice for businesses wherein is told what to think about when products are offered to the consumer is added in the conclusion as well.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework

In the theoretical framework the concept of culture and the concept of consumer buyer behaviour are explained. To represent the pillars of culture, a national cultural theory will be established. This cultural theory will be combined in the conceptual framework with the steps of consumer buyer behaviour so that a model can be drawn up that links these two terms. This model will be used to analyse the Dutch culture and to see how it influences the consumer buyer behaviour of Dutch people.

Chapter 2.1 – Culture theories

Culture is a term which is hard to define. According to the Oxford dictionary the meaning of the term culture is ‘The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). Many interpretations of the term culture exist, and several national culture theories have been created. The national culture models which will be used for setting up a new model of national culture are drafted by Hofstede, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, Schwartz, and GLOBE. These models are chosen because they are well-known and cited often in the organizational research literature. Several aspects of social beliefs and norms and values are highlighted in each of these models.

Chapter 2.1.1 - Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck

The model of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck is based on the value orientations of a culture. Kluckhohn stated that biological characteristics and properties form the basis of a culture. The own values and habits are seen as normal, and other beliefs and habits are considered to be weird. The basic assumptions of this theory are:

- that there is a little number of problems which are common to all different kinds of cultural groups,
- there are several solutions for these problems. These solutions are not random or limitless, but there is a range of different possible solutions,
- and all the alternatives for all the problems are present in all the different cultural groups, but every group has its own preference for a specific solution.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck suggested that the preferred solution of a problem reflects the values of a society. They stated that there are five types of problems which form the basis of problems which

need to be solved by the society every day (Hills, 2001). These types are illustrated in a table below.

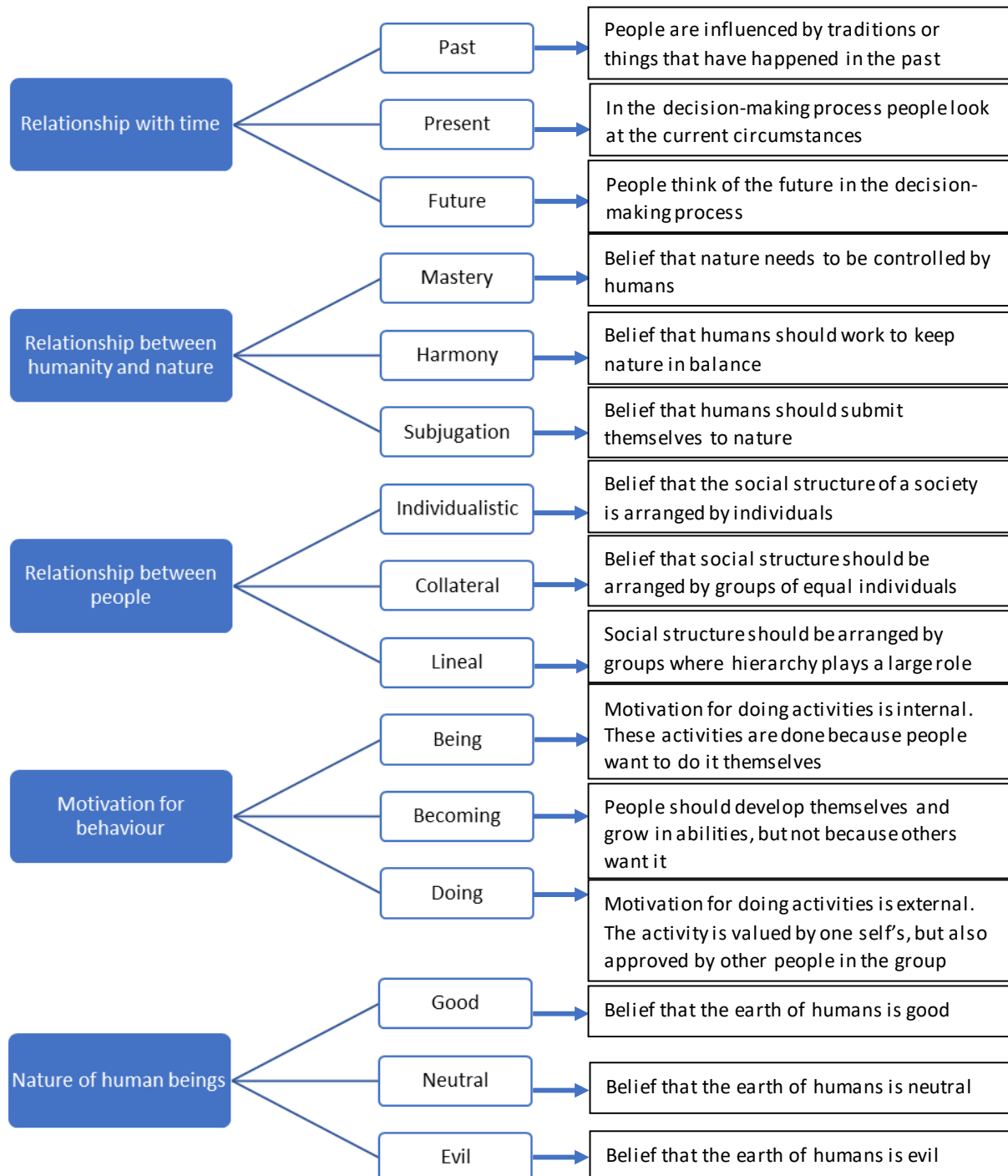


Table 1. Model of national culture according to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (Nardon & Steers, 2006).

According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck the way in which is looked for solutions, reflects the values of a society and so national culture can be illustrated.

Chapter 2.1.2 - Hofstede

The national culture model of Geert Hofstede is set up because, according to this psychologist, different cultures can be distinguished from each other by the differences of belief among these groups (Nardon & Steers, 2006). The primary data he used for setting up his national culture theory were distracted from surveys of employee's attitudes in 66 countries between 1967 and 1973 (Academia, sd). For Hofstede it was important to find out what the values of the respondents were. He defines these values as a tendency to choose certain situations over other situations. According to Hofstede these values are the core elements of culture (McSweeney, 2002). The six core elements which are used in the national culture theory of Geert Hofstede is illustrated in a table on the next page.

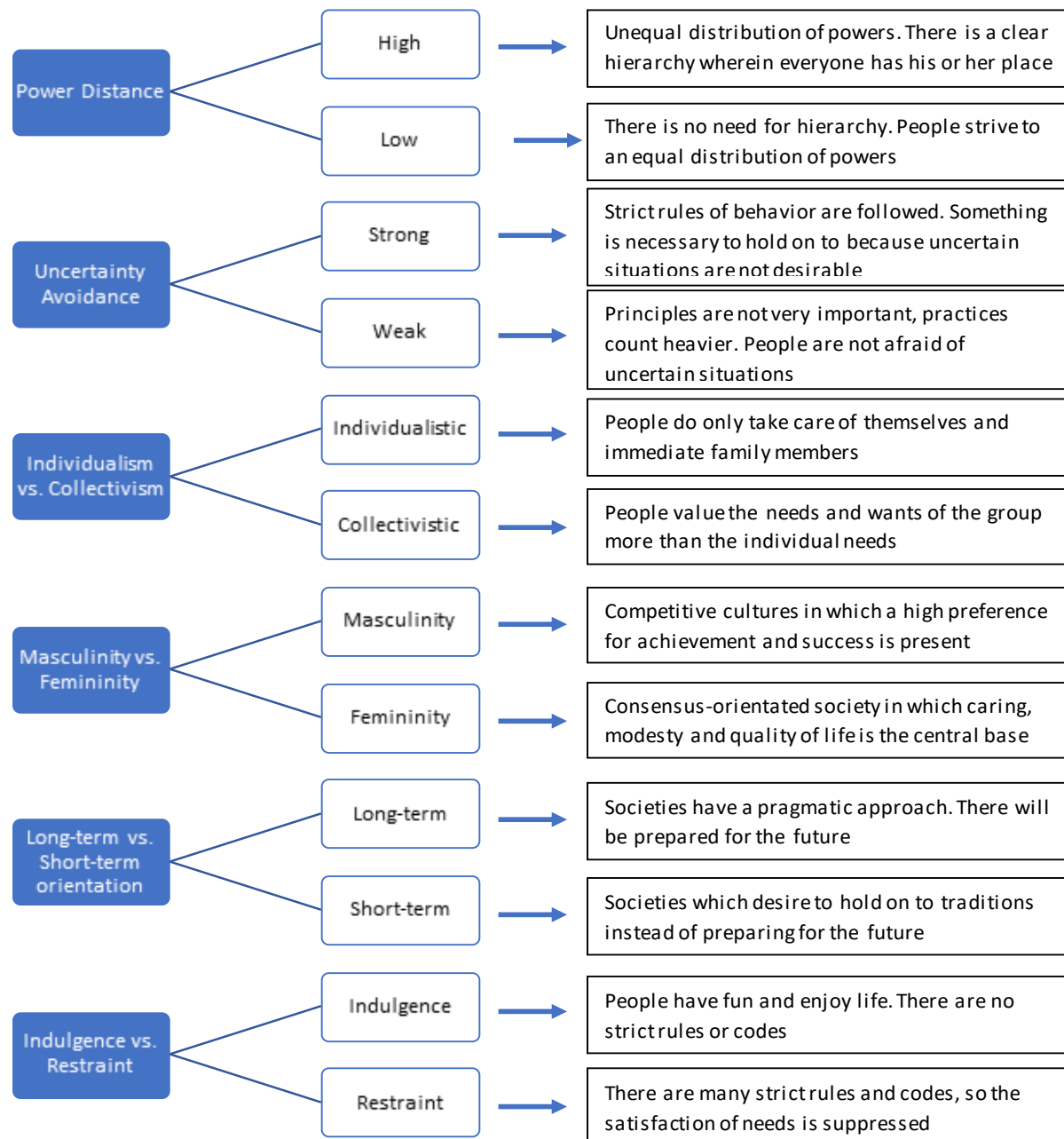


Table 2. National culture model of Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, National Culture, 2017).

Chapter 2.1.3 - Schwartz

According to socialist Schwartz, national cultures can be distinguished from each other by the motivational goals a society expresses. Ten universal human needs are identified which reflect social motives, needs, and social institutional demands. These universal human needs are used in the national culture model of Schwartz because these ten needs can be found in every culture. The ten

human values are: power, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, benevolence, universalism, tradition, self-direction, security, and conformity. These values are individual-level dimensions, which means that in daily life these values are experienced by individuals (Schwartz, An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic, 2012). Remarking is that Schwartz distinguishes individual-level dimensions from cultural-level dimensions. Cultural-level dimensions are solutions for a society to deal with the regulation of human activities (Schwartz, Values: Individual and cultural, 2011). The national model of culture according to Schwartz contains of three dimensions:

- Conservatism vs. autonomy
- Hierarchy vs. egalitarianism
- Mastery vs. harmony

The national culture model is summarized in a table below.

