Investigating the Role of Social Environment as Antecedents of Intercultural Communication Competence and its Effects on Customer Satisfaction

Ali Ihtiyar[1*]
[1] Department of Marketing, State University of New York at Oswego, New York, USA
[*] aliihtiyar@gmail.com

Abstract: The article aims to better understand the impact of intercultural communication and social environment on customer satisfaction and loyalty in grocery retailing. In this endeavour, the study illustrates the unique context of intercultural communication to highlight several improvements in the literature, and to encourage the advancement of the intercultural communication in the literature. To initiate the research, a survey approach was taken. 681 questionnaires were returned out of 1100 that were distributed within selected grocery retailers in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The measurement of the constructs and their interrelationships are examined based on partial least square-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings validate the proposed framework with statistically significant relationships among all constructs. Furthermore, it exposes additional insights into some practical and conceptual solutions for addressing the intercultural communication of culturally diverse encounters in the Malaysian grocery retail industry. These contributions postulate an impetus for future research in various service settings. Based on the theories, the study assesses the role of the social environment of grocery retail consumers on intercultural communication competence (ICC) and its impact on inter-role congruence and interaction comfort. It is anticipated that by filling this knowledge gap, the research will assist in strengthening retail communication strategies, which require intercultural communication adjustments in a multicultural business environment. The ICC is expected to improve the retail industry competitiveness when it positively influences inter-role congruence and interaction comfort among customers.

Keywords: Social environment, intercultural communication, customer satisfaction, retailing, mediation, PLS-SEM

Paper type: Research paper

1. Introduction

Priorities customers place on certain activities, consuming features, and perceptions of services and/or products are influenced by culture (Polsa *et al*., 2013). Therefore, understanding the cultural differences of culturally diverse customers is an essential outline for understanding customer behaviour in a multicultural marketing context. Understanding themes and concepts based on a multicultural perspective has gained the attention of marketing researchers as a means to explain the attractive features, price perceptions and service satisfaction among customers (Huang *et al*., 2016; Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2015; Polsa *et al*., 2013).

The significance of service industries has increased expressively within the past decades, particularly among industrialised countries. During the period of development, new challenges for service providers have arisen due, in part, by the varying demands of culturally diverse customers. Thus, international service providers should create an efficient, innovative, competitive and steady marketing orientation for national and/or international markets (Ahmad *et al*., 2014). Furthermore, driven by the recent growth of internationalisation and the mobilisation of services, a number of studies have tested and investigated relationships between culture and customer satisfaction (Kuo *et al*., 2009), purchase behaviour (Souiden and Pons, 2009), loyalty (Omar and Musa, 2011), and interaction of service encounters (Sharma *et al*., 2012). The rationale of these studies within the context of culture is understanding, analysing, and improving the comprehensive solutions for service settings in multicultural societies (Ahmad *et al*., 2014; Matos and Leis, 2013). Furthermore, the cognitive inferences of the numerous implementations in practical and/or theoretical fields present culture as a significant and remarkable determinant in the marketing context (Ihtiyar, 2017; Wang and Mattila, 2010; Souiden and Pons, 2009), leading scholars or marketers not to disregard the influence of intercultural issues on customer behaviour.

Cultural diversity in a business discipline is becoming the most popular subject among diversified Asian societies (Awang *et al*., 2012). Asian culture is one of the distinctive samples of a multicultural atmosphere that involves favourable intercultural communication competence and understanding in sustaining a harmonious cross-cultural relationship (Awang *et al*., 2012). Among the Asian countries, the exceptional characteristic of Malaysia is its exceedingly variegated ethnic mix rendering, and it is a country with a multicultural or multiracial peculiarity with a greater need for intercultural understanding (Ahmad *et al*., 2014). Regarding the diversified population profile of Malaysia, in contrast to other countries such as Japan, South Korea, and China in Asia, Malaysia is identified as a multiracial/multicultural and multi-religious country with a greater need for intercultural understanding regardless of whether the operative marketers remain local or moves global (Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2016).

Malaysia presents an enormously multicultural and combined ethnic structure of three dominant groups with the percentage of Malays at 50.35%, Chinese at 22.21% and Indians at 6.67% (Statistics Department of Malaysia, 2013). Due to the cultural discrepancies, there is a clear deficiency of behaviour homogeneity where the nature of Malaysia's domestic market is highly categorised by ethnically segmented customers (Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2015).

Earlier studies on Malaysian customers' influence on purchase decisions explored ethnicity as a meaningful predictor of shopping decisions (Ihtiyar and Shannon, 2016). It is, therefore, significant for academicians and practitioners to identify and understand cultural individuality to deliver value to a specific segment (Ahmad *et al*., 2014). Besides other contexts in marketing, multiculturalism has great significance and consistent application in the Malaysian society. However, there is limited consideration on the subject while empirical studies are marginal, particularly with regards to intercultural communication competence's efficiency in general, especially for ethnically different customers.

