values, and ideals regarding affect and emotion. In the above example, Stanford students may have liked the slogan “less stress and more success” because it is consistent with the American ideal of feeling good and not feeling bad. In contrast, Chinese University of Hong Kong students may have disliked the slogan because it goes against the Chinese ideal of emotional moderation, or maintaining a balance between feeling good and feeling bad.

Many studies have demonstrated that culture shapes consumer behavior (e.g., evaluation of products, product preference) and that affect shapes consumer behavior. Surprisingly few studies have considered how culture and affect jointly shape consumer behavior. For instance, research consistently shows that when consumers feel good, they evaluate products more favorably. The conditions under which consumers feel good, however, largely depend on their cultural contexts. Therefore, in this chapter, we will review existing research on affect and consumer behavior, present our work on ideal affect (how people ideally want to feel) and consumer behavior, and finally, discuss how understanding a culture’s ideal affect can help us understand the relations among culture, affect, and consumer behavior. First, we define our key terms.

DEFINITIONS

Affect: actual and ideal

By “affect,” we refer to neurophysiological states that are experienced as emotions, moods, and other feelings, and that can be categorized along the dimensions of arousal and valence. The valence dimension corresponds to the feeling of environmental gain (positive valence; e.g., “happy”, “satisfied”) or losses (negative valence; e.g., “sad”, “unhappy”), and the arousal dimension corresponds to the feeling that one’s environment requires energy and mobilization (high arousal, e.g., “aroused”) or allows rest and recuperation (low arousal; e.g., “inactive”) (Barrett & Russell, 1999; Russell, 2003). Studies of self-reported mood, emotional facial expressions, and emotion lexicons suggest that different feeling states can be categorized in terms of at least these two dimensions (Kuppens, Ceulemans, Timmerman, Diener, & Kim-Prieto, 2006; Russell, Lewicka, & Niit, 1989; Yik & Russell, 2003). For instance, excitement, enthusiasm, and elation are high-arousal positive (HAP) states, whereas calm, peacefulness, and serenity are low-arousal positive (LAP) states (see Figure 4.1).

Most research on affect and consumer behavior has focused on how people actually feel, or what we refer to as their “actual affect.” However, in this chapter we argue that how people ideally want to feel, what we refer to as their “ideal affect,” may matter as much as (and sometimes even more than) their actual affect in shaping consumer behavior. How are actual affect and ideal affect different? Whereas actual affect is a response to an event or an outcome (e.g., actually feeling anxious on a Ferris wheel), ideal affect is a goal or a desired state (e.g., wanting to feel calm on a Ferris wheel). Although both ideal affect and
actual affect are critically important to emotional life, they serve different functions: whereas actual affect represents how someone is feeling (“I feel good”), ideal affect serves as a yardstick against which one can interpret that state (“Is this feeling good?” “Does this feel right?”). Because ideal affect is primarily culturally shaped, one source of cultural differences in consumer behavior may be cultural differences in ideal affect. While actual affect shapes consumer behavior, these relationships may depend at least in part on ideal affect. We discuss our work on ideal affect in greater detail following our review of the literature on actual affect and consumer behavior.

Consumer behavior

We use the term “consumer behavior” to refer to the “behavior of the consumer or decision making in the marketplace of products and services” (American Marketing Association, 2012). We focus particularly on how consumers respond to and evaluate different products, providers, and services, and the options they prefer.

ACTUAL AFFECT AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A REVIEW OF EXISTING FINDINGS

In this section, we review existing findings regarding the role of affect on consumer behavior. This review is not intended to be comprehensive, but instead to reflect the most consistent patterns in the empirical literature to date. As mentioned above, most of this research has focused on how consumers’ actual affect shapes their behavior.

The role of actual affect versus reason in consumer decision making

Historically, dominant models of decision making, derived primarily from economic theory, assumed that individuals behave rationally (i.e., select options that provide the greatest benefit and lowest cost). Because reason and affect are often pitted against each other, these models largely ignored the role of affect in decision making. As demonstrated by the recent global economic crisis, however, individuals often behave in ways that cannot be predicted by these models alone. Prospect theory argues that these “anomalies” occur when individuals cannot make rational decisions, and instead must rely on heuristics that are often sensitive to affective processes (Tversky & Kahneman, 1983). Thus, affect was initially used to explain irrational decisions, or those not accounted for by the rational actor model. Indeed, in the consumer decision-making literature, most research assumes a “dual processing” approach, in which cognitive processes are described as high level, deliberate, utilitarian, rational, systematic, and often conscious, whereas affective processes are described as low level, automatic, gut-like, hedonic, and usually unconscious (Damasio, 2005; Edell & Burke, 1987; Epstein, 1994; Forgas, 1995; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Kahneman & Frederick, 2002; Pham, 2004; Schwarz & Clore, 1996; Slooman, 1996; Slovic, Finucane, Peters, & MacGregor, 2007).

For instance, in Shiv and Fedorikhin (1999) American undergraduates were randomly assigned to either a high or low cognitive load condition. In the high cognitive load condition, participants were required to remember a seven-digit number that they had to report to a researcher down the hall. In the low cognitive load condition, participants only had to remember and report a two-digit number. Participants were then told to choose an item from a food cart in the hall and to tell the researcher which item they wanted after they reported their number. The food cart contained a piece of chocolate cake (presumably the more affectively pleasant but less rational option) and a fruit salad (presumably the less affectively pleasant but more rational option). Participants in the high cognitive load condition were more likely to choose the chocolate cake than those in the low cognitive load condition. Consistent with prospect theory, the authors concluded that when individuals’ cognitive abilities are impaired, affective processes lead people to make more impulsive and less rational choices (i.e., to select the chocolate cake).