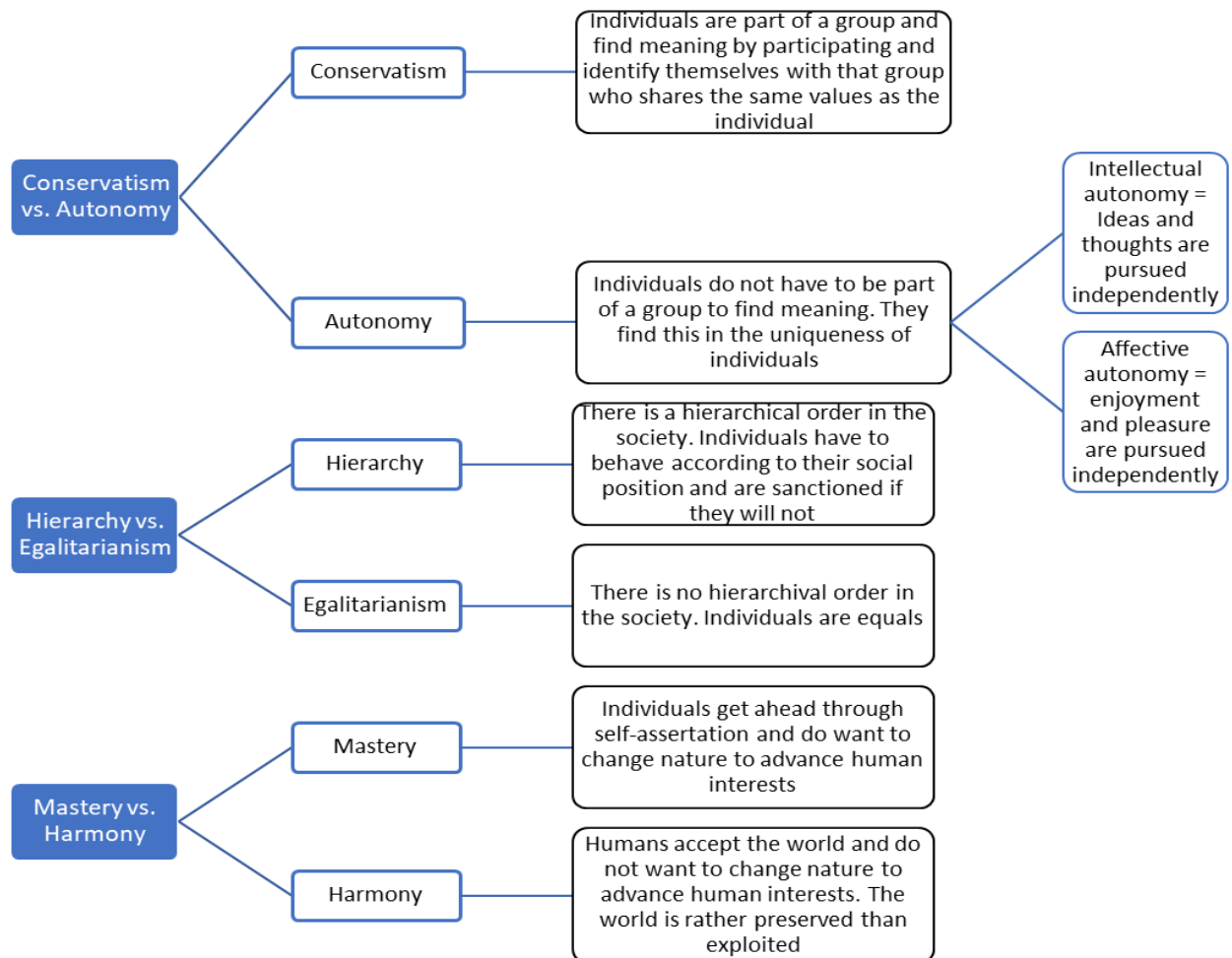


Table 3. Schwartz national culture model (Nardon & Steers, 2006).

Chapter 2.1.4. - GLOBE

This national culture theory is focused on how cultural differences influence leadership processes. It is founded by Robert House in 1991, and set up to illustrate interrelationships between societal culture, organizational leadership and societal effectiveness. For this model data was collected in 62 countries, and the results shew that there were significant differences in leadership across different cultures. So, this model does not only focus on cultural differences, but also on how the variations in these dimensions affect leadership and effectiveness (Nardon & Steers, 2006). Nine cultural dimensions are used in this national culture theory to identify a national's societal culture (GLOBE, n.d.). This is also the part of the model which will be used in this research to identify a country's culture. Some of the dimensions are also used in other culture theories (individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance), but the others are unique. Every dimension is ranked with two scores; one how a society values to be, and one how a society actually acts. The nine different cultural dimensions are outlined in a table on the next page.

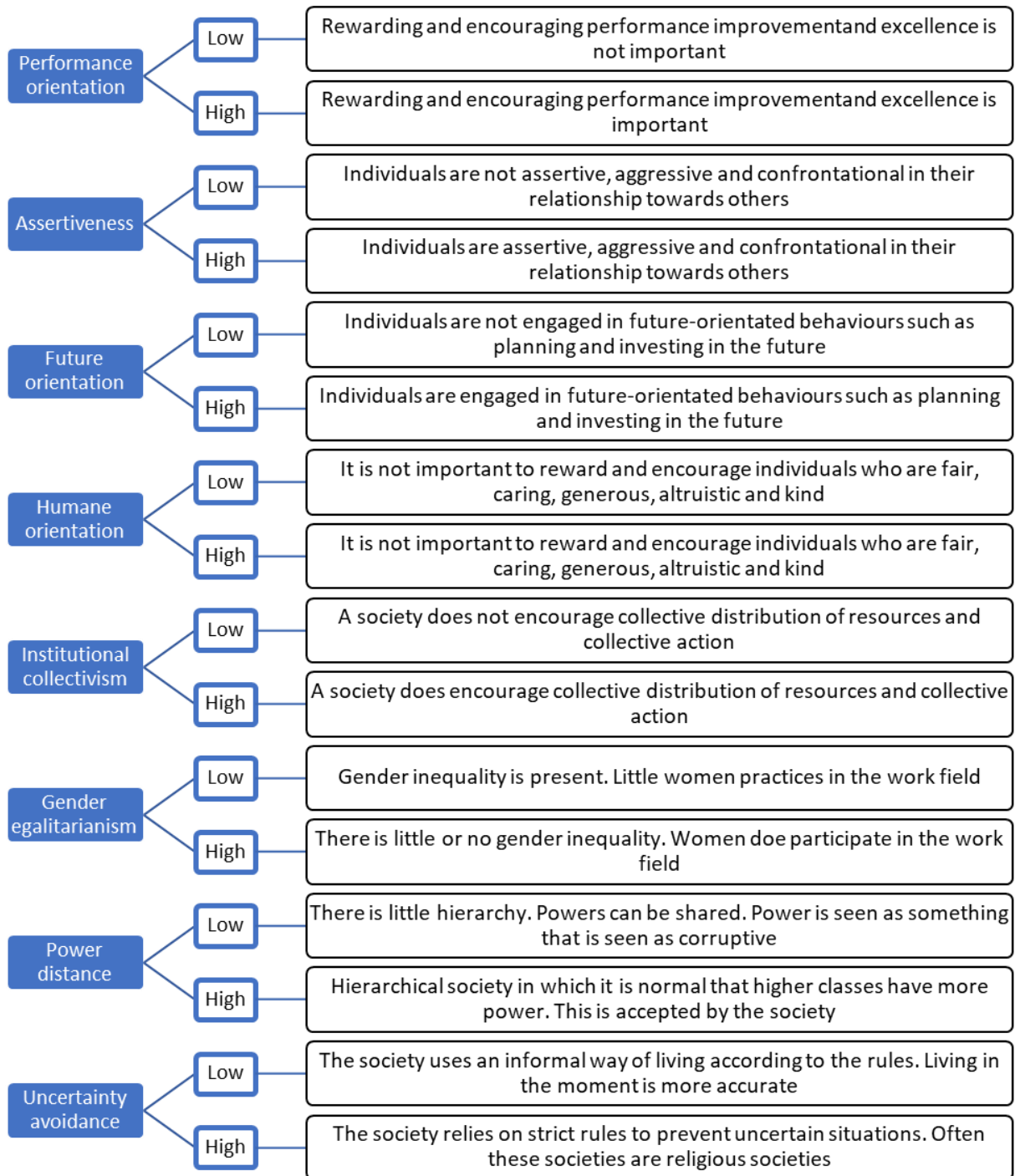


Table 4. national culture model of GLOBE (GLOBE, n.d.) (Nardon & Steers, 2006).

Chapter 2.2 – What is consumer buyer behaviour?

According to the Business Dictionary, consumer buyer behaviour means: ‘the process by which individuals search for, select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods and services, in satisfaction of their needs and wants’ (Business Dictionary, 2017). Consumer buyer behaviour is very complex because every customer is unique and has a different mind and attitude. For businesses it is important to investigate the consumer buyer behaviour because it helps to know what the consumer buys, why, where, when and how. The reason of the purchase becomes visible, and the satisfaction of the product or service becomes clear. When these factors are known, companies can respond to this. This will help to better meet the needs and demands of the target group (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2006).

The decisions consumers make are based on many criteria. However, the triggers for buying a product, happen often before the actual purchase takes place. In this phase, marketers play a large role, because marketing and advertising can influence the consumers. The choice for choosing a specific product instead of choosing for substitutes can be determined here.

However, nowadays it is important to keep the increased consumerism in mind. Consumerism means that there is a continual expansion of one's wants and needs for goods and services (Business Dictionary, 2017). This plays a large part in the decision making of the consumers. People are getting used to brands because of the high consumerism and have become more brand loyal. Nevertheless, it is still important to investigate the consumer buyer behaviour because it is important for businesses to know the needs and demands of (potential) consumers, and to know how the product can be improved (Bhasin, 2016). The consumer buyer behaviour process is divided in five steps. These steps are problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post purchase behaviour. Below the steps are defined.

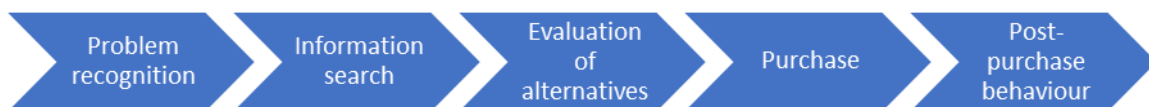


Figure 1. The five steps of consumer buyer behaviour

Problem recognition

The first step is when the consumer recognizes that there is a problem or a need. This is the most important step because without the recognition of a problem or need, the purchase will not take place

either. The want or need is triggered by internal factors such as thirst or hunger, or by external factors such as word of mouth or advertisements (Johnston, 2016). Needs, wants and demands are constantly changing, because life changes constantly as well. Trends and hypes of products come and go, people get married, get babies and want a bigger house and so on and so forth (Grimsley, 2017). According to Maslow, there are five types of needs, which are shown in the figure below. The most basic needs need to be fulfilled before the next level of needs are desired to be achieved. When this level is fulfilled, there will be a desire to fulfil the next level of needs, and so on (McLeod, 2017).