2. Literature Review

A. An integrated framework

The proposed conceptual framework for analysing customer satisfaction with the antecedents of intercultural communication is presented in Figure 1. The framework incorporates and synthesises research within an overall model based on role theory, interdependence theory and cognitive consistency theory. The model concentrates on the customer perceptions and whether the proposed dimensions affect their perception positively or negatively. Furthermore, in the model, social environment (SE), intercultural communication competence (ICC), interaction comfort (IAC), interrole congruence (IRC) and perceived cultural distance (PCD) are assumed constructs of intercultural communication, and customer satisfaction (CS) and loyalty (L) is contemplated as a consequence of customers' shopping experience as highlighted in Oliver (1981).

Moreover, the study was conducted in the context of grocery retail industry, whereby numerous studies related to retailing in Malaysia have examined various topics in the retailing context in Malaysia. In recent years, grocery retailing in Malaysia has experienced rapid growth (Mohammed *et al*., 2015). Focusing on customer satisfaction has become a major goal in retailing, particularly in grocery retail, and thus, a complete understanding of its antecedents is essential for retailers and practitioners (Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2015). Although there are various studies on interrelationships of customer satisfaction with product categories, industry players, pricing, store atmosphere and so on, however limited studies have investigated interrelationship of intercultural communication (with antecedents and consequences) and customer satisfaction within the grocery retail in Malaysian market (Awang *et al*., 2012).

Moreover, recent studies have called for attachment of intercultural communication in different service settings and markets (Tam *et al*., 2014; Sharma *et al*., 2012). The majority of the studies that investigate the Malaysian context are related to sociology of religion (Ismail, 2015), communication (Mulyana and Zubair, 2015), public-relation (Hashim and Mahpuz, 2011) and sociology of culture (Awang *et al*., 2012). They suggested including additional variables in their presented framework that may develop the understanding of intercultural communication in the Malaysian context. However, a careful review of the literature indicated that empirical studies examining emotional, cognitive, and behavioural factors of intercultural communication simultaneously are still limited. It is, therefore, significant for academicians and practitioners to identify and understand the impact of intercultural communication on customer satisfaction to deliver value to a specific segment (Sharma *et al*., 2012).

Another potential strength of the study lies in its capability to recommend approaches to reduce communication problems and to increase awareness among intercultural service encounters who possess dissimilar languages, ethnic beliefs, religious, values, norms and cultural backgrounds. The competencies here could include knowing the values of the different societies, their religion, ethnic beliefs, culture, language and practices in culture, as well as their verbal and nonverbal communication. This study will make recommendations for managerial, policy maker and practitioner level to enhance the intercultural service encounter's communication skills effectively. This is particularly significant for retailers, which consider the service encounters have different cultural backgrounds.

Considering these gaps, this study contemplates social environment (SE) as an antecedent of intercultural communication competence (ICC), and interaction comfort (IAC), customer satisfaction (CS), and loyalty as the consequence to examine integrated view of intercultural communication. Accordingly, a comprehensive framework is established, and it is contemplated as a momentum point to better understand the intercultural communication of intercultural service encounters in Malaysian retailing industry.

B. Grocery retail industry of Malaysia

According to the last census in 2010 (Statistics Department of Malaysia), Malaysia's population was 28.3 million and Malaysia was the 17th crowded country throughout the Asia and the 42th most crowded country in the World. Over 60% of the population of Malaysia is regarded as middle-income customers, and poverty has virtually been eliminated. Over 70% of the population of Malaysia now lives in the urban areas (Cottrell, 2010). These figures might be a deductive and explicable reason for investing in the food retail industry of Malaysia by global players. However, the market has not been identified as easy in or easy out. Malaysia's food retail industry has highly dynamic and competitive market structure.

Furthermore, well-know western global player such as; Tesco (45) have been challenging eastern or domestic brands such as; Mydin (94), Giant (147), AEON-JUSCO (45) etc. and creating new strategies for increasing their market share against the domestics companies in the market.

According to (PWC, 2011), the turnover of the sector increased to $54 billion dollars at the period of 2010 from $48 billion at 2009. Furthermore, the expected growth percentages between 2010 and 2012 are between 5% and 6%. As in the world, the sectorial growth rate of retail industry in Malaysia will be represented a increase in the next years and annual the growth rate of the industry is 3.7% and 3.8% per annum in 2013-2014 (PWC, 2011).

C. Exploring theoretical background

This review of literature will focus on the theoretical background of the research, which focuses on role theory, interdependence theory and cognitive consistency theory. It will also explain the research determinants of the proposed research framework by understanding its embedded theory and past literature. Then, it will suggest the research propositions that explain the interrelationships between the determinants.

Role theory

Role theory was initially promoted by Biddle (1979) and later by Solomon *et al*. (1985) to posit that people interact in socially defined roles, which determine expectations via the concept of information asymmetry. It is 'a science concerned with the study of behaviours that are characteristic of persons within contexts and with processes that produce, explain or are affected by these behaviours' (Biddle, 1979). In accordance with this definition, social cohesions and environments affect individuals' personality and individuality as an integrative model of behaviour (Solomon *et al*., 1985). Therefore, the concentration of the theory among marketers is essentially on the recognition of interaction of intercultural service encounters (ISE) on anticipated customer behaviours.