Work by Zajonc and colleagues (Zajonc, 1980; Zajonc & Markus, 1982) was among the first to suggest that affect, independent of cognition, functions as an influential guide in consumer preferences and decision making.
Based on this work, significant research has since treated affect as a valid source of information that can even facilitate optimal choices and decisions (Damasio, 2005; Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003; Loewenstein, Weber, Hsee, & Welch, 2001; Pham, 2004; Schwarz & Clore, 1983, 1996; Slovic, Finucane, Peters, & MacGregor, 2002; Slovic et al., 2007). Indeed, recent studies have observed that compared to normal control subjects, brain-damaged patients with impaired emotional functioning (e.g., difficulties processing emotional stimuli, difficulties anticipating how they would feel in the future) made lower quality decisions and were slower at learning to select favorable (versus unfavorable) options (for reviews, see Bechara, 2004; Damasio, 2005). Thus, rather than prevent optimal decision making, increasing research suggests that affective processes can promote optimal decision making. For example, American and Canadian older adults, who have more emotion-focused goals than younger adults, made better decisions (e.g., engaged in more healthy eating behaviors) when they focused on the affective (versus informational) properties of health care information (Löckenhoff & Carstensen, 2007; Mikels, Löckenhoff, Maglio, Carstensen, Goldstein, & Garber 2010; Zhang, Fung, & Ching, 2009). As a result, researchers have begun to examine more directly how affect shapes consumer behavior, in particular people’s evaluation of and preferences for specific consumer products, services, and service providers.

**Actual affect: anticipated, online, and recalled**

Prior to consumption (i.e., trying a product or service or engaging with a service provider), consumers may have expectations about how they will feel during consumption ("anticipated" actual affect). During consumption, they may experience feelings ("online" actual affect) that may or may not be related to the product, service, or service provider. Sometime afterwards, consumers may remember how they felt during consumption ("recalled" actual affect). For example, as illustrated in Figure 4.2, prior to riding a Ferris wheel, an individual might think about how she will feel on the Ferris wheel (anticipated actual affect). While she is riding the Ferris wheel, she may feel relaxed ("integral" online actual affect; i.e., affect that is related to the product or service), even though an insect flying around her ear may annoy her ("incidental" online actual affect; i.e., affect that is unrelated to the product or service). After the ride is over, she may think about how she felt on the Ferris wheel (recalled actual affect).

The bulk of existing research suggests that these three types of actual affect—anticipated, online, and recalled—have similar implications for consumer evaluation and preference. We first describe this research, and then review our work on culture and ideal affect, which—as shown in Figure 4.2—we believe influences the links between the types of actual affect and consumer behavior described below.

**Anticipated actual affect**

It is well documented that people base their decisions on how they expect they will feel after making a choice or decision (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2000; Bell, 1985; Chaudhuri, 2002; Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003; Mellers Schwartz, & Ritov, 1999; Richard, van der Pligt, & de Vries, 1996). For instance, using bipolar scales (i.e., good–bad, nice–awful, pleasant–unpleasant), Dutch college students rated how they felt toward various behaviors (e.g., taking drugs, drinking alcohol, studying hard), how much they intended to engage in each behavior, and how they expected to feel after engaging in each behavior (i.e., anticipated affect) (Richard et al., 1996). Students’ anticipated actual affect predicted their intentions to engage in each behavior more than did their feelings toward each behavior. Similarly, several studies find that anticipated actual negative affect, such as regret, loss, and disappointment, is a motivator of choice (e.g., Bar-Hillel & Neter, 1996; Bell, 1985; Connolly, Ordóñez, & Coughlan, 1997; Loomes & Sugden, 1982; Simonson, 1992; Zeelenberg, 1999; Zeelenberg, van Dijk, Manstead, & van der Pligt, 2000). For example, employees at Rutgers University in the United States were more likely to get the influenza vaccine the more they anticipated regretting not getting the vaccine and worrying about getting influenza. Furthermore, among people who did not get vaccinated, those who anticipated more regret and worry were more likely to get vaccinated one year later (Chapman & Coups, 2006).

Ironically, although people base their decisions on their anticipated actual affect, a significant body of research suggests that people are generally bad at forecasting or predicting how they will feel after a particular outcome (e.g., Hsee...
negative) mood (unrelated to the product) (Andrade, 2005). However, when people expected that a product would make them feel good, those in a negative mood were as likely to try the product as those in a positive mood. When people were led to expect that they would feel bad if they tried a product (i.e., they would have to fill out a long survey), those in a positive mood were as likely not to try a product as those in a negative mood. These findings suggest that when determining whether or not to try a product, anticipated actual affect matters more than incidental online actual affect.

On the other hand, consumer satisfaction can also depend on the discrepancy between how people anticipated a product would make them feel and what they actually experienced while consuming the product, above and beyond the individual effects of anticipated and online actual affect (Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002). American college students rated how they thought they would feel when drinking orange juice. Right after drinking the orange juice, they rated how they felt (online actual affect), how much this differed from how they thought they would feel (discrepancy), and how satisfied they were with the juice. The smaller the discrepancy between how negative participants expected the orange juice to be and how negative it actually was, the more satisfied they were with the orange juice. The discrepancy in negative affect predicted satisfaction above and beyond the individual effects of how they actually felt and how they expected to feel when drinking the juice. Thus, whereas anticipated actual affect seems to matter more than incidental online actual affect, anticipated actual affect seems to interact with integral online actual affect to influence consumer behavior.

Recalled actual affect
How people remember feeling about a particular product, provider, or service also has a significant impact on consumer decision making. For example, American car buyers were more satisfied with their purchases if they recalled feeling pleasant more often since buying the car (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). In a seminal study, male students from an American university experienced 60-seconds of steady pain (by immersing their hand in 14 °C water), and then the same 60-seconds of steady pain (by immersing their other hand in 14 °C water) followed by 30-seconds of lesser pain (keeping their hand in the water as the temperature was increased to 15 °C). Participants recalled feeling more positively in the latter condition, and therefore, were more likely to prefer it, even though it was 30 seconds longer than the former condition (Kahneman, Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeier, 1993). In a related study, colonoscopy patients’ recalled pain was most strongly predicted by the most painful and most recent parts of the procedure (Redelmeier & Kahneman, 1996). In a follow-up study, patients were randomly assigned to a “shorter” colonoscopy or an “extended” one, which was longer but did not involve any additional pain or discomfort than the shorter procedure. Those who had the extended procedure were more likely to return for a colonoscopy a few years later than those who had the shorter procedure (Redelmeier, Katz, & Kahneman, 2003). These
findings suggest that recalled actual affect can influence preferences, at times even more than online actual affect.