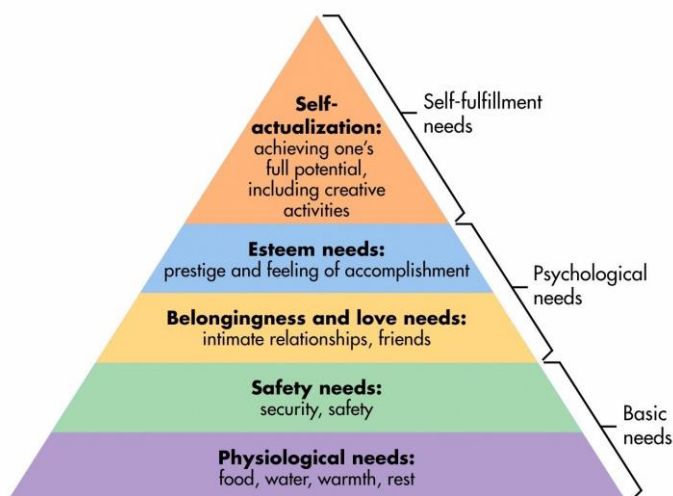


Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McLeod, 2017)

Information search

The second step in the consumer buyer behaviour process is called information search. There are numerous choices for consumers because of both the variety of brands and the variety of different products. Therefore, consumers want to gather information before buying a product. But this gathering of information is limited, because it is unlikely that consumers will consider all the different options. Therefore, products that are offered need to be outstanding, and give consumers a reason to specifically buy that product. Besides, when customers are satisfied with a brand, the step information search will have low involvement. Brand loyalty has taken place here. The level of involvement is important in this step, because when the level of involvement is low, little information research will take place (Bhasin, 2016). The sources which give mostly information in this step and influence potential customers the most are word of mouth promotions, online media, advertisements and commercials (Johnston, 2016).

Evaluation of alternatives

The third step is the step where alternatives are evaluated. At this stage, products are compared to each other based on product attributes, which means according to the Business Dictionary 'Characteristics of a raw material or finished good which make it distinct from other products'. The image below describes this step the best.



Figure 3. Evaluation of alternatives (Bhasin, 2016).

The image is a simple example, but it shows how alternatives are evaluated in real life as well. The available brands which are available on the market are five brands, and the brand which is finalized is only one brand. So, 80% of the brands is eliminated. There could be several reasons for this, such as price, colour, features, benefits, etc. (Bhasin, 2016).

Important factors are the attitude and involvement of a customer. If there is a positive attitude and high involvement, multiple products will be compared. If the attitude is negative and the involvement is low, there will probably be looked at only a single product, or just a few (Johnston, 2016). Moreover, the attitude plays a role because of the personal preferences of the consumer. One may like a product which another person does not like (Mohammadian, Alipoor, & Daryani, 2013).

Purchase

In this phase the purchase decision can be disrupted by two factors. The first one is because of negative feedback from customers who already have had experience with the product, and the second factor is the extent to which the potential buyer listens to the existing feedback (Mohammadian, Alipoor, & Daryani, 2013). A consumer possibly has made the decision to buy a product, but because a

friend discourages to buy the product, the possibility exist that the consumer waives from the purchase of the product. Furthermore, the purchase can also be disrupted because of unforeseen situations like bankruptcy of the brand or job loss (Johnston, 2016).

Post-purchase behaviour

The last step of the consumer buyer behaviour process is the post-purchase behaviour. This is an important step for businesses because customers often look at experiences previous customers have had with the product before deciding to buy it. It is also important for businesses because it is crucial for retaining customers. If customers are satisfied with the product, this can result into brand loyalty. Step two and three in the consumer buyer behaviour model can be skipped the next time the customer needs to buy something because of the good experience with the brand. The brand will be chosen again without considering other brands (Mohammadian, Alipoor, & Daryani, 2013). If customers are dissatisfied, they will move towards competitors and spoil the name of the brand (Johnston, 2016). Therefore, many businesses use customer relationship management to influence the buying behaviour of consumers. Consumers like it when they are recognized, when the wants are known, when they get extra discount because they are loyal customers, etc. (Bhasin, 2016).

The consumer buying model is clever to use for companies because it becomes visible where the most influence can be exercised, and how the consumer behaviour can be observed the best way. This may result in greater customer satisfaction, which leads to increased brand awareness, and which allows the company to survive or continue to grow.

Chapter 2.3 – Conceptual framework

Now the different culture theories are outlined, and the term consumer buyer behaviour is explained, these two components can be combined. This is done to clarify the research variables. These research variables will be used as sub-questions in this report. First, a new model of national culture will be set up in this conceptual framework, and then will be illustrated how this can affect consumer buyer behaviour.

The dimensions which will be used for the new national culture model are relationship with time, relationship with rules, meaning of a person, and institutional collectivism. These dimensions and scale anchors are illustrated in a figure on the next page. The explanations of the scale anchors are illustrated as well in the figure.

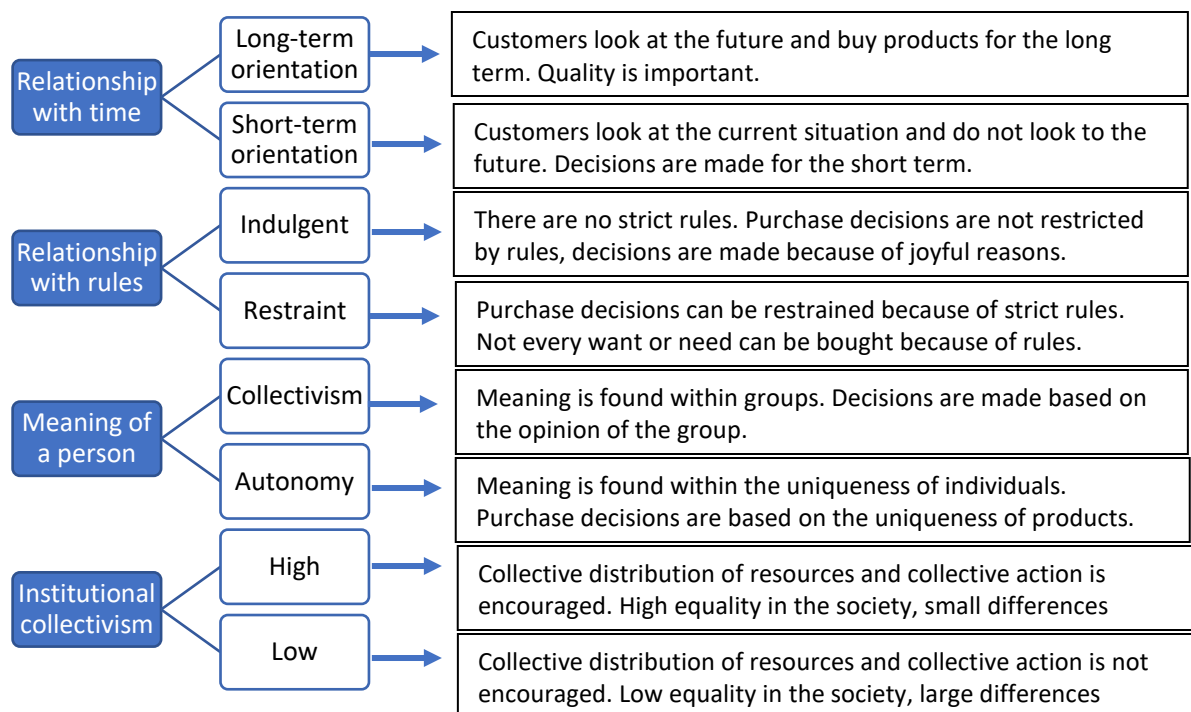


Table 5. New national culture model

Chapter 2.3.1 - Consumer buyer behaviour model affected by culture

To see how consumer buyer behaviour is affected by national culture, the new culture theory and the theory of consumer buyer behaviour will be combined. The steps of consumer buyer behaviour have already been outlined, and some of these steps can be influenced by the national culture. The new culture model combined with the steps of consumer buyer behaviour is shown in the figure below.

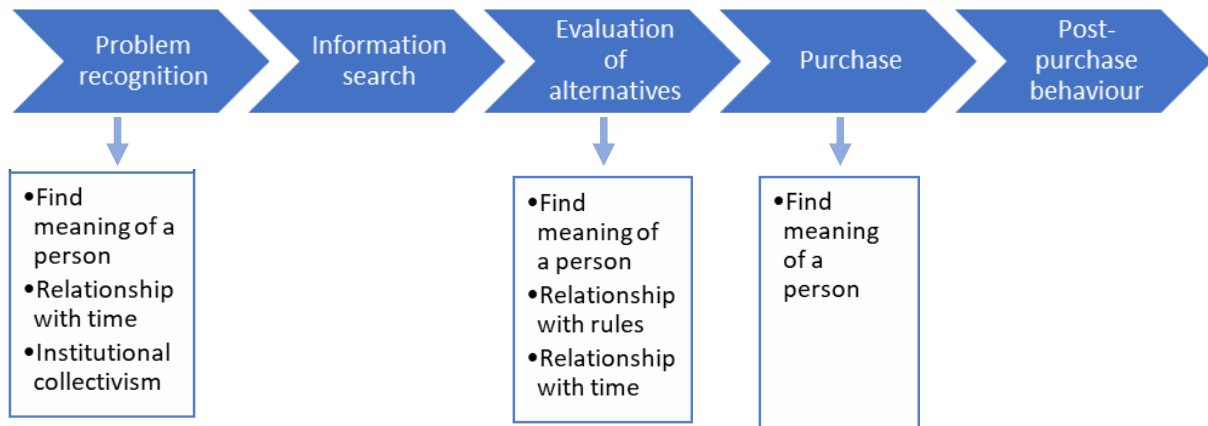


Figure 4. Consumer buyer behaviour model affected by national culture

Chapter 2.3.2. - Problem recognition

The first step of consumer buyer behaviour is the problem recognition. This step can be influenced by the cultural dimensions meaning of a person, relationship with time and institutional collectivism. The cultural dimension meaning of a person is applicable because this dimension tells if a person finds meaning within a group or in the uniqueness of individuals. If a person finds meaning within a group, the person will be affected by the choices of the group. If the group has a product, the individual might recognize the want or need to buy the product as well. If a person finds meaning in the uniqueness of individuals, this person might want to buy a product which is not in the possession of many other persons.