A significant topic in role theory recognises the significance of interpersonal (person-to-person) interaction in intercultural contexts and its overall influence on primary marketing outcomes such as the maximisation of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Sharma *et al*., 2012). Person-to-person interaction is becoming a crucial indicator to decrease dissatisfaction and create powerful strategies for many pure services or mixed products and services (Ihtiyar *et al*., 2015; Sharma *et al*., 2012; Paswan and Ganesh, 2005). To an extent, all employees involved in customer contact are considered service providers who represent the company to explain the product, promote it and to gain direct feedback from customers (Solomon *et al*., 1985). However, although the role of employees in interaction is significant, the interpersonal interaction is not defined as linear. Instead, it is a reciprocal and interactive experience among the service encounters.

Interdependence theory

The perspective of interdependence theory is established on the logical analysis of the structure of interpersonal interactions (Sharma *et al*., 2012; Paswan and Ganesh, 2005). The theory implies a logical and explicable process to better understand specific situations, problems, motivations and opportunities via the similarity-attraction paradigm and concept of transformation. The theory hypothesises that the ability of a person to interact in a social environment is partly due to the anticipation of the social reward or social comforts (Rusbult and Van Lange 2003).

The interdependence theory also identifies that the most important characteristics of interpersonal situations are not just from intrapersonal perspectives but also through the interpersonal process or a comprehensive analysis of situation structure (Rusbult and Lange, 2008). A few studies on the theory resulted in interesting findings. For example, an individual in a multicultural team who has a foreign accent is frequently more culturally distant than another who can speak the official language fluently (Hill and Tombs, 2011). Another finding from the study that indicates that the linguistic ability of the employee in a service setting (i.e. American, British and Indian accent) influences the customers' perceptions and interpretations during the service experience in the call centre setting (Wang *et al*., 2009). Thus, clarifying, describing and decoding the interaction among the encounters is a crucial process to understand the consequences and possible outcomes of encounters better.

Cognitive consistency theory

An additional theory for explaining perspectives and to predict differences of intercultural service encounters (ISEs) in terms of intercultural communication conflicts is cognitive consistency theory. The theory assumes that behaviours or attitudes of individuals change when there are differences between expected and perceived situations, particularly when outcomes are significant to them (Pekerti and Thomas, 2015). In accordance with the theory, individuals who are comfortable with differences between realised situations do not attempt to change their opinions or behaviours in others. These behaviours are entitled inconsistency-support behaviours. Contrary to this definition, individuals who are not comfortable attempt to change opinions or behaviours. These behaviours are entitled inconsistency-reduction behaviours (Iwao, 1997; Kelman and Baron, 1968). In short, intentionally or unintentionally obtained information from the social environment is significant for encounters (Vater and Schröder-Abé, 2015).

D. Socio-cultural environment

The environment is a major antecedent for explaining the consumption experiences in various businesses settings (Uhrich and Benkenstein, 2012). Previous studies in marketing literature, conceptually or empirically, have paid considerable attention to environment (as micro indicator) such as; impact of store environment on service setting (Jeong *et al*., 2012), social and physical atmospheric effects in hedonic service consumption (Uhrich and Benkenstein, 2012); the relationship of environmental externalities and consumption preferences (Jim and Chen, 2007); the relationship of physical environment and customer behaviour (Tombs, and McColl-Kennedy, 2003) and the role of environment in marketing services (Baker, 1986).

Social and cultural environment affects customers' decisions (Kotler and Keller 2012). In this study, social environment, as contemplated macro indicator, is a compromised of four main factors that are namely socio-economic status (SE7, SE8 and SE9), socio-education background (SE4, SE5 and SE6), socio-cultural environment (SE1, SE2 and SE3) and national socio-policy (SE10, SE11 and SE12). Socio economic deals with the impacts economic improvement has on social milieu. Socio-education assesses educational background that helps people to fully integrate in intercultural

society. Socio cultural environment deals with set of interaction beliefs and practices among the people within a population while socio-policy is an assessment on national policy that deals with social integration and cohesion. The present study would assist to explain how individuals' social environment affects their competence on intercultural communication and interaction comforts.

Hypothesis for socio-cultural environment
Social environment causes intercultural communication competence.
Social environment causes interaction comfort.

E. Intercultural communication

Interaction comfort

Earlier studies in social psychology, sociology of culture and customer behaviour literature have provided several validated reasons of increasing customer comfort during service encounters. Strengthened interaction comfort reduces the perceived risk, increases confidence, satisfaction and improves relational exchange (Sharma *et al*., 2012; Lloyd and Luk, 2011; Paswan and Ganesh, 2005).

As stated in the interdependence theory (Surprenant *et al*., 1987), each part of the interaction has an impact on another part because the behaviour of the second part is influenced by the outcomes of the first part. Interaction comfort is defined as the likeliness individuals share common norms, values, languages and other factors related to culture and this will improve predictability of individual's expectations and behaviour, decrease uncertainty and create effective communication. On the other spectrum, perceived dissimilarities in behavioural values or norms such as in language, religion and so on will lead to a sense of discomfort (Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2015). In this study, interaction comfort is a critical dimension for mirroring the impact of ICC and IRC in the overall research framework.