Other studies also show that recalled actual affect has a greater impact on consumer preferences than online actual affect (Abelson et al., 1982; Dubé & Menon, 2000; Morewedge, Gilbert, & Wilson, 2005). For instance, American college students reported how they felt while they were on vacation, and then four weeks later, how they recalled feeling while they were on vacation. Participants were then asked to indicate what they would like to do for their next vacation. Participants recalled feeling more extremely (positive or negative) than they actually felt, and they based their vacation preferences on their recalled more than their online actual affect (Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, & Diener, 2003). However, it is possible that online actual affect may have more strongly predicted vacation preferences if those preferences were assessed during or immediately after the vacation. Future work comparing the relative effects of online and recalled affect on immediate and longer-term preferences may provide a better understanding of these processes.

How do anticipated and online actual affect shape recalled actual affect? A study of vacation and film preferences (Klaaren, Hodges, & Wilson, 1994) attempted to answer this question. American undergraduates were asked to rate how positively they expected to feel on their upcoming vacation. When they returned, in an "unrelated" study, they were asked to rate their specific experience on vacation (e.g., whether they got to do everything they wanted, whether their travel went smoothly) and to recall how positive their experience was. Participants' anticipated actual affect predicted their recalled actual affect almost twice as much as their online actual affect.

In a follow-up study (Klaaren et al., 1994), American undergraduates were either told that they were going to "watch a really neat movie that everyone likes a lot," or were not given any affective information about the film. Half of the participants were assigned to either a comfortable or uncomfortable (i.e., poor lighting, hard chair) viewing environment. A few weeks later, participants reported how much they were willing to participate in the same study again. Participants who expected to watch the positive film were more willing to participate again and recalled a more enjoyable experience than did those who were not given any affective information about the film, regardless of whether they had a comfortable or uncomfortable experience. Thus, how people expect to feel strongly influences what they recall feeling.

In summary, the studies reviewed above demonstrate that anticipated, online, and recalled actual affect shape consumer experience and behavior. In general, the more positively people expect to feel, feel in the moment, and recall feeling, the more positive their consumer experience and preference for that option. Moreover, a series of studies have examined the interaction among these different types of affect, and suggest that anticipated and recalled affect may be more important than online affect.

One main limitation of this work, however, is its focus on Western samples. As a result, it is unclear what role culture plays in this process. We refer to Kroeber and Kluckhohn's definition of "culture" as historically derived and socially transmitted ideas that are instantiated through cultural rituals (e.g., birthday celebrations, weddings), practices (e.g., greetings), products and artifacts (e.g., magazines, advertisements), and institutions (e.g., companies and corporations). Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) described culture as what humans create as well as the "conditioning elements" (i.e., creators) of future human action. Does anticipated, online, and recalled actual positive affect shape consumer behavior in other cultural contexts? Does culture shape how consumers respond to specific products, providers, and services, and what preferences they have?

Previous work demonstrates that cultural contexts shape the relationship between preferences and consumer choices. For instance, in Indian cultural contexts, individuals were less likely to make choices based on their own preferences compared to those in American cultural contexts (Savani, Markus, & Conner, 2008). The authors suggest that this reflects different models of agency; in American contexts, people's choices should reflect their own personal preferences, whereas in Indian contexts, people's choices must also consider the preferences and needs of others. Although cultural ideas and practices likely influence consumer behavior in a multitude of ways, here we focus on only one.

Specifically, we argue that in order to examine how affect shapes preferences and consumer behavior, researchers must consider not only people's actual affect, but also their culturally shaped ideal affect. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, cultural factors shape ideal affect, and ideal affect may shape consumer behavior directly, or may shape consumer behavior through anticipated, online, and recalled actual affect. In the next section, we discuss what ideal affect is and how it varies across cultures.

The importance of ideal affect: Affect Valuation Theory

Whereas the bulk of research in psychology has focused on actual affect, significantly less research has examined people's ideal affect. In part, this may be because most researchers of emotion and consumer behavior are from Western cultural contexts, and therefore, assume that everyone wants to feel a similar way. In reality, however, although most people want to feel good, people differ in the specific good feelings they ideally want to feel, and this varies both within and between cultures. Affect Valuation Theory (AVT) is a theoretical framework that attempts to incorporate ideal affect into existing models of actual affect by: (a) distinguishing between actual and ideal affect; (b) identifying how culture and temperament shape actual and ideal affect; and (c) describing the behavioral consequences of ideal affect (Tsai, 2007). We describe these three premises of AVT next.
Ideal affect differs from actual affect

The first premise of AVT is that ideal affect differs from actual affect. When we first started this work, there were no existing measures of "ideal affect," and therefore, we developed a measure of ideal affect based on existing measures of actual affect (Barrett, 1996; Larsen & Diener, 1992; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). Thus, in addition to asking people how much they actually feel various states (see Figure 4.1 for specific states) either "on average," "over the course of a typical week," or "right now," using a 5-point rating scale (ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = all the time), we asked them to rate how much they would ideally like to feel those same states, using the same scale. We have administered this measure (the Affect Valuation Index [AVI]) to a variety of college student and community samples and found that as predicted, people report wanting to feel significantly different from how they actually feel. Perhaps not surprisingly, people from a variety of cultures report wanting to feel more positively and less negatively than they actually feel. Moreover, actual affect and ideal affect are weakly to moderately correlated with each other (approximately 0.30 on average) (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). Using structural equation modeling, we have found that across diverse cultural contexts, models that treat ideal and actual affect as separate factors fit the data better than those that treat them as a single factor. These findings hold whether we compare global or momentary ratings of actual and ideal affect (using experience sampling methods) (Koopmann-Holm & Tsai, 2014; Tsai et al., 2006).