Another dimension which can influence the problem recognition is the relationship with time. Do consumers look at the short-term needs, or the long-term needs? If a society turns out to be a society which looks at the long-term, consumers will recognize the need or want of a product before they actually need the product. The purchase is necessary for the future. A good example of this are the school supplies. Even though school starts in September, in the Netherlands you can find the first products of the so-called 'Schoolcampus' already in May. During the Schoolcampus, school products

are offered on a large scale with various designs. Many students obtain their school supplies such as diaries, notebooks and cover paper for the coming school year during this period (V&D Concept House, 2017). Societies that are characterized by looking at the short term will not buy products so far in advance. They will recognize the want or need later and buy the product at the time it is needed.

The last dimension that influences the problem recognition is institutional collectivism. In societies where institutional collectivism is low, large differences in the society appear. The rich people will have other needs than the poor people. The hierarchy of needs of Maslow explains this as well (p. 13). Rich people will fulfil the lowest layer easily because it can be afforded easily. If the lowest layer is fulfilled, the needs will go up to a layer higher. Poor people might have struggles with fulfilling the lowest layer. Their needs will not reach up to a layer higher, or at least not as fast as the needs of the rich people do. Because of this inequality, the needs are different as well. Rich people might feel the need to buy a large TV-screen, and poor people only recognize the need to buy food. If there is more equality, the needs of the society are on the same level. It is important for businesses to look at this dimension to understand who the target group is.

Chapter 2.3.3. - Evaluation of alternatives

Moreover, the step 'evaluation of alternatives' is influenced as well by culture. In this step alternatives are compared with each other and finally a decision will be made on which products to buy. The dimensions meaning of a person, relationship with rules and relationship with time affect this step. The dimension meaning of a person is applicable because the individual will look what other persons should do when living in a collectivistic country. If some people of the group already have a particular product, individuals will choose for this product as well instead of for choosing a unique product. In autonomous societies there will not be looked to what the rest of the group has, and there will only be looked at the individual preferences.

In addition, the dimension relationship with rules affects the third step of consumer buyer behaviour as well. An individual might want a product, but rules might forbid the usage of the product. For example, Islamic people might want to have clothes for hot summer days. Some options are gathered, but at the third step these options are evaluated. The shorts which they might want to buy, are not an option because of the strict rules that come together with their religion. They will choose for a product

which is not too warm, but which covers the body. If there are no strict rules within a society, people can live freely and buy what they want.

The last dimension which influences the evaluation of alternatives is the dimension relationship with time. People who look at the long-term, would look to the quality of the products. They will buy a product which still can be used in the future. These people are willing to pay more money when the quality is better. People who look at the short-term will choose a product which is the best option for now. The future does not matter. Probably they will choose for a product which is cheaper.

Chapter 2.3.4. - Purchase

Finally, the purchase step can be influenced by national culture. This step can be influenced by the dimension meaning of a person. The purchase step will not take place if potential customers have heard a negative recension for example. Conservative societies will listen to the feedback which is given, because they find meaning by participating in a group, and will not buy the product.

Autonomous countries would try it themselves first before listening to others because they think that everyone is unique. If a person has a bad experience with a product, it does not mean that everyone will have bad experiences with that product. Everyone is unique, and everyone's preferences are unique as well.

Chapter 3 - Methods

Chapter 3.1. – Theoretical framework

To research the research question 'how is the Dutch online consumer behaviour in the fast fashion industry affected by the Dutch culture', the definition culture needs to be defined. In the theoretical framework different culture models are outlined, and the most important dimensions are used to create a new cultural model. To look for the most important cultural models, different articles from business journals and websites are compared. These sources are used because they contain of much accessible information which is reliable as well. The culture theories which will be used in the theoretical framework are Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, Hofstede, Schwartz and GLOBE. These four national culture models were used because there would be enough information to set up a new national culture model, without looking similar to an already existing model. To gather reliable information, three sources per national culture model were compared. If these sources contained of the same information, and the context in which it was written was professional, the information is considered to be valid. The dimensions of the new national culture model will be used to set up the sub-questions for this dissertation.

Another term which will be outlined in the theoretical framework is consumer buyer behaviour. To find out what this term means, the book 'Consumer behaviour: A European Perspective link' will be used. This book will be used because it is written by philosopher Michael R. Solomon, who is a PhD and professor of marketing (Saint Joseph's University, 2017). Because of this he is knowledgeable, so the books he writes can be considered as reliable. Besides, there will be searched to what steps consumer buyer behaviour contains of, because with these steps it becomes visible in which parts the consumer buyer behaviour can be influenced. This is necessary because if the parts which are influenceable become visible, there can also be looked at how culture plays a role at this. The new national culture model can be applied at these steps. The information of the steps of consumer buyer behaviour on websites will also be compared with three other websites to be sure that the information which is described is correct.

3.2. Research methods

When the theoretical framework is created, there will be investigated how the Dutch culture looks like in the results. Firstly, the research methods which have been used will be described, and further in the methods will be described how the results and analysis have been made up. The research methods

which have been used are desk research and field research. The desk research will be done to see how the Dutch culture looks like based on the outcomes of already existing national culture models in which the 'Dutch culture' is described. The scale anchors of the new national culture model are already used in other national culture models and these scores of the scale anchors will be used to make a prediction of the outcomes of the scale anchors.

Afterwards, field research will be used to investigate if the predictions were right and give the Dutch culture a score at the scale anchors. The field research which will be used for this is a questionnaire, because many people can be reached with this within a relatively short time. The method which is used for this is the quantitative method. Multiple-choice questions are posed to the research group because then you have a clear overview of what people think. When a qualitative method is used, open questions are posed to the research group, and this gives many different replies which is very difficult to analyse. When there are multiple-choice questions, a certain number of different answers is kept within the limits. The questionnaire, which is based on chapter two of this research, will be given to native Dutch people between 20 and 30 years old. This group of people is chosen because these people are able to choose what they buy themselves (a six-year old child cannot always choose what they buy because they do not have an income and the parents make the buying decision), and this group can be loyal customers for a long time as this group is likely to live for many more years. Therefore, this group is interesting to use for this research. Native Dutch people are chosen to reflect the Dutch society because they have been living in the Netherlands for their whole life, so they have been raised with the Dutch culture around them. Because of this, this group of people is influenced by the Dutch culture and therefore this group represents the Dutch society, even though the society contains of a multicultural society. The group of people between 20 and 30 years in the Netherlands contained of 1,988,832 on 1 January 2017 (CBS, 2017). To conduct a significant qualitative research group, 106 people need to fill in the questionnaire according to SurveyMonkey. This is based on a reliability level of 90%, and an error margin of 8% (SurveyMonkey, n.d.).

3.3 Results

In the results there will be looked at all the cultural dimensions in the steps of consumer buyer behaviour. This will be done to see how every step gets influenced by different factors. The first step which is influenced by national culture is the problem recognition.

3.3.1. Problem recognition

The cultural factors which influence this are meaning of a person, relationship with time and institutional collectivism. Because the dimensions are already used in already existing national culture models, there is already an expectation of what the outcomes of the new national culture model will be. The first dimension which will be discussed is meaning of a person in the problem recognition. To see if the Netherlands is an autonomous country or a collectivistic country in this step, the question 'What motivates your way of clothing?' is asked. This question has been asked to find out what inspires Dutch consumers. Why are they triggered to need a product?

Subsequently, the relationship with time in the problem recognition will be outlined. To investigate when Dutch customers recognize the need to buy a product, the question 'When do you recognize the need to buy a product? (For example, when do you buy a winter coat)' was asked in the questionnaire. This makes clear if Dutch people are long-term orientated or short-term orientated.

Afterwards, the last dimension of the problem recognition will be researched, institutional collectivism. The question 'Do you have the feeling that collective distribution of resources and collective action is encouraged and rewarded in the Netherlands? (Is equality encouraged?)' was asked in the questionnaire. This question was asked to find out if the Dutch think that there is equality in their country. If there is equality, the needs of Maslow's period should be more or less on the same level within the society. It is important to research this because it shows what people recognize as a need. Moreover, the question 'would your buying behaviour look different if you would have more money?' was asked. This question was asked to find out there are significant differences in the responds of the respondents. If many responds are similar, it can be concluded that there is equality in the society as the majority desires the same.

3.3.2 Evaluation of alternatives

The next step which will be researched in the results is the evaluation of alternatives. This step is influenced by the dimensions meaning of a person, relationship with rules and relationship with time. At this step there are already expectations of the outcomes of the new national culture model, because the dimensions are already used in other national culture models. The outcomes of other national culture models will be mentioned before the results of the field research will be shown. This will be done for every dimension in this step. The first dimension which will be outlined is the dimension meaning of a person. This dimension is applicable in this step as well so that is the reason

why this dimension is being researched again, but slightly in a different way. To investigate how Dutch culture behaves in this dimension, field research has been done. The question 'What is important to you when you buy a piece of clothing?' is asked to find this out. This question is asked to find out whether people base the choice of a product on individual interests, or on what others think. The results will show whether the Dutch are more of a collective or autonomous society in this area.

The dimension which is examined after the dimension meaning of a person, is the relationship with time. We look at this dimension in the evaluation of alternatives because it becomes clear what people value. Do Dutch people value quality more, or is the price more important? This dimension will make clear whether people look at the long term or the short term when they buy a product. To get this clear, field research has been done. The question 'what is more important, price or quality?' is asked to the respondents. This question will make clear whether the Dutch look more closely at the short term or the long term when buying a piece of clothing.

The final dimension that will be investigated in the evaluation of alternatives is the dimension relationship with rules. It will be investigated whether Dutch people allow their will to be influenced by rules or principles. It is important to investigate this because, for example, in religious countries it is not successful to offer short skirts because women are not allowed to wear this because of faith. To find out whether this is also the case in the Netherlands, the question 'Do rules or principles that you have to buy?' is asked to the respondents. This will show whether Dutch people have their will determined by themselves or by rules and principles.

3.3.3 Purchase

The last step of consumer buyer behaviour that is influenced by national culture is the purchase. This step can be influenced by the dimension meaning of a person. This dimension is important to investigate in this step because it looks at the extent to which Dutch people listen to other people. Some people listen a lot to other people, such as reviews on a product, but some people prefer to experience things themselves. It is up to the culture to what extent a person is more autonomous than collectivistic. To find out how the Dutchman functions in this case, the question 'What are the reasons for not buying a piece of clothing?' is asked. This will show what drives the Dutch person not to proceed with the purchase of a product. It will show whether Dutch society is collectivistic or autonomous.