F. Inter-role congruence

A favourable interaction outcome depends on role clarity, and those each other's roles and perceptions during communication should be understood (Solomon *et al*., 1985). Unfortunately, even when ISEs transpire among between people of similar cultures, they may have different perceptions about each other, or they may not always be able to act within their expected roles in interaction (Huang *et al*., 2016). The inter-role congruence would be more complicated in intercultural interactions where participants must consider the different roles among retailers and consumers.

According to role theory (Solomon *et al*., 1985), the level of conflict and misunderstanding that are caused by the role perception (the degree of understanding and agreement between both sides on each other's role in an interaction) may involve breaking the communication between both sides, and it may lead to a dissatisfied shopping or service experience for customers.

G. Intercultural communication competence

Intercultural communication competence (ICC) is the aptitude to communicate effectively and correctly with people from culturally diverse social environments (Messner and Schäfer, 2012). It deals with the capability to think positively, discriminate the differences, internalise various cultural settings, manage the experiences properly and build effective communication with individuals from different cultures (Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2016; Samovar *et al*., 2014). ICC influences cross-cultural interactions (Sharma *et al*., 2012) where people with stronger ICC have greater propensity to learn

foreign languages and norms or values of other culture (Thomas and Peterson, 2014). Furthermore, revenue contribution, service concentration, interpersonal skills, social and job satisfaction are influenced by intercultural sensitivity (Sizoo *et al.,* 2004). However, most of the encounter's expectations and reactions have been examined without ICC (Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2015).

Individuals with lower ICC are likely to feel less comfortable and have weak inter-role congruence in intercultural encounters compared to those with higher levels of ICC (Friedman and Antal, 2005). Those with higher ICC exhibit more empathy and respect for individuals from various cultures, respond to curious circumstances and behaviours in a non-judgemental way without showing visible or perceivable discomfort and enthusiastically use their knowledge and experience to predict various expectations in numerous situations (Samovar *et al*., 2014). Individuals with higher ICC may not only be more aware of cross-cultural differences in service roles and perceptions, but they are also more likely to agree with these differences. Furthermore, they have greater experience and knowledge about other cultures and can use this experience and knowledge efficiently with people from other cultures, compared to those with lower ICC (Thomas and Peterson, 2014). Hence, higher ICC may also contribute to reducing discomfort and uncertainty associated with ISEs. Thus, the study proposes and formulates the relationships among these dimensions that are namely intercultural communication competence, interaction comfort, interrole congruence and customer satisfaction.

Hypotheses for Intercultural Communication:
Intercultural communication competence causes customer satisfaction.
Intercultural communication competence causes interaction comfort.
Intercultural communication competence causes interrole congruence.
Interaction comfort causes customer satisfaction.
Inter-role congruence causes customer satisfaction.
Inter-role congruence causes interaction comfort.

H. Perceived cultural distance

Dissimilarities or familiarities about the cultural background of culturally diverse customers indicate significant changes in their expectations and/or perceptions of service or goods and shopping experiences (Sharma *et al*. 2012). In the literature of sociology, social psychology, positive psychology and associated fields, dissimilarities or familiarities of individuals have been investigated under cultural distance. Most studies utilise cultural distance using various indexes. For instance, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are uncertainty, avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity and power distance (Sharma *et al*., 2012). Instead of this general approach, the present study will consider applying Sharma *et al*.'s (2012) method entitled *"perceived cultural distance"* to measure overall differentiation among individuals from different cultures.

Perceived cultural distance (PCD) measures 'an individual difference of the perceived discrepancies between social and physical aspects of home and host culture environments' (Sharma *et al*., 2012). According to this definition, individuals' social environment may influence perceived cultural distance. Although Sharma *et al*.'s (2012) model, which is assumed as a core model for the present study, did not reflect how social environment influence perceived cultural distance. The present study seeks to fill this gap by integrating social environment into the current model.

Hypotheses for perceived cultural distance
Perceived cultural distance causes inter-role congruence.
Perceived cultural distance causes interaction comfort.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is one of the most examined topics in the marketing literature. A review reveals that the interrelationship among service evaluation, loyalty and topics related to culture has become a competitive power for intercultural marketers (Vesel and Zabkar, 2009). For instance, CS has been found to reduce costs for attracting new customers and dealing with poor quality, defects and complaints (Ahmad *et al.*, 2014). This study concentrates on conceptual and managerial thinking and articulates these linkages and assumes that ICC, IAC and IRC may affect CS, specifically the buying experience of customers in a multicultural atmosphere.

Hypothesis for Shopping Experience:
Customer satisfaction causes loyalty.