More recently, we have collected data suggesting that ideal and actual affect are associated with distinct neural correlates (Chim, Sims, Samanez Larkin, Tsai, & Knutson, unpublished data). In this study, American participants saw cues indicating that they would either gain or lose money if they pressed a button within an allotted period of time (Monetary Incentive Delay Task; Knutson, Adams, Fong, & Hommer, 2001). During anticipation of monetary gain, participants' actual high-arousal positive affect was correlated with activity in the nucleus accumbens (a brain region associated with reward); however, participants' ideal high-arousal positive affect was correlated with activity in the ventral medial prefrontal cortex (a brain region typically associated with valuation). Together, these studies suggest that ideal affect differs from actual affect.

Culture shapes ideal affect more than actual affect; temperament shapes actual affect more than ideal affect

The second premise of AVT is that actual affect and ideal affect also differ in the degree to which they are shaped by cultural and temperamental factors. Shweder (2003) and Rozin (2003) argue that cultural factors shape what people view as good, moral, and virtuous. Similarly, AVT predicts that cultural factors should shape what affective states people view as good, moral, and virtuous (i.e., their ideal affect). Much of this socialization may occur through interaction with parents, peers, and teachers, through exposure to popular media, and through engagement in various rituals and practices.

Indeed, in a series of studies (Tsai, 2007; Tsai et al., 2006; Tsai, Louie, Chen, & Uchida, 2007; Tsai, Miao, Seppala, Fung, & Yeung, 2007), we have demonstrated that American culture values excitement, elation, and other HAP states more than Chinese culture does. Chinese culture, in contrast, values calm, peacefulness, and other LAP states more than American culture does (Figure 4.3). Other research teams have replicated these results; for example, European Canadians valued HAP more and LAP less than did Hong Kong Chinese (Ruby, Falk, Heine, Villa, & Silberstein, 2012, Study 1). Although most of our studies have compared American and Chinese cultures, we have also administered our measure of actual and ideal affect to members of various Western (United States, England, France, Germany) and East Asian (Beijing China, Japan, South Korea) cultures and found that overall, Western cultures value HAP more and LAP less than East Asian cultures, although there is considerable variation among individual Western and East Asian cultures (Tsai et al., unpublished data).

These cultural differences in ideal affect are reflected in popular and widely distributed cultural products. For example, in a comparison of best-selling children's storybooks in the United States and Taiwan, characters in the American storybooks had more excited (versus calm) smiles, and they engaged in more physically rigorous activities than did characters in the Taiwanese storybooks (Tsai, Louie, et al., 2007). Similarly, American advertisements had more excited (versus calm) smiles than did Chinese advertisements, and European American Facebook profile photos had more excited smiles than did Hong Kong Chinese Facebook profile photos, with Asian American Facebook profile photos falling in between the two groups (Moon, Chim, Tsai, Ho, & Fung, 2011). These latter findings are consistent with other findings that American college students had...
more intense smiles than did East Asian college students in their Facebook profiles (Huang & Park, 2012).

Why does American culture value excitement states more and calm states less than Chinese culture? We predicted that between and within-culture differences in interpersonal goals (i.e., influencing versus adjusting to others) result in differences in the value placed on excitement and calm states, respectively. Previous studies show that North American contexts value influence more and adjustment less than East Asian contexts (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). We predicted that because influencing others initially involves acting or doing something (e.g., expressing an opinion, explicitly asking someone to do something), and action involves increases in physiological arousal, when people aim to influence others, as they do in American culture, they desire or want to feel excitement and other high-arousal positive states. Conversely, because adjusting to others initially involves suspending action (e.g., waiting for others to speak first, allowing others to make plans or decisions), and suspending action involves decreases in arousal, when people aim to adjust to others, as they do in Chinese culture, they desire or want to feel calm and other low-arousal positive states.

To test this hypothesis, we administered survey measures of influence and adjustment goals (Locke, 2000) and the AVI (Tsai et al., 2006) to European American, Asian American, and Hong Kong Chinese college students. As in previous work, European Americans valued excitement states more and calm states less than Hong Kong Chinese, and Asian Americans valued excitement states more than Hong Kong Chinese and calm states more than European Americans. As predicted, influence goals fully mediated group differences in the value placed on excitement states. Adjustment goals partially mediated the difference in the value placed on calm states between European Americans and Hong Kong Chinese (Tsai, Miao, et al., 2007).

To assess experimentally whether having influence versus adjustment goals altered the degree to which people wanted to feel HAP (versus LAP) states, we conducted a series of studies in which participants were randomly assigned to either the (a) Value Influence condition, in which participants’ task was to arrange cards in a personally meaningful order (or to build an object from their choice out of Legos) and then to describe the cards (or object) to their partners, or the (b) Value Adjustment condition, in which participants’ task was to listen carefully to the instructions of their partner and try to put their cards in the same order (or build the same object) as their partners. Across cultures, participants in the Value Influence condition reported valuing HAP states more and LAP states less than participants in the Value Adjustment condition (Tsai, Miao, et al., 2007).

In another experimental study, we used a behavioral rather than a self-report measure of ideal affect, the choice of listening to exciting (versus calming) music. Participants were ostensibly waiting for their partners to arrive, and were given the opportunity to listen to music that “has been shown to be good for increasing your performance” in the experimental task. As in the other studies, half of the participants were preparing to either influence or adjust to their partners.