3.4 Analysis

When the results are known, the analysis will be made. In the analysis, research will be carried out per dimension. First of all, the dimension meaning of a person will be made up. The outcomes of the results of this dimension will be compared with each other. A model will be drawn up in which these outcomes will be processed, to finally come to the conclusion whether the Netherlands is an autonomous or collectivistic society.

Then the results of the relationship dimension with time will be processed in the analysis as well. A model is also made for this dimension in which the results will be processed. On the basis of this model it becomes clear whether the Netherlands is a country that is focused on the long term or on the short term.

Thirdly, the results of the dimension institutional collectivism will be processed in the analysis. Here it becomes clear whether the Netherlands is a country in which collective distribution of resources and collective action is encouraged and rewarded. This indicates whether there is equality in the Netherlands, and whether the wants and needs of the Dutch are on an equal level according to Maslow's pyramid.

Eventually, the results of the dimension relationship with rules will be processed in the analysis. In addition to looking at the results of the questionnaire, the developments in the Netherlands around religion are also examined. Religion can influence this dimension, so it is important to see if divisions in religion have changed in recent years. With this information taken into account, it will ultimately be decided whether the Netherlands is a country that is guided by rules and principles, or that the Netherlands is an indulgent country, which is not guided by rules and principles when a piece of clothing is bought.

Chapter 3.5. - Conclusion

Finally, the conclusion will be made up in which will be outlined how the Dutch online consumer behaviour is affected by the Dutch culture. The answer on the main research question will be given. In addition, it explains how companies can respond to the influential steps of the consumer behaviour process.

Chapter 4 – Results

In this chapter all steps of consumer buyer behaviour that are influenced by national culture will be outlined. There are three steps of consumer buyer behaviour that are influenced by culture, namely the problem recognition, the evaluation of alternatives, and the purchase step. There are different dimensions of the newly established national culture model that can be applied to the steps of consumer buyer behaviour. Some dimensions can be applied to multiple steps, so that is the reason why some dimensions are mentioned several times in this chapter. Since the dimensions of the new national culture model have already been used in existing culture models, there is a certain expectation of what the outcomes of the new national culture model will be. To find out what the outcomes of the new national culture model are, field research has been carried out. A questionnaire is distributed to see how the Dutch responds in certain situations and what the preferences are.

Chapter 4.1. - Problem recognition

The problem recognition is the first step which can be influenced by national culture. There are three cultural dimensions which are applicable in this step, namely: meaning of a person, relationship with time and institutional collectivism. These dimensions will be explained separately from each other. Before giving the results of the questionnaire, the outcomes of the already existing national culture model will be shown.

Chapter 4.1.1. – Meaning of a person

The dimension 'meaning of a person' is a cultural dimension which is also used in the national culture model of Schwartz. In this national culture model, the Netherlands scored 4.49 out of 7 on the autonomous scale anchor, and 3.19 out of 7 on the embeddedness scale anchor (Schwartz, 2008), which means that the Netherlands is an autonomous country according to Schwartz's national culture model. This means that the uniqueness of individuals is valued. Most likely, consumers will opt for unique products, and not for products that everyone already has because of this. To investigate whether Dutch people are indeed inspired by unique products instead of products that multiple possess, field research has been done. The question 'What motivates your way of clothing?' has been asked to investigate if the Netherlands is an autonomous country according to the new national culture model as well. The options that could be chosen are: advertisements, other people, trends, unique products and different. It was expected that most Dutch would opt for unique products, as this answer best reflects the preference for uniqueness. However, most people opted for trends (55.8%).

The clothing branch which best reflects trends is the fast fashion industry, because this branch is based on the fast-changing fashion trends (Fibre2Fashion, n.d.). Therefore, the fast fashion industry has given way to the Netherlands, and the national culture has been adjusted in this cultural dimension when looking at existing cultural models. Besides that the Dutch are inspired by trends, are they inspired by others and by unique products as well according to the field research. These results both achieved 39.2% of the respondents.

6. What motivates your way of clothing?

120 reacties

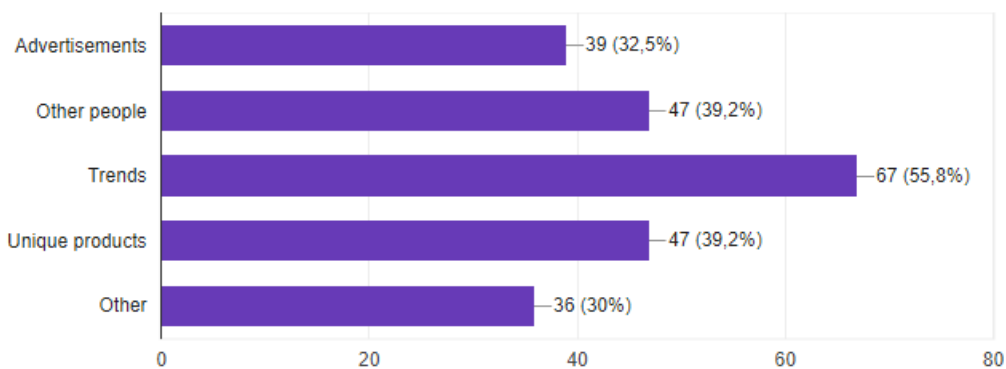


Figure 5. Outcomes of the question 'what motivates your way of clothing?' in the market research

Chapter 4.1.2. - Relationship with time

Relationship with time is the second dimension which influences the problem recognition. This dimension is already used in two existing national culture models, namely Hofstede's national culture model and the one of GLOBE. The outcomes in both of the already existing culture models illustrate that the Netherlands is a country in which people look at the long-term. This is shown in the national culture model of Geert Hofstede in which the Netherlands scores 69 out of 100 (Hofstede, n.d.), and in the national culture model of GLOBE in which the Netherlands scores 4.61 out of 7 (GLOBE, 2004). To see if Dutch consumers also look at the long-term when the need is recognized, the question: 'When do you recognize the need to buy a product? (For example, when do you buy a winter coat)' was asked in the field research. Against expectations, the majority of the respondents admit that a product is purchased at the short term instead of at the long term. The respondents were able to choose an answer between one and five. One means that a product is bought at the last moment, and five means that a product is purchased before the product is needed.

5. When do you recognize the need to buy a product? (For example, when do you buy a winter coat)

120 reacties

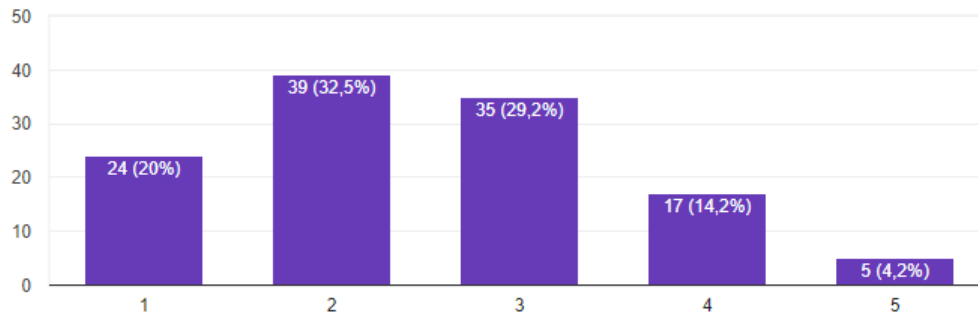


Figure 6. Outcomes of the question 'When do you recognize the need to buy a product?' in the market research

Chapter 4.1.3. - Institutional collectivism

Institutional collectivism is the last dimension which is influenced by national culture in the step 'problem recognition' of the consumer buyer behaviour. As this dimension is already used in an already existing national culture model, an expectation of the outcomes of the new national culture model exists. The national culture dimension of GLOBE shows that the Netherlands scores 4.47 out of 7 on this dimension which means that collective distribution of resources and collective action is encouraged and rewarded on a medium level (GLOBE, 2004). To investigate if the Dutch society believes that collective distribution of resources and collective action is encouraged and rewarded on a medium level as well, field research has been done. The question 'Do you have the feeling that collective distribution of resources and collective action is encouraged and rewarded in the Netherlands? (Is equality encouraged?)' was asked, and according to the questionnaire Dutch people score three out of five. They neither agree or disagree with the question. This was expected as well as this outcome shows that the Dutch people believe that collective distribution of resources and collective action is encouraged and rewarded on a medium level.

Another question which relates to this dimension is: 'Would your buying behaviour look different if you would have more money?' At this question most people answered 'yes I would buy more and other clothes'. There are no significant differences in the answers respondents gave, which means that the pyramid of Maslow is fulfilled for everyone about the same level. Because everyone is about the same level and has the same wishes, it can be said that there is little inequality. Otherwise, the answers would differ more from each other.

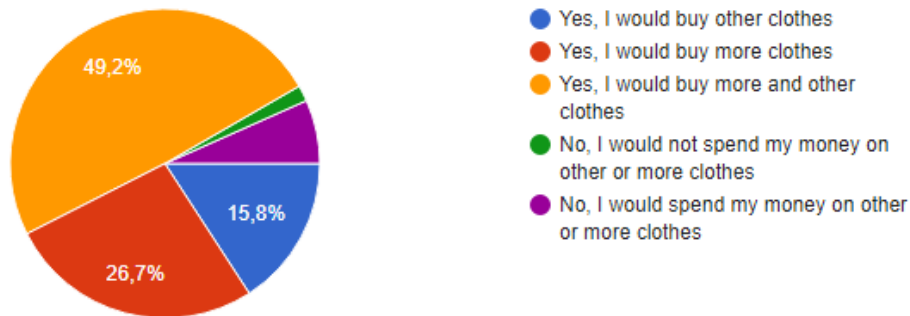


Figure 7. Outcomes of the question 'Would your buying behaviour look different if you would have more money?' in the market research

Chapter 4.2. - Evaluation of alternatives

Another step of consumer buyer behaviour which can be influenced by national culture is the step 'evaluation of alternatives'. This is the step where a person has multiple options to choose from, but where eventually the alternatives are eliminated to decide which product should be purchased. This step can be influenced by three dimensions of national culture. These dimensions are: meaning of a person, relationship with rules and relationship with time. These dimensions will be discussed separately from each other in the next part. Before giving the results of the questionnaire, the expectations based on the outcomes of already existing national culture models will be shown.

Chapter 4.2.1. - Meaning of a person

This dimension is a dimension which plays a role in the problem recognition as well. As discussed in the previous step, it is expected that the respondents will opt for unique products, because this was the outcome in the national culture model of Schwartz as well. To investigate if this is also the case in this step of the consumer buyer behaviour, the question 'What is important to you when you buy a piece of clothing?' was asked. Even though the results in the problem recognition indicate that the Netherlands is more of a collective society, it appears here that the Netherlands is indeed more of an autonomous society, as expected. Many people chose the answers 'I think it is important that the product is comfortable', and 'I think it is important that the product is unique'. Few people opted for the options 'I think it is important that others wear similar clothing', and 'I think it is important that others like the product'.