3. Results

A. Research framework

The study proposes a research framework and research design to empirically examine the interactions among the determinants discussed above based on the theories proposed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research framework
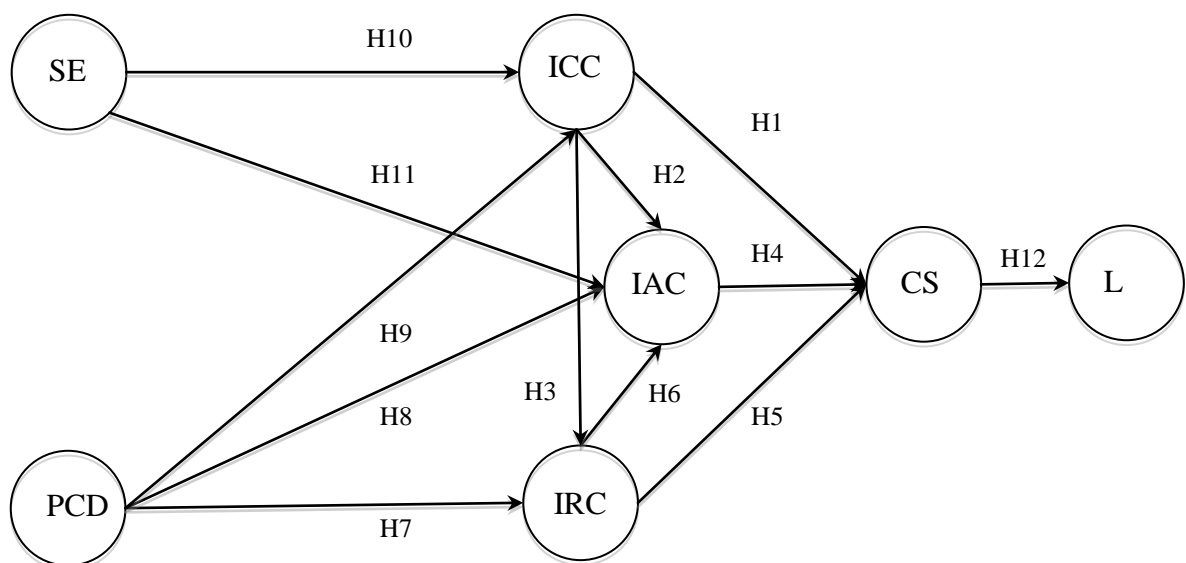
In designing this research, the nature of the research problems and the objectives of the study, which are translated from the conceptual framework, served as a basis to indicate the type of design to be applied. This research tests whether the proposed model can conceptualise and explain the endogenous and exogenous variables related to ICC in a multicultural service environment. To that end, a survey was designed based on the intercultural sensitivity scale for measuring intercultural communication competence (ICC) by Chen and Starosta (2000), and rest of the items derived from Sharma *et al.* (2012), Zeithaml et. al. (1996), Phau and Ferguson (2013), Huddleston *et al.* (2009), Shen *et al* (2011), Wang *et al* (2009), Sinha (2010), Spanierman *et al* (2010), Parker *et al* (2012) and Kraay *et al* (2003).

B. Research methodology

To provide an empirical assessment of the proposed research model shown in Figure 1, a quantitative technique was performed using the cross-sectional data collection approach. For the purpose of this study, customers who were from Klang Valley were targeted to test and examine the model statistically. Due to the time limitations, reduction of cost, increased ease of distribution, improved data accuracy and difficulties to collect the data, both online and paper-pencil questionnaires were used to collect the primary data from the target population (Kays *et al.*, 2012). The questionnaires were categorised into two sections. The first part of the questionnaire intends to obtain the information relating to the demographic profile of the respondents, such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, income and purchasing frequency (Table 1). The second section aims to collect the information regarding the research construct relationships. Additionally, to increase the readability of the questionnaire and reduce the wording errors, a pre-test (N 43) and pilot test (N 153) was undertaken.

Following the successful results of the pre-test and pilot test, the study proceeded with the actual data collection. In June 2014, questionnaires were distributed to potential respondents in Malaysia. By the end of September 2014, 1100 questionnaire were distributed, and 707 responded questionnaires were received. Of these, 26 were not completed and thus rejected for this study. The study gathered 681 completed questionnaires, which are appropriate for further assessments.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of demographic indicators

Demographic Indicators	Status	Percentages
Gender	Female	56.09%
	Male	43.91%
Age	20-24	19.24%
	25-29	23.94%
	30-34	17.62%
	35-39	15.12%
	40-44	9.69%
	45 and 45+	14.39%
Ethnicity	Malay	56.24%
	Chinese	12.33%
	Indian	11.89%
	Others	19.54%
Education	Primary	0.00%
	High School	5.88%
	Diploma	12.35%
	Degree	81.77%
Purchasing Frequency (Monthly)	1 – 2	29.22%
	3 – 4	44.93%
	5-6	16.45%
	$7\leq$	9.40%
Amount of Purchasing in one time	$\leq$ RM 99	18.94%
	RM 100 – RM 199	37.30%
	RM 200 - RM 299	23.05%
	RM 300 $\leq$	20.71%
Income	$\leq$ RM 1999	19.24%
	RM 2000- RM	16.15%
	2999	14.24%

	RM 3000- RM 3999	50.37%
	RM 4000≤	
Stores	Aeon-Jusco	22.91%
	ColdStorage	2.79%
	Giant	24.96%
	Mydin	11.01%
	NSK	3.96%
	Tesco	19.24%
	Others	15.13%

C. Missing value treatment

Missing values is a unanimous problem in surveys, which leads to difficulties in the multivariate data analyses in behavioural and social sciences (Rezaei, 2015). To manage the missing values, Gold and Bentler (2000) suggested using the Expectation Maximisation Method (EMM). In accordance with the Hair *et al*. (2013), missing data of up to 5% was not large and does not cause problematic results. In terms of the study, the number of collected responses was 681 with 59 missing data points from 36774 points, and the percentage was 0.0016, which was not a significant value.