Participants were then asked to choose between listening to an exciting or calm CD. The exciting CD was “Soundsplash” its front cover depicted a man surfing, and its back cover contained fictitious reviews such as “High energy, lively vibes.” The calm CD was “Windchants” its front cover depicted a man meditating on a rock, and its back cover contained reviews such as “Relaxing tunes.” Across cultural groups (European Americans, Asian Americans, and Hong Kong Chinese), participants in the Value Influence condition were significantly more likely to choose the exciting (versus calm) CD than those in the Value Adjustment condition. Furthermore, across conditions, European Americans were significantly more likely to choose the exciting (versus calm) CD than Asian Americans or Hong Kong Chinese. Together, these studies suggest that cultural differences in ideal affect are at least partly due to cultural differences in interpersonal goals, and that increasing the value of these goals alters consumer preferences.

What about temperament? Although cultural factors also shape what affective states people actually feel, decades of empirical research suggest that across cultures, actual affect is largely shaped by people’s temperaments. For example, the more extroverted individuals are, the more likely they are to experience high-arousal positive affective states (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980; Emmons & Diener, 1986; Rusting & Larsen, 1997), and the more neurotic individuals are, the more likely they are to experience high-arousal negative affective states (e.g., hostility, nervousness) (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980; Gross, Sutton, & Ketelaar, 1998). Other factors that may influence people’s actual affect include their ability to regulate their emotions and their immediate life circumstances (e.g., number of life stressors) (e.g., Gross & John, 2003; Watson, 1988).

Thus, AVT predicts that although cultural and temperamental factors likely influence both ideal and actual affect, cultural factors shape ideal affect more than actual affect, and temperamental factors shape actual more than ideal affect. Consistent with this prediction, in the samples of European Americans, Chinese Americans, and Hong Kong Chinese described above, cultural variables such as influence and adjustment goals predicted a greater percentage of variance in ideal affect than in actual affect, whereas temperamental variables such as extraversion and neuroticism predicted a greater percentage of variance in actual affect than in ideal affect (Tsai, 2007). AVT is one of the few theories that specify how culture and temperament shape affective life.

Ideal affect predicts mood-producing behavior

What are the consequences of these cultural and individual differences in ideal affect? The third premise of AVT is that ideal affect predicts what people do—consciously or not—to feel good or to stop feeling bad. Although most theories of emotion include behavior, they tend to focus on immediate response behaviors. AVT is unique in its inclusion of more proactive behaviors such as preference-based decision making. Because some activities are more effective at inducing specific affective states than others, when people feel bad and want to...
do something to feel better, they may engage in activities that most effectively elicit their ideal state. Indeed, this may explain why some people reduce their stress by running, whereas others reduce their stress by practicing yoga. People may also regularly engage in these specific activities to prevent negative feelings and to promote the specific positive feelings that they desire. Finally, people's everyday behavioral choices may also reflect their ideal affect. People may prefer “stimulating” versus “soothing” lotions and shampoos because they promise to elicit their ideal affective state. They may even choose friends and romantic partners who express the affective states that they value and ideally want to feel.

For example, in our previous studies, the more people valued excitement states, the more they preferred exciting vacations (e.g., partying versus reading), leisure activities (e.g., running versus walking), music (e.g., exciting versus calming), and drugs (e.g., frequency of stimulant use). Ideal affect also accounted for cultural differences in these mood-producing behaviors, even after controlling for actual affect (Tsai, 2007). Consistent with these findings, the more people want to feel happy and angry, the more they prefer happy and angry music and activities, respectively (Tamir & Ford, 2012).

To examine the links between ideal affect and product choice experimentally, we randomly assigned European American, Asian American, Hong Kong Chinese, and Beijing Chinese college students to one of three conditions: (a) Value Excitement; (b) Value Calm; and (c) Control (Tsai et al., unpublished data). All participants were told that they would be engaging in a puzzle task with a partner who had not yet arrived to the laboratory. Participants were then shown two videos of “past participants” (of the participant's culture). One “past participant” engaged in the task in an excited way (with a high pitched voice, excited smiles); the other engaged in the task in a calm way (with a low pitched voice, calm smiles). In the Value Excitement condition, participants were told that the excited past participant did well in the study, whereas the calm past participant did not (we did not use exciting and calm descriptors). In the Value Calm condition, participants were told the reverse. In the Control condition, participants were not told anything about the performance of the past participants in the videos. Participants were then told to begin the second part of the study until their partners arrived. They were presented with pairs of exciting versus calm consumer products (e.g., CDs of exciting versus calm music) as well as pairs of filler items, and asked to choose the product that they preferred from each pair. As predicted, participants in the Value Excitement condition chose more exciting products than did those in the Control and Value Calm conditions. Moreover, consistent with cultural differences in ideal affect, European Americans also chose more exciting products than Beijing Chinese; Asian Americans and Hong Kong Chinese fell in between the other two groups. Thus, although there are stable cultural differences in ideal affect, we can also manipulate how much people want to feel excitement and calm in the moment, and this alters their product preferences.

In a recent series of studies using survey and experimental methods, the more people valued HAP states, the more likely they were to select a physician that promoted excitement (versus calm) states (Sims, Tsai, Koopmann-Holm, Thomas, & Goldstein, 2014). Why? The more people valued HAP, the more trustworthy they found the excited (versus calm) physician, which increased their likelihood of selecting the excited physician. These findings were consistent across European Americans and Chinese Americans ranging in age from 20 to 80 years old. Interestingly, how often people actually felt HAP states was not related to their health care preferences, suggesting that ideal affect may be more influential than actual affect in shaping physician preferences among health care consumers. Ideal affect also predicts adherence to physicians’ recommendations. In another study, participants were randomly assigned to either a HAP-focused or LAP-focused physician. The more participants valued HAP, the more they adhered to the HAP-focused physicians’ recommendations over the course of a week. Similarly, the more participants valued LAP, the more they adhered to the LAP-focused physicians’ recommendations (Sims & Tsai, 2014). Again, these findings held after controlling for actual HAP and actual LAP.