7. What is important to you when you buy a piece of clothing?

120 reacties

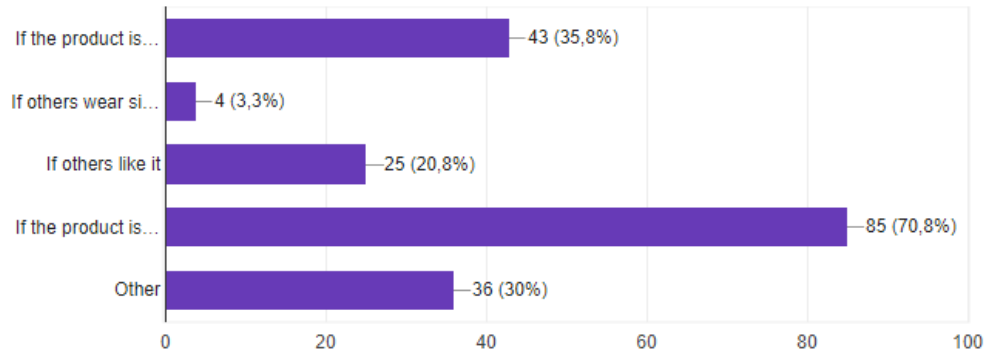


Figure 6. Outcomes of the question 'What is important to you when you buy a piece of clothing?' in the market research

Chapter 4.2.2. - Relationship with rules

Further, the step 'evaluation of alternatives' is influenced by the cultural dimension 'relationship with rules' as well. Sometimes people would like to buy a product, but rules or principles restrain them from actually buying the desired product. This dimension is used in the national culture model of Geert Hofstede as well. In Hofstede's national culture model the dimension is called 'indulgence vs. restraint'. According to Hofstede the Netherlands scores 68 out of 100 what makes the Netherlands an indulgent country. This means that the inhabitants of the Netherlands do not live according to strict rules, and decisions are made because of joyful reasons (Hofstede, n.d.). To investigate if this is also the case in this step of the consumer buyer behaviour, the question 'Do rules or principles restrain you sometimes from buying a piece of clothing which you actually desire to buy?' was asked. As expected, most people (77,5%) responded that they always buy the products they want and that they are not restrained by rules or principles.

9. Do rules or principles restrain you sometimes from buying a piece of clothing which you actually desire to buy?

120 reacties

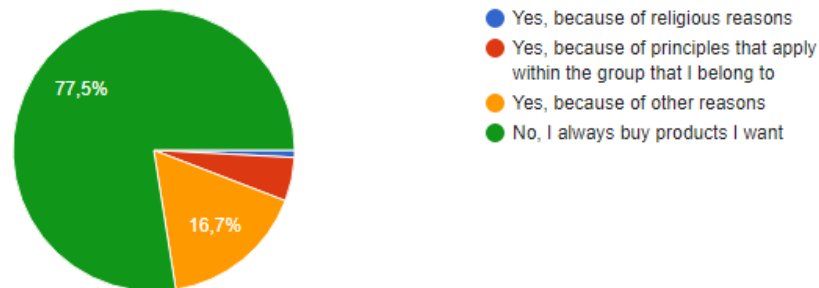


Figure 7. Outcomes of the question 'Do rules or principles restrain you sometimes from buying a piece of clothing which you actually desire to buy?' in the market research

Chapter 4.2.3. - Relationship with time

Eventually, the relationship with time plays a role as well in the evaluation of alternatives. As mentioned in the step 'problem recognition', this dimension is used in two other national culture models. These national culture models (GLOBE and Hofstede) showed that the Netherlands is a country in which is looked at the long-term. The problem recognition already showed that the Netherlands is looking more closely at the short term in the area of buying clothes, although that was not the expectation. To see whether the Netherlands is looking at the long term in the 'evaluation of alternatives' step, the question 'what is more important, price or quality?' has been asked in the questionnaire. When quality is more important, more attention is paid to the long term. When the price is more important, the Dutch look more towards the short term. Based on the national culture models of GLOBE and Hofstede, it is expected is that people will look at the long-term, so the quality should be important. According to the questionnaire, most respondents score 4 out of 5 on this question, so quality is more important than the price. On the score table number 1 meant that the price is more important, and number 5 meant that the quality is more important. So according to this question, the Netherlands look more at the long-term.

8. What is more important for you when you buy a piece of clothing?

120 reacties

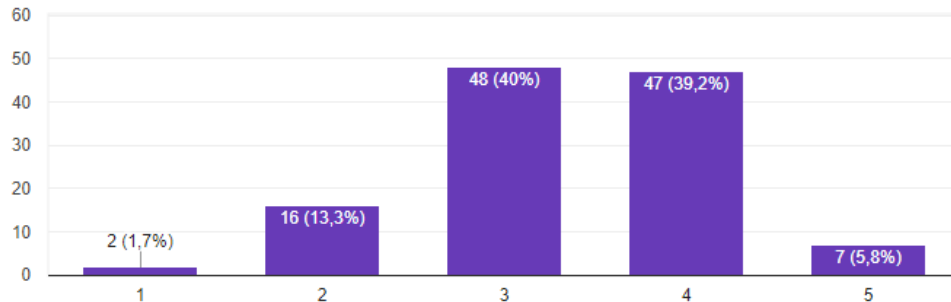


Figure 8. Outcomes of the question 'what is more important when you buy a piece of clothing?' in the market research

Another question which was asked is to investigate whether the Dutch society looks at the long-term or at the short-term, is 'What are mostly the reasons for deciding not to buy a piece of clothing?'. 69,2% of the respondents responded here as well that bad quality of the products would restrain them from buying the product. Remarking is that despite the fact that the quality of the products is more important than the price, still 84.2% of the participants indicate that they do not buy products if the price is too high.

12. What are mostly the reasons for deciding not to buy a piece of clothing?

120 reacties

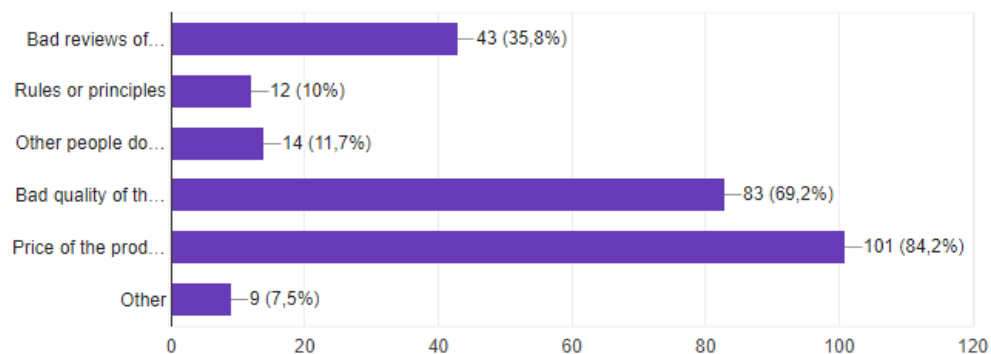


Figure 9. Outcomes of the question 'What are mostly the reasons for deciding not to buy a piece of clothing?' in the market research

Chapter 4.3. - Purchase

Chapter 4.3.1. - Meaning of a person

Lastly, the purchase step is influenced by national culture. The dimension which influences the purchase step is the dimension 'meaning of a person'. This dimension is also used in the two other steps of consumer buyer behaviour that can be influenced by national culture. The outcomes of this

dimension showed that the Netherlands is an autonomous country and the outcomes of the already existing national culture model of Schwartz showed this as well. Therefore, the expectation for the outcome of this dimension in the purchase step is that it shows that the Netherlands is an autonomous country as well. This will be investigated via field research. When people decide to buy a product, it can occur that at the last moment factors restrain them from really buying the product. Reasons for this could be for example bad reviews, rules or principles, or other people do not like the product. In figure 9 above is shown what the reasons are for respondents to abandon the purchase. Expected was that people are not restrained from buying products because of others, and this is also the case when there is looked at the outcomes of the questionnaire. Most people are not restrained from buying products because of other people, rules or principles, or bad reviews of people who have experience with the product. People want to experience the product themselves.

Chapter 5 - Analysis

Now the results of the market research have been made up, an analysis of the outcomes of the market research can be made. In this chapter the created national culture model will be filled in, so the Dutch culture can be illustrated according to the respondents of the market research. In contrast to the chapter results, in which was looked at the Dutch society per step of consumer buyer behaviour, this chapter will look at the Dutch society per dimension. This is done because it paints a clearer picture of how Dutch society functions as a whole, rather than per step. The dimensions that have been used multiple times in various steps of consumer buyer behaviour will be compared with each other, in order to ultimately be able to build up an analysis of how Dutch culture exerts itself in the area of that dimension.

Chapter 5.1. - Meaning of a person

The first dimension of the national culture model is 'meaning of a person'. This dimension is shown in all three steps of the consumer buyer behaviour that can be influenced by national culture. In the problem recognition step is illustrated that the Dutch society turns out to be a collectivistic society, even though the expectation was that the outcomes of the market research would turn out that the Netherlands is an autonomous society. The main reason of this outcome is that people are mostly inspired by trends, especially women. Besides, the outcomes of being inspired by trends is higher than the outcomes of being inspired by unique products. Being inspired by trends actually means being inspired by what many people wear at that moment in terms of clothing. This is seen as a collectivistic answer, and therefore, the Netherlands is seen as a collectivistic country based on this question.

But when the dimension meaning of a person is investigated in the other two steps, it becomes visible that the Netherlands is, as expected, an autonomous country. Because this is contrary, a scale from minus three to plus is made, to measure the Dutch culture. Minus three to zero contains of the collectivistic answers, and zero to three contains of autonomous answers. This scale is chosen because the 120 respondents can be divided easily in these columns, and the details of a culture become clearer when there are six columns, than when there are only four columns. Not more columns are chosen because then it will be too specific, and it will be harder to specify a culture when there are outliers.