The second phase of the analysis was to adjust the missing values. EMM was utilised to input the values for further assessment. Furthermore, EMM generated Little's MCAR test statistics via SPSS 21.0, and according to the assumption of the test, the test result should generate an insignificant Chi-Square result for randomisation of missing values. According to the Chi-Square result, the data represented insignificant values, and the values for the model were Chi-Square = 1020.596, DF = 882, Sig. = 0.0601.

D. Common method bias

Common method bias (CMB) is a critical challenge in quantitative studies, which influences the validity of the findings on the results of constructs, item reliabilities, structural relationships and the co-variation between latent constructs (MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012). To decrease the probability of CMB, Hair *et al*. (2013) suggested conducting Harman's one-factor test. Another step for the assessment model is calculating the potential common method bias. The study applied Harman's one-factor test to determine whether the data included any potential common method bias (Hashim, 2012). The criterion for common method bias is that the accounted covariance for a single factor should be lower than 40%. For this study, the statistical results indicate that common method biases are not a concern in the study.

E. Non-response bias

The last assumption in the study was to ensure that non-response bias is not a concern in the study and there was no difference between early and late distributions among respondents in terms of key constructs in the model, demographic indicators and responses collected online and individually (Hair *et al*., 2013; Lewis *et al*., 2013). Non-response bias is a "critical issue" during the data collection via survey methods, particularly online surveys. The main concern of researchers is that non-response bias affects the generalizability of the research findings (Hair *et al*., 2013). Therefore, researchers should seek to reduce non-response bias. To evaluate the assumption, the collected responses, which were categorised early responses (n=455 of 681) and late responses (n=226 of 681), an independent sample T-test was employed. The criterion is that the p-value for the t-

statistics should be greater than 0.05 (Hair *et al*., 2013). The results of T-test indicated no statistical difference between early and late respondents for the measurement items.

F. Method of measurement and structural model analysis

Following the data collection period, selecting an appropriate statistical analysis remains a challenge for studies in business, management and social sciences (Sarstedt *et al*., 2014). Regarding this, analysing the obtained data using the partial least square-structural equation model (PLS-SEM) technique provides several advantages for studies in customer behaviour. (Sarstedt *et al*., 2014, Hair *et al*., 2014). In contrast to first generation techniques, the PLS-SEM technique does not require complicated assumptions such as distribution, and sample size (Wong, 2013; Hair *et al*., 2013). Furthermore, the technique is performed for complicated cause-effect-relationship models, which includes several latent constructs that are indirectly measured by several indicators (Rezaei, 2015; Hair *et al*., 2013) and it is not appropriate for confirmatory testing (Chin, 2010).

In accordance with Wong (2013) and Hair *et al*. (2013), evaluating the model consists of a two-stage approach, namely a measurement model and structural model. According to Wong (2013) and Hair *et al*. (2013), the measurement model must meet the minimum requirements in terms of construct reliability, outer loadings, indicator reliability, and average variance extracted. The structural model assesses the size and significance of path coefficients, coefficients of determination, predictive relevance, model fit (GoF and SRMR) and effect size (f^2 and q^2) (Wong, 2013; Hair *et al*., 2013) by examining the bootstrapping procedure of 5000 resamples.

Hence, bootstrapping and blindfolding were examined to assess the measurement and structural model via SmartPLS software 3.0.

Table 2. Construct validity

Construct	Item	Outer loadings	AVE[a]	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's alpha
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.741	0.594	0.921	0.902
	CS2	0.801			
	CS3	0.805			
	CS4	0.699			
	CS5	0.788			
	CS6	0.667			
	CS7	0.863			
	CS8	0.782			
Interaction Comfort	IAC	0.888	0.781	0.947	0.929
	IAC	0.888			
	IAC	0.895			
	IAC	0.922			
	IAC	0.822			
Intercultural Communication Competence	ICC	0.796	0.722	0.915	0.896
	ICC	0.710			
	ICC	0.503			
	ICC	0.750			
	ICC	0.734			
	ICC	0.819			
	ICC	0.812			
	ICC	0.644			
	ICC	0.694			
	ICC	0.709			
Interrole Congruence	IRC	0.881	0.808	0.955	0.94
	IRC	0.838			
	IRC	0.939			

	IRC	0.937			
	IRC	0.896			
	L1BL	0.703			
	L2BL	0.822			
	L3BL	0.816			
Loyalty	L4BL	0.780	0.553	0.895	0.864
	L5BL	0.802			
	L6P	0.642			
	L7P	0.607			
Perceived	PCD	0.833			
Cultural	PCD	0.830			
Distance	PCD	0.845	0.714	0.925	0.901
	PCD	0.921			
	PCD	0.789			
	SE1	0.835			
	SE1	0.691			
	SE1	0.660			
	SE1	0.682			
	SE2	0.835			
Social	SE3	0.823	0.523	0.923	0.920
Environment	SE4	0.717			
	SE5	0.650			
	SE6	0.713			
	SE7	0.685			
	SE8	0.623			