Thus, findings from our studies and others suggest that how people ideally want to feel: (a) is different from how people actually feel; (b) is shaped by culture; and (c) has consequences for a variety of behaviors. In the next section, we discuss the specific implications of ideal affect for existing research on affect and consumer behavior.

**IMPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL VARIATION IN IDEAL AFFECT FOR CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

As described above, much of our research suggests that ideal affect may predict preference-based choices above and beyond actual affect. However, AVT has a number of other implications for research on consumer behavior, especially consumer behavior in other cultural contexts.

**Ideal affect predicts variation in responses to and evaluation of consumer products and services**

What determines whether people respond positively or negatively to a particular product, provider, or service? As illustrated in Figure 4.3, we predict that ideal affect shapes people's responses to various products, providers, and services. Specifically, we predict that people will feel more positively toward products, providers, and services that match their ideal affect. To test this hypothesis, we exposed participants to exciting and calm amusement park rides or treadmill exercises. Participants completed measures of ideal affect prior to the rides or exercises, and were asked immediately after these activities to rate how enjoyable they found the rides or exercises. For both American and Hong Kong Chinese samples, the more individuals valued LAP, the more they enjoyed the calm (but not the exciting) rides and exercises (Chim, 2013). Similar results emerged for
anticipated and recalled actual affect, suggesting that ideal affect may also shape these types of actual affect. In addition, as described above, the more individuals value HAP, the more likely they are to choose exciting (versus calm) physicians because they evaluate them more positively (i.e., view them as more trustworthy) (Sims et al., 2014). Similarly, calm states increase the monetary value of products (i.e., how much a product is worth) in East Asian contexts (Pham, Hung, & Gorn, 2011). Thus, individual and cultural differences in ideal affect may influence how people perceive and respond to different products, providers, and services, which should then impact people’s preferences and choices.

Previous findings that cultures vary in their responses to consumer products may also be due to ideal affect. For example, when participants received an unexpected gift, East Asians reported feeling less pleasure than did Westerners (Valenzuela, Mellers, & Strebel, 2010). This may be because unexpected gifts elicit high levels of arousal, which are valued less in East Asian than Western cultural contexts.

Ideal affect predicts variation in consumer preferences

Variation in consumer preferences may also be due to ideal affect. For example, the more Chinese participants had “high uncertainty avoidance,” the more they preferred advertisements that had complete (versus incomplete) endings (e.g., a person in danger clearly reaches safety at the end versus a person in danger may or may not reach safety at the end) (Lee & Lim, 2006). “High uncertainty avoidance” is similar to anxiety avoidance, and anxiety is the opposite of calm; therefore, it is possible that uncertainty avoidance is a proxy for valuing calm. Thus, Chinese participants who had high uncertainty avoidance (or who valued calm more) may have preferred the complete endings because they elicited less arousal than the incomplete endings. In another study, East Asian cultural groups (i.e., Chinese, Asian American) showed more favorable attitudes toward and were more persuaded by advertisements conveying both positive and negative emotions compared to European Americans, who preferred advertisements conveying positive emotion only (Hong & Lee, 2010; Williams & Aaker, 2002). This may be because East Asian cultural groups (i.e., Chinese American, Hong Kong Chinese, Beijing Chinese) value positive affect less and negative affect more than European Americans (Sims, Tsai, Jiang, Wang, Fung, & Zhang, unpublished data).

Similarly, in our own work (Sims & Tsai, unpublished data), cultural differences in physician preference were mediated by cultural differences in ideal affect. Middle-aged and older European American adults preferred a physician who promoted excitement states (versus a physician who promoted calm states) more than did middle-aged and older Chinese Americans in a hypothetical scenario; these differences were mediated by the degree to which individuals valued HAP. We observed similar variation in real-world contexts in which European Americans evaluated an exciting vs. calming physician more positively than East Asians. Moreover, European American community college students remembered more health recommendations presented in a brief video clip by an exciting vs. calm physician relative to Asian American students.

Ideal affect influences assumptions about affect in consumer behavior literature

In the same way that consumers are shaped by their ideal affect, researchers are influenced by their ideal affect as well. In the consumer behavior literature, there are two ways in which researchers’ ideal affect may influence how they conduct their research. First, ideal affect may shape how they assess positive and negative affect. In most studies of affect and consumer behavior, positive affect and negative affect are typically measured on a unidimensional scale, with “extremely positive” at one end and “extremely negative” at the other (e.g., Connolly et al., 1997; Klaaren et al., 1994; Lee & Sternthal, 1999; Mazaheri, Richard, & Laroche, 2011; Mellers et al., 1999; Morewedge et al., 2005; Murray, Suhan, Hirt, & Suhan, 1990; Richard et al., 1996). Although people across cultures classify emotions along a bipolar continuum of positive and negative valence (Russell & Carroll, 1999; Tellegen, Watson, & Clark, 1999), the bipolarity of positive and negative states (i.e., the degree to which the two are negatively correlated) is greater in Western than Eastern cultures (Bagozzi, Wong, & Yi, 1999; Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Perunovic, Heller, & Rafaeli, 2007; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2002; Scollon, Diener, Oishi, & Biswas-Diener, 2005; Shiota, Campos, Gonzaga, Keltner, & Peng, 2010). Although these differences have been attributed to the greater emphasis on dialecticism (i.e., the notion that two seemingly opposite statements can be simultaneously true) in East Asian versus Western cultures (Schimmack et al., 2002), we find that cultural differences in the bipolarity of positive and negative affect are also due to different affective ideals. Whereas in American culture, people want to maximize positive feelings and minimize negative ones, in Chinese culture, people want to moderate positive and negative feelings. In two experience sampling studies, Americans’ momentary reports of positive and negative actual affect were more bipolar than those of Chinese, and these differences were mediated by how much individuals ideally wanted to feel positive (ideal positive affect) and how little they wanted to feel negative affect (ideal negative affect) (Sims, Tsai, Jiang, et al., unpublished data). When experimentally manipulating ideal affect, American and Chinese participants who wanted to maximize feeling positive and minimize feeling negative showed more bipolarity of positive and negative affect while watching a pleasant television clip than who did not. These findings suggest that for cultural groups that have different affective ideals than American culture, positive and negative affect should be measured independently.