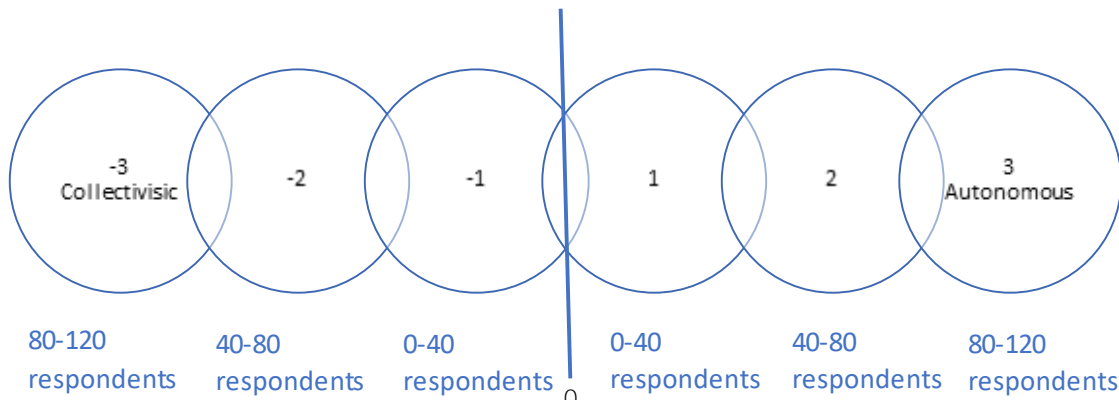


Figure 10. Scale anchors for the dimension meaning of a person

To fill in this visual dimension, there will be looked at the three steps of consumer buyer behaviour in which the dimension 'meaning of a person' was applicable. The visual dimension will be filled in step by step, in order to make a conclusion on the extent to which the Netherlands is an autonomous or collectivistic country.

In the step problem recognition, the question 'What motivates your way of clothing?' was asked. The answers advertisements, other people and trends will be seen as collectivistic answers, and the answer unique products will be seen as an autonomous answer. The average of the collectivistic answers will be used to fill in the score for the dimension meaning of a person. This means that the answers 39 (respondents of advertisements), 47 (respondents of other people), and 67 (respondents of trends) will be added together and divided by three. The total number is divided by 3 because there were 3 options that had a collectivistic character. In this way, an average of how many people opt for a collectivistic response. This gives 51 as an answer, so the Netherlands scores minus two out of 3 on the scale of being collectivistic. There were also 47 people who gave an answer which has an autonomous character, which means a score of one out of three. This gives a final scale total of $-2+1=-1$ in the problem recognition.

6. What motivates your way of clothing?

120 reacties

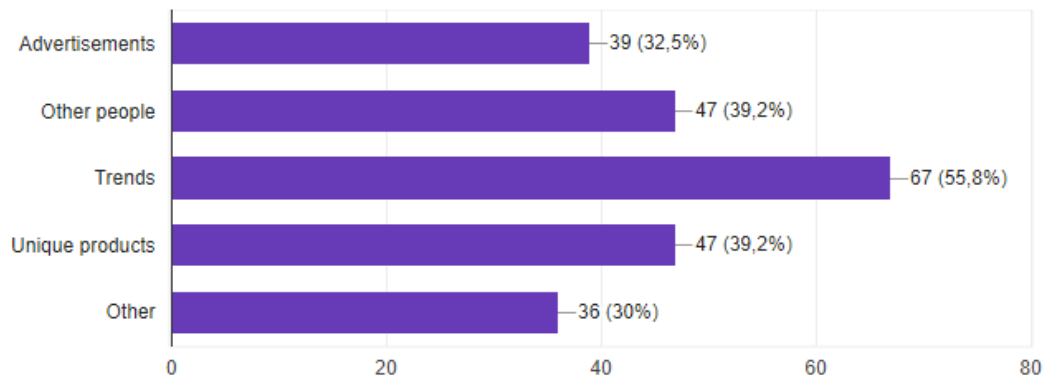


Figure 11. Outcomes of the question 'What motivates your way of clothing?' in the market research

Between men and women there are significant differences in the answers that are given, but both of the outcomes show that the majority of the respondents indicate to be inspired by collectivistic purposes.

What motivates your way of clothing?	Female	Male
Advertisements	30 = 40,5%	9 = 19,6%
Other people	33 = 44,6%	14 = 30,4%
Trends	46 = 62,2%	19 = 41,3%
Unique products	29 = 39,2%	18 = 39,1%

Table 7. Outcomes of the question 'What motivates your way of clothing?' in the market research

In the step of 'evaluation of alternatives' the dimension 'meaning of a person' is used as well. Here it becomes visible that Dutch people are more autonomous than collectivistic. The answers 'if other wear similar clothes' and 'if others like the product too' can be seen as collectivistic answers and the answers 'if the product is comfortable' and 'if the product is unique' can be seen as autonomous answers. 'If others wear similar clothes' had 4 respondents and 'if others like the product too' had 25 respondents. These two are counted together which leads to an answer of 29, divided by two gives an answer of 14,5. The total is divided by two because then an average is shown of how many people chose for a collectivistic answer. This means that the first scale of collectivistic is reached so this means that the outcomes fall in scale -1. The autonomous answers had 128 respondents in total, divided by two is 64 respondents. This leads to an outcome within scale 2. The final scale total in this step is 1. There is looked at the total outcomes of the respondents and not in segments, because as visible in table 8, there are no significant differences in the responds between different age groups.

What is important to you when you buy a piece of clothing?	Between 20 and 23 years old	Between 24 and 27 years old	Between 28 and 30 years old
If others like it	11 = 18,33%	13 = 25%	1 = 12,5%
If the product is comfortable	45 = 75%	35 = 67,3%	5 = 62,5%
If others wear similar clothes	2 = 3,33%	2 = 3,85%	
If the product is unique	17 = 28,33%	23 = 43,4%	3 = 37,5%

Table 8. Outcomes of the question 'What is important to you when you buy a piece of clothing?' in the market research.

Finally, in the purchase step is the dimension 'meaning of a person' added as well. The answers 'bad reviews of a product', 'rules of principles' and 'other people do not like the product' fall under the collectivist scale. There are no significant remarking differences in the responds which are given as seen in table 9 below, what makes that the average answers of all respondents are relevant in this case. This means that 43+12+14 respondents gave an answer in the collectivistic scene. This gives a total of 69, which needs to be divided by three. That gives a final answer of 23. The scale -1 is the scale which belongs to these answers. The autonomous answers are 'bad quality of the product' and 'price of the product', which is summed up 184. This divided by two gives an answer of 92, and a scale column of 3. These answers are autonomous answers because these are factors influenced by the market and not by other people. The final scale total here is 2, because $-1+3=2$.

What are mostly the reasons for deciding not to buy a product?	Between 20 and 23 years old	Between 24 and 27 years old	Between 28 and 30 years old
Bad quality of the product	45 = 75%	24 = 46,2%	5 = 62,5%
Price of the product	50 = 83,3%	41 = 78,8%	7 = 87,5%
Bad reviews of the product	26 = 43,3%	15 = 28,8%	4 = 50%
Other people don't like the product	7 = 11,7%	7 = 13,2%	
Rules or principles	8 = 13,3%	5 = 9,6%	1 = 12,5%

Table 9. Outcomes of the question 'What are mostly the reasons for deciding not to buy a product?' in the market research.

When the final scale totals are added to each other and divided by 3, the dimension meaning of a person comes to a scale total of 1 according to the questionnaire regarding the Dutch society. This shows that the Netherlands thus is an autonomous country, as was expected as well. When is looked at the collectivistic answer 'being inspired by others', it can be seen that there were 47 persons who gave this answer. Only 16 of these people said that they find it important that others like the product too. This is only 34% which shows that the minority of the respondents is showing a collectivistic character. These figures emerged from the field research.

A reason why the Netherlands turns out to be a collectivistic country when looking at what inspires them, is because of the upcoming fast fashion industry. The fast-fashion industry is based on trends, and therefore Dutch people can be inspired by trends as well. Besides, fast-fashion clothes are cheaper, the quality is often worse so they need to be replaced sooner as well too. Buying more belongs to the trend of fast fashion. Perhaps because more is bought (because products are rather worn out), the urge is also more to keep up with the trends.

Chapter 5.2. - Relationship with time

Further, the dimension 'relationship with time' is part of the new national culture model as well. This dimension is used in two steps of the consumer buyer behaviour, namely in the problem recognition and in the evaluation of alternatives. In the problem recognition, clear differences between the responds of men and women are visible in the dimension relationship with time. 38,6% of the women admits that the purchase is done before the product is actually needed, and only 15,3% of the men purchases the product before it is necessary. In contrary, only 28,7% of the women buys the product at the last moment and 44,9% of the men do this. The rest is in the middle.

Som van 5. When do you recognize the need to buy a product?			
	Female	Male	Total
1 - At the last moment	3,96%	16,33%	8,00%
2	24,75%	28,57%	26,00%
3	32,67%	39,80%	35,00%
4	33,66%	0,00%	22,67%
5 - Before you need the product	4,95%	15,31%	8,33%
Total	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

Table 9. Outcomes of the question 'When do you recognize the need to buy a product?' in the market research

Even though these differences occur, the Dutch culture should be seen as a whole, without separation. Therefore, there will be looked at the outcomes of the total society. For this dimension there will be made three scale anchors: short-term, neutral and long-term.

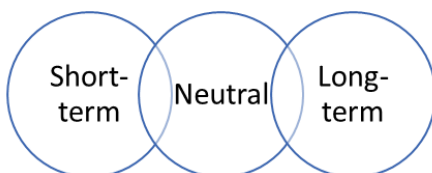


Figure 12. Scale anchors for the dimension relationship with time

As can be seen in the figure 13, there were five scale anchors for the question related to the relation with time in problem recognition. Scale anchors one and two in figure 12 will be calculated and added

to the short-term scale, the outcomes of scale anchor three will be added to scale anchor neutral, and the outcomes of scale anchor four and five in the picture will be added to the scale anchor long-term. The short-term contains of 63 respondents, the neutral scale anchor contains of 35 respondents, and the long-term scale anchor contains of 22 respondents. This shows that Dutch people are more looking at the short-term, in contrary to the expectations.

5. When do you recognize the need to buy a product? (For example, when do you buy a winter coat)

120 reacties

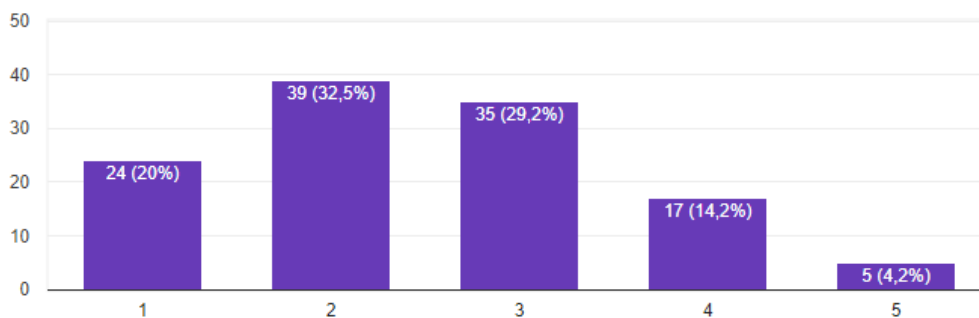


Figure 13. Outcomes of the question 'When do you recognize the need to buy a product?' in the market research

Before concluding that the Netherlands is a country in which is focused on the short-term, there need to be looked at this dimension in another step of consumer buyer behaviour as well: the evaluation of alternatives. The same new scale anchor model as used before will be used: short-term, neutral and long-term. When looking at the question related to relationship with time van be seen that there were five options to choose from. The question which was related to this step was: 'What is more important to you when you buy a piece of clothing, price or quality?' The answers one and two will be summed up for the short-term, which leads to an outcome of 18. The answers of scale anchor three are 48 so 48 people are neutral in this case. The respondents of column four and five are the people who look at the long-term, and this number is 54. Here it becomes visible that the Dutch society looks more at the long-term. It is striking that 40 people who indicated that quality is more important, are still prevented from buying a product when the price is too high. From this we can conclude that people find it important to buy products of good quality, but that there is a limit to the price attached to them.