4. Results

A. Assessment of measurement model

To examine the measurement model, the study applies the criteria proposed by Wong (2013) and Hair *et al*. (2013). According to them, composite reliability, outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE for convergent validity) and discriminant validity, which is determined by VIF values, cross-loading and Fornell-Larcker criteria were assessed to examine the measurement models. As shown in Table 2, the majority of the outer loadings of the constructs are well above the minimum threshold value of 0.70. However, according to Neupane *et al*. (2014), Wong (2013) and Lew and Sinkovics (2013), if the research is exploratory, the loading scores should be at least 0.40 or greater. According to these authors, the loading scores are well above the minimum value. Composite reliability and Cronbach's α values for internal consistency reliability are also above the minimum threshold level of 0.70. Furthermore, the AVE values for convergent validity are well above the minimum threshold level of 0.50 thereby demonstrating convergent validity for all constructs.

To assess discriminant validity tests as to whether the items do not unintentionally measure or not (Urbach and Ahlemann, 2010), cross-loading criteria (Chin, 1998) and Fornell-Larcker's criteria were used. The summary of validity results to evaluate a measurement model is presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

In analysing the model, the model employed the PLS-SEM model with new implementations. Sharma *et al*. (2012) employed the model with a co-variance-based approach (CB-SEM), whereas the present study applied the PLS-SEM perspective. It applies the new criteria of the PLS-SEM approach for the model fit index of the model. According to calculation of Standardized Root Mean Square (SRMR) criteria for model is 0.047, which is lover than criterion level 0.08. Furthermore, GoF index was calculated as 0.397 and the obtained value for the model was classified in the GoF$_{large}$ category.

B. Assessment of structural model

The following phase of the measurement model is the confirmation step for the model, which examines the collinearity, capabilities of the model's predictive ability, predictive relevance and interrelationships of the constructs (Wong, 2013 and Hair *et al.*, 2013). The study examined the collinearity problem using SmartPLS 3.0, and the results indicate that the values of the predictor constructs were lower than the tolerance level, which is VIF value of 5.00. Following this step, the structural model was assessed, and Table 6 and Table 10 show the results of the hypothesis testing, structural relationships and hypothesis decisions.

The values for R^2 and Q^2 of the endogenous latent constructs were obtained using the PLS algorithm procedure. According to Hair *et al.* (2013), Q^2 values of each construct in the model are greater than zero for a predictive relevance. Table 7 shows the results of R^2 and Q^2. According to the results, customer satisfaction (CS) and perceived cultural distance (PCD) indicate small effect sizes; interaction comfort (IAC) present large effect sizes, and finally, interrole congruence (IRC) and intercultural communication competence (ICC) show medium effect sizes. Furthermore, the Q^2 values of each construct are above zero.

In addition, the f^2 effect size, which shows the impact of a specific predictor construct on an endogenous latent construct, and the q^2 effect size for the predictive relevance are presented in Table 8.

Table 3. Discriminant validity–fornell-larcker criterion

Constructs	CS	IAC	ICC	IRC	L	PCD	SE
CS	**0.594**						
IAC	0.165	**0.781**					
ICC	0.199	0.713	**0.722**				
IRC	0.062	0.612	0.551	**0.808**			
L	0.506	0.074	0.119	0.064	**0.553**		
PCD	-0.035	0.058	0.099	0.176	0.100	**0.714**	
SE	0.172	0.124	0.249	0.122	0.128	0.073	**0.523**

Table 4. Discriminant validity–loading and cross-loading criterion

Items	CS	IAC	ICC	IRC	L	PCD	SE
CS1	**0.741**	0.157	0.172	0.068	0.403	-0.001	0.103
CS2	**0.801**	0.200	0.224	0.115	0.423	0.044	0.122
CS3	**0.805**	0.141	0.181	0.058	0.391	-0.017	0.152
CS4	**0.699**	0.085	0.167	0.024	0.334	-0.102	0.164
CS5	**0.788**	0.110	0.130	0.020	0.446	-0.031	0.161
CS6	**0.667**	0.029	0.084	-0.034	0.370	-0.016	0.148
CS7	**0.863**	0.153	0.149	0.060	0.549	-0.044	0.125
CS8	**0.782**	0.122	0.129	0.052	0.605	-0.049	0.111
IAC1	0.153	**0.888**	0.634	0.561	0.082	0.050	0.092
IAC2	0.178	**0.888**	0.613	0.540	0.103	0.071	0.060
IAC3	0.140	**0.895**	0.629	0.545	0.064	0.024	0.129
IAC4	0.135	**0.922**	0.662	0.589	0.051	0.042	0.106
IAC5	0.124	**0.822**	0.609	0.461	0.026	0.070	0.166
ICC1	0.208	0.628	**0.796**	0.524	0.114	0.060	0.160
ICC10	0.168	0.461	**0.710**	0.422	0.132	0.078	0.203
ICC17	0.044	0.324	**0.503**	0.208	-0.007	0.069	0.137
ICC3	0.198	0.505	**0.750**	0.398	0.126	0.093	0.196
ICC4	0.133	0.455	**0.734**	0.398	0.056	0.055	0.141
ICC5	0.156	0.635	**0.819**	0.451	0.101	0.050	0.212
ICC6	0.121	0.614	**0.812**	0.431	0.067	0.084	0.173
ICC7	0.091	0.456	**0.644**	0.286	0.038	0.035	0.186
ICC8	0.123	0.509	**0.694**	0.332	0.083	0.107	0.228
ICC9	0.147	0.475	**0.709**	0.441	0.106	0.093	0.174
IRC1	0.055	0.519	0.480	**0.881**	0.043	0.121	0.135

IRC2	0.070	0.544	0.474	**0.838**	0.050	0.154	0.082
IRC3	0.066	0.567	0.522	**0.939**	0.080	0.185	0.108
IRC4	0.053	0.557	0.511	**0.937**	0.056	0.169	0.097
IRC5	0.037	0.560	0.488	**0.896**	0.058	0.159	0.126
L1BL1	0.360	0.001	0.030	-0.022	**0.703**	0.064	0.103
L2BL2	0.553	0.078	0.131	0.106	**0.822**	0.057	0.115
L3BL3	0.483	0.041	0.082	0.065	**0.816**	0.081	0.098
L4BL4	0.444	0.077	0.126	0.061	**0.780**	0.078	0.096
L5BL5	0.497	0.145	0.186	0.119	**0.802**	0.057	0.055
L6PM1	0.304	0.021	0.025	0.000	**0.642**	0.127	0.099
L7PM2	0.331	-0.027	-0.036	-0.073	**0.607**	0.090	0.116
PCD1	0.002	0.050	0.078	0.118	0.099	**0.833**	0.064
PCD2	-0.053	0.049	0.088	0.129	0.037	**0.830**	0.073
PCD3	-0.054	0.008	0.030	0.108	0.076	**0.845**	0.052
PCD4	-0.052	0.052	0.097	0.146	0.077	**0.921**	0.054
PCD5	-0.004	0.063	0.098	0.200	0.118	**0.789**	0.061
SE1	0.111	0.120	0.258	0.155	0.079	0.025	0.835
SE10	0.115	0.142	0.200	0.100	0.067	0.071	**0.691**
SE11	0.109	0.091	0.139	0.073	0.081	0.065	**0.660**
SE12	0.105	0.046	0.108	0.037	0.076	0.066	**0.682**
SE2	0.160	0.125	0.241	0.135	0.122	0.021	**0.835**
SE3	0.143	0.142	0.230	0.132	0.117	0.065	**0.823**
SE4	0.131	-0.040	0.067	-0.034	0.115	0.048	**0.717**
SE5	0.157	-0.017	0.081	-0.017	0.120	0.108	**0.650**
SE6	0.132	-0.052	0.081	-0.047	0.113	0.071	**0.713**
SE7	0.140	-0.050	0.098	-0.034	0.070	0.036	**0.685**
SE8	0.151	-0.001	0.068	0.005	0.152	0.146	**0.623**

Table 5. Discriminant validity–Heterotrait-Monotrait Data Ratio Criterion

Constructs	CS	IAC	ICC	IRC	L	PCD	SE
CS					1		
IAC	2.362						
ICC	2.123	1.509		1.010			
IRC	1.670	1.468					
L							
PCD		1.035	1.005	1.010			
SE		1.070	1.005				

Table 6. Result of hypothesis testing and structural relationships

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	P Values
CS-> L	0.586	22.276	0.000	Supported
IAC -> CS	0.091	1.664	0.096	Supported
ICC -> CS	0.187	3.303	0.001	Supported
ICC -> IAC	0.552	14.928	0.000	Supported
ICC -> IRC	0.539	16.358	0.000	Supported
IRC -> CS	-0.097	1.899	0.058	Supported
IRC -> IAC	0.322	8.188	0.000	Supported
PCD -> IAC	-0.050	1.805	0.071	Supported
PCD -> ICC	0.082	2.233	0.026	Supported
PCD -> IRC	0.122	3.461	0.001	Supported
SE -> IAC	-0.050	1.714	0.087	Supported
SE -> ICC	0.244	7.689	0.000	Supported

p*: 0.01; 2.58, p**: 0.05; 1.96, P***:0.10; 1.6

Table 7. Result of R^2 and Q^2

Constructs	R^2	Q^2	ct Size*
CS	0.042	0.027	Medium
IAC	0.579	0.453	Large
ICC	0.069	0.036	Medium
IRC	0.319	0.256	Medium
L	0.344	0.184	Medium

*Predictive relevance (Q2) Value effect sizes are namely level of 0.02 is small, 0.15 is medium and 0.35 is large.

Table 8. Result of f^2 and q^2

Path Coefficients			
CS-> L	0.586	0.523	0.225
IAC ->CS	0.091	0.004	0.001
ICC -> CS	0.187	0.017	0.797
ICC -> IAC	0.552	0.483	0.335
ICC -> IRC	0.539	0.422	0.312
IRC -> CS	-0.097	0.006	0.003
IRC -> IAC	0.322	0.169	0.099
PCD -> IAC	-0.050	0.006	0.004
PCD -> ICC	0.082	0.007	0.004
PCD -> IRC	0.122	0.022	0.015
SE -> IAC	-0.050	0.005	0.004
SE -> ICC	