Indeed, European American and Asian American college students recalled the amount of positive (pleasant, sociable, calm, happy, joyful) and negative affect (unpleasant, irritated, guilty, sad, worried) they experienced during their
spring break trip (positive and negative affect were assessed separately) (Wirtz, Chiu, Diener, & Oishi, 2009). For European Americans only, recalled positive actual affect predicted vacation preference: the more positively they recalled feeling, the more willing they were to go on that vacation again. However, for Asian Americans, both recalled positive and negative actual affect predicted willingness to go on the vacation again: the more positively they recalled feeling and the less negatively they recalled feeling, the more willing they were to go on that vacation again.

The second way in which researchers' ideal affect may shape research on affect and consumer behavior is through their definitions of "emotion." Because most researchers are from Western cultural contexts that value high-arousal positive states, it should not be surprising that "emotions" are defined as high-arousal states (e.g., Zevon & Tellegen, 1982). The assumption that affective processes work against rather than with reason may also be specific to Western contexts. Because high-arousal states narrow attention more than do low-arousal states (Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2008; Gable & Harmon-Jones, 2010), integrating cognitive and affective processes may be more difficult for high- versus low-arousal states. In contexts that value low-arousal states, however, consumers may be less torn between affective impulses and rational thought.

To illustrate, in a study of food preferences, affective (taste, associated memories) and informational (nutritional content) judgments were negatively correlated (i.e., the more nutritious a food, the less tasty they found it) for French participants, whereas for Chinese participants, affective and informational judgments were positively correlated (i.e., the more nutritious a food, the tastier they found it) (Dubé, Cervellon, & Jingyuan, 2003). This suggests that compared to French participants, the Chinese participants are better able to integrate affective and informational attributes of a product and therefore experience less duality between cognition and emotion. Thus, the validity of dual processing models may vary as a function of cultural differences in ideal affect.

CURRENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In our current and future research, we plan to follow up on some of the hypotheses presented in this chapter. In addition, future research should include other contexts, other affective states, and other types of consumer behavior.

Other contexts

Most of the research described in this chapter has focused on Western and East Asian comparisons. However, it would be important to examine other cultural contexts as well. For example, even though they live in a collectivistic culture, Mexican participants value HAP more than LAP (Ruby et al., 2012). Consistent with these findings, the combination of peacefulness and passion for spiritual fulfillment and relaxation may explain the relationship between HAP and vacation
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(5) Consumer Behavior, Culture, and Emotion

(intellectual autonomy, enjoyment and exploration of affective life) is a personality trait unique to Spanish brands compared to American brands (Aaker, Benet-Martínez, & Carrol, 2001). These findings suggest that cultural factors other than individualism-collectivism also shape ideal affect.

In addition to culture, age differences in ideal affect may explain variation in consumer behavior. Emotional goals are particularly salient among older adult consumers (e.g., Fung & Carstensen, 2003; Löckenhoff & Carstensen, 2007). Further, studies show significant variation by age in ideal affect (Scheibe et al., 2011; Sims, Tsai, Thomas, et al., 2012), which may lead to age differences in consumer behavior. For instance, in the health care domain, European Americans and Chinese American older adults prefer a physician who promotes a stimulating lifestyle significantly less than do younger adults (Sims & Tsai, unpublished data). Similarly, in an American sample, older adults associate happiness with calm more than excitement (Mogilner, Kamvar, & Aaker, 2011). Moreover, when reporting their next planned purchase and a recent purchase that made them feel happy, older adults are more likely to report calming and are less likely to report exciting purchases than younger adults. Thus, while European Americans may show a greater preference for HAP consumer products, services, and experiences, this preference may attenuate as people age. Increasingly preferring LAP vs. HAP products and providers with age may be because older adults are more aware of the finitude of life. As such, their preferences shift to calm states that facilitate savoring and reflecting on existing relationships rather than excitement states that facilitate influencing others and expanding networks (Jiang, Fung, Sims, Tsai, & Zhang, unpublished data).

Other affective states and types of affect

Most studies focus on actual positive and negative affect. Although many studies include different positive and negative states, few studies actually differentiate among them, and when they do, they tend to differentiate among negative (e.g., anger, fear, regret) rather than positive states.

Of the few studies that distinguish among positive states, including our own, most differentiate between positive states that are high and low in arousal, such as cheerfulness versus quiescence (Bosmans & Baumgartner, 2005), excitement versus calm (Kim, Park, & Schwarz, 2010; Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2011; Tsai, 2007); joy versus interest (Oliver, 1993), or upbeat versus warm emotions (Burke & Edell, 1989). For example, American participants rated an adventurous (high-arousal positive) vacation advertisement as more positive when they felt excited (versus calm), and they rated a serene vacation advertisement as more positive when they felt calm (versus excited) (Kim et al., 2010). Thus, future research should examine further how the effects of positive and negative affect on consumer behavior vary as a function of arousal.

Affective states, however, also vary along an interpersonal dimension, which may exert an independent influence on consumer behavior. For example,
American participants who felt more pride reported more satisfaction with a hypothetical computer purchase (Louro, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2005). However, the effect of pride on consumer satisfaction may be specific to contexts that value pride. Kitayama et al. (2000) examined daily reports of emotions and found that pride was more strongly associated with general positive emotional experience for Americans than for Japanese. Conversely, socially engaging emotions (e.g., close, friendly feelings) were more strongly associated with general positive emotional experience for Japanese than for Americans. Thus, pride may be associated with different consumer outcomes for Japanese than Americans (e.g., see Aaker & Williams, 1998). Future studies are needed to examine the effects of more interpersonal affective states (e.g., compassion, shame) on consumer behavior across cultures.

In this chapter, we have primarily focused on actual and ideal affect, but other work in our laboratory has focused on "avoided affect," or the affective states that people want to avoid feeling. In this work, we find that Americans want to avoid negative states more than Germans, and that these differences are reflected in the content of sympathy cards in the US and Germany (Koopmann-Holm et al., 2014). Specifically, American sympathy cards contain more positive (vs. negative) words and more living (vs. dying) images than German sympathy cards. These findings suggest that for certain products, avoided affect may predict product evaluation and preference even more than actual or ideal affect. Future work should examine the role that avoided affect plays in consumer behavior.

Other consumer behaviors

Finally, future research should examine the effects of ideal and actual affect on other types of "consumer behaviors" such as risk taking and social preferences.

Financial risk taking

Perhaps surprisingly, many studies show that Chinese participants are generally more risk seeking than Americans in the domain of financial decision making (Hsee & Weber, 1999; Wang & Fischbeck, 2004; for reviews, see Weber & Hsee, 2000; Weber & Morris, 2010). These differences have been attributed to how socioeconomic (e.g., how technological a society is [Whitcomb, Onkvisit, Curley, & George Benson, 1995; Yates, Zhu, Ronis, Wang, Shinnotsuka, & Toda, 1989]), how experienced a society is with financial markets [Fan & Xiao, 2005]), as well as sociocultural (e.g., social networks: Hsee & Weber, 1999; views of self: Mandel, 2003) factors.

Based on our findings that European Americans want to maximize positive and minimize negative affect more than East Asians, we predict that East Asians may be more risk seeking because they are more willing to accept the negative feelings associated with a financial loss. Conversely, European Americans may be more risk averse because the losses associated with risk taking conflict with their goal to maximize positive affect. Indeed, Westerners (American and Dutch participants) base their perceptions of risk for different lotteries more on the probability of positive outcomes than do Chinese (Taiwan and Hong Kong participants) (Bontempo, Bottom, & Weber, 1997). Thus, future research should examine how cultural variation in ideal affect leads to cultural differences in financial risk taking.

Social preferences

Earlier in this chapter, we described studies related to consumers' evaluation of their physicians. However, we also expect that ideal affect shapes consumer evaluations of social partners and even political leaders. In a study of preferences for politicians (Abelson et al., 1982), the more actual positive effect and the lower actual negative effect (e.g., happy, hopeful, sad, angry) participants felt toward a politician, the more favorable the candidate was rated and the higher was his ranking. Moreover, actual affect predicted favorability ratings and ranking order of the candidates more than did ratings of candidates' characteristics (e.g., weak, power hungry, inspiring). According to AVT, feelings toward the candidate should depend on whether the candidates' characteristics appeal to voters' ideal affect. Consistent with previous results, the more people value HAP, the friendlier they perceive an excited (versus calm) leader, and the more likely they are to rate them as a better leader (Tsai et al., unpublished data). Findings from others studies are consistent with this work. For example, although the strength of a political candidate's smile is correlated with the percentage of the vote he received in Japan and Australia, the smile is a much stronger predictor in Australia than in Japan (Horiiichi, Komatsu, & Nakaya, 2012). Similarly, whereas smile intensity was positively correlated with trustworthiness for Americans, it was negatively correlated with trustworthiness for Japanese (Ozono, Watabe, Yoshikawa, Nakashima, Rule, Ambady, & Adams Jr., 2010). Thus, ideal affect may predict not only what consumer products, service providers, or recreational experiences people choose, but also behaviors that reveal their social preferences.

Conclusion

Increasingly, researchers are examining how affect shapes various consumer behaviors. While feeling good or bad indisputably matters for consumer behavior, researchers should consider how culture shapes what constitutes a good or bad feeling. To date, most research has focused on Western samples and has been conducted by Western researchers. As a result, many of the assumptions about emotion and affect in these studies reflect Western beliefs, norms, and ideals regarding emotion, in particular, the Western emphasis on excitement and other high-arousal positive states. In today's global economy, understanding how culture shapes these processes is critical. In this chapter, we have argued that one way of understanding cultural differences in consumer behavior is through cultural differences in ideal affect, or how people ideally want to feel.
REFERENCES


Consumer Behavior, Culture, and Emotion


Consumer Behavior, Culture, and Emotion


Categories of Cultural Variations

A global marketer is preparing to launch a marketing communications campaign across numerous countries. Should they run the same campaign across culturally or ethnically distinct customer segments, or capitalize on economies of scale by running the same campaign globally? The question at the heart of this business decision is "Do consumers who have different cultural values respond to advertising messages in similar ways?" In the last several years, culture has emerged as a central focus of research in consumer behavior. A large body of social psychological research on culture has provided a robust theoretical foundation for this work. Thus, we now have extensive research to help marketers to resolve the globalization versus localization debate and make informed decisions about attitudes and persuasion across cultures.

OUR SCOPE

Research in consumer behavior and social psychology has addressed the role of culture in multiple ways—across nations, across ethnic groups within nations, across individuals within nations (focusing on cultural orientation), and across situations through the priming of cultural values. These studies have established that regardless of how culture is studied, cultural distinctions have important implications for advertising content, persuasiveness of appeals, consumer motivation, and consumer judgment processes. The findings often emerge in parallel across these cultural operationalizations. Thus, our coverage will address national or ethnic/subcultural group differences, as well as individual differences in cultural values or intrapersonal processes such as salient self-constructual.

The constructs of individualism and collectivism, or independent and interdependent self-constructual have in recent years received significant research attention. Along with this focus, research on thinking styles, specifically cultural differences in analytic versus holistic thinking tendencies, has also taken center stage. Our chapter reviews the implications of these cultural differences...