8. What is more important for you when you buy a piece of clothing?

120 reacties

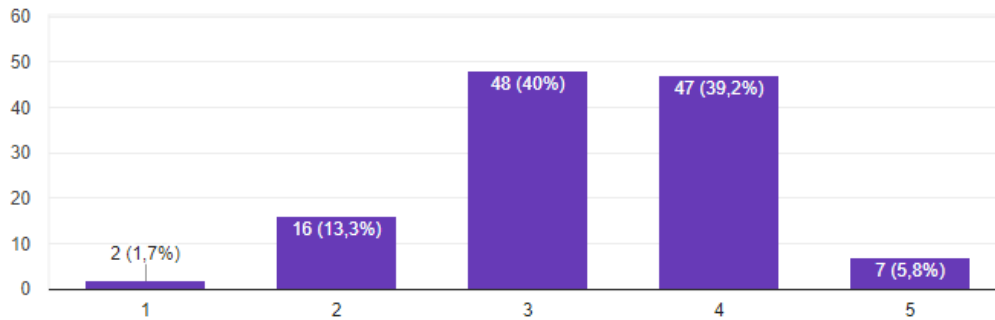


Figure 14. Outcomes of the question 'What is more important for you when you buy a piece of clothing?' in the market research

When these outcomes of the two questions are combined, it becomes visible that 81 people choose for short-term answers, 83 for neutral answers and 76 for long-term answers. This shows that the Netherlands is a neutral country instead of a country which looks at the long-term.

Chapter 5.3. - Institutional collectivism

The third dimension which is part of the new national culture model is institutional collectivism.

Institutional collectivism simply shows if there is equality in the country when it comes to collective distribution of resources. If there is much inequality, the needs are different within the society according to Maslow. The respondents were mostly neutral in their answers related to this question. This means that there is little remarking inequality. According to the respondents they would mostly buy more and other clothes when they would have more money. It is logical that if you would have more money, you would buy more things, because more levels of the pyramid of Maslow can be reached. But this shows as well that there are no large differences within the society, as almost every respondent says that they would buy more/other clothes. If there would be large differences within the society, there would probably be larger differences in the answers. So as expected, the Netherlands scores on a medium level when it comes to institutional collectivism.

Chapter 5.4. - Relationship with rules

Ultimately, the dimension relationship with rules is the last dimension which is part of the new national culture model. Rules or principles do restrain people sometimes from living the life they actually desire to live. In the Netherlands many different cultures are present, and therefore there is also more chance that people feel prevented from buying a product because of their religion. Every

day an average of 600 immigrants enter the Netherlands, and 430 emigrants leave (CBS, 2017). This makes it logical that the percentage of religious people can grow, and people can therefore be inhibited in their actual will regarding buying clothes. Yet this is not entirely true in reality. The number of people without religious convictions has increased, and furthermore all religious beliefs have declined or stayed the same in the Netherlands, except for Islam and Buddhism. But these beliefs have not increased explosively. Buddhism increased by 0.1% between 2010 and 2015, and Islam rose by 0.4% between 2010 and 2015 (CBS, 2016). As a result, we can expect that the data from earlier national culture models still can be applied. According to Geert Hofstede, the Netherlands is an indulgent country. The question 'Do rules or principles restrain you sometimes from buying a piece of clothing which you actually desire to buy?' was asked. 77.5% responds that they always buy the products they want and that they are not restrained by rules or principles. This makes it that the Netherlands is an indulgent country.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

The fast-fashion industry is an industry that is gaining ground, in the Netherlands too. In addition, e-commerce is also becoming more and more popular. In this research was investigated how Dutch society reacts to this. The research question was: 'How does national culture influence online consumer behaviour of native Dutch customers in the age of 20 to 30 regarding the fast fashion industry?' In order to research this, a new national culture theory has been made up and field research and desk research was done. In this chapter an answer will be given on the research question.

As seen in the research, a new national culture model which is applicable in the steps of consumer buyer behaviour has been made up. This model contains of four different dimensions: meaning of a person, relationship with time, institutional collectivism, and relationship with rules.

Via field research was investigated how the target group can be categorized in the dimensions. The dimension meaning of a person was applied in three different steps of the consumer buyer behaviour. It became clear that overall the Netherlands is an autonomous country, but when looking at the inspiration for buying clothes the Netherlands looks more like a collectivistic country. From this information it can be concluded that the Dutch target group is influenced by what kind of clothes several people wear, but meanwhile it is important that they like the product too. The consumer is inspired by trends, so what is often worn at the moment, but there will be chosen for a product that the consumer wants, not by what others want. Because the consumer ultimately focuses on himself, the Netherlands is an autonomous country. The Netherlands' national culture influences the online consumer buyer behaviour regarding the fashion industry through its autonomous character.

The other dimension of Dutch culture that influences online consumer behaviour is the relationship with time. The field research has shown that the overall scale anchor that can be attached to this dimension is 'neutral'. When looking at this dimension in more detail, it can be seen that consumers buy clothes at a short term, and not far in advance. Furthermore, consumers consider the quality of a product more important than the price, although they do indicate that a price which is too high will keep them from buying. What is often seen is that just before the season starts, or when the season just has just started, the sale of the clothing needed for that season is already starting. This makes it possible for people to buy clothes of good quality, for a price which is not too high. What ultimately can be concluded is that Dutch culture influences online consumer behaviour in this area by looking at

which products are needed to purchase in the short term, but by looking at the long term when a product is purchased, by looking at the quality of a product.

Furthermore, the online consumer buyer behaviour regarding the fast fashion industry is still influenced by institutional collectivism. Because according to the respondents no major differences are noticeable in the Netherlands, and everything is fairly distributed, the wishes of the Dutch are reasonably on an equal level. This is because the pyramid for Maslow is fulfilled for the majority of the Dutch at the same level. This has determined the realistic desire to purchase certain products. It has been determined to what extent wishes can be fulfilled by this and whether the wishes of the target group would be very different from each other.

The last dimension that influences online consumer behaviour is the relationship with rules. Sometimes it can be seen that restrictions are imposed in countries regarding certain forms of clothing. In that case, culture would influence consumer buyer behaviour. In the field research that was carried out, very few people in the Netherlands were restricted with respect to the clothes they wear. The Dutch mainly do what they want and do not let themselves be held back by rules or principles.

So, the Dutch society is a society in which many people between 20 and 30 years old are inspired by trends. Further, the Netherlands is an autonomous country so the person himself is central. People buy needed clothes at the short term but buy them for the long term. Besides, Dutch consumers are not restricted by rules or principles when buying clothes, the autonomous character shows its role here as well. Eventually, there is little remarking inequality in the Netherlands, and therefore the wants and needs of consumers are on the same level.

Businesses can respond to this by looking at the trends. Dutch people are inspired by trends, so this is what they want to buy too. Also, offering products should not be done too long before the season starts. This because the majority of the people buy their clothes rather at the last moment than in advance. Besides, it is important that the quality of the products is good because Dutch consumers buy products for the long term. Furthermore, the price should not be extremely high because this scares off potential customers. Even though the quality of products is more important, customers keep the price of the products in mind as well. Additionally, products must not meet certain requirements in

terms of rules, principles or religion, because in the Netherlands people do not feel limited because of this when they want to buy a piece of clothing.

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Chapter 8 - Appendices

8.1. Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female

2. What is your age?
 - Under 20 years old (then this is the final question)
 - Between 20 and 23 years old
 - Between 24 and 27 years old
 - Between 28 and 30 years old
 - Older then 30 years old (then this is the final question)

3. What do you do for living?
 - I work full time
 - I work part time
 - I am a student and work besides school
 - I am a student and do not work besides school
 - I am unemployed

4. How often do you buy clothes online?
 - Never
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Once in two months
 - Twice a year
 - Less often

5. When do you decide to buy a product (For example: When do you buy your winter coat?)?
(Five options, to choose from, one and five are determined, the other options are in between the extremes)

- 1 = At the last moment, at the moment you need the product (during the winter)
- 5 = Before the product is necessary. It is useful for the future (during the summer)

6. What motivates your choice of clothing?

- Advertisements
- Other people
- Trends
- Unique products
- Other

7. What is important to you when you buy a piece of clothing?

- If the product is unique
- If others wear similar clothes
- If others like it
- If the product is comfortable
- Other

8. What is more important to you when you buy a product?

(Five options, to choose from, one and five are determined, the other options are in between the extremes)

- 1 = That the product is cheap
- 5 = That the product can be used for a longer time

9. Do rules restrain you sometimes from buying a product which you actually desire to buy?

(Because of religious reasons for example)

- Yes, because of religious reasons
- Yes, because of principles that apply within the group that I belong to
- Yes, because of other reasons
- No, I always buy the products I want

10. Would you buy other clothes if you have more money?

- Yes, I would buy other clothes
- Yes, I would buy more clothes
- Yes, I would buy more and other clothes
- No

11. Do you have the feeling that collective distribution of resources and collective action is encouraged and rewarded in the Netherlands?

(Five options, to choose from, one and five are determined, the other options are in between the extremes)

- 1 = Yes
- 5 = No

12. What are mostly the reasons for deciding not to buy a product?

- Bad reviews of the product
- Rules or principles
- Other people don't like the product
- Bad quality of the product
- Price of the product
- Other

13. Do you hold on to existing reviews of a product or do you think that everyone is unique and has a unique experience with the product?

(Five options, to choose from, one and five are determined, the other options are in between the extremes)

- 1 = I hold on to existing reviews
- 5 = I think that everyone has their own experience with a product, so I would try it myself

8.2. Student Ethics Form

**European Studies
Student Ethics Form**

Your name:

Supervisor:

Instructions/checklist

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a. ☐ Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b. ☐ Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c. ☐ Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d. ☐ Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

(i) Title of Project:

(ii) Aims of project:

(iii) Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)

YES / NO

If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form.

This project is not designed to include research with human subjects . I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature _____ - date _____

If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?

(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?

Questionnaires[]; Pictures[]; Sounds []; Words[]; Other[].

(iv) Consent: Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. Either verbally or by means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data?

Student's signature: **date:**

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures): **date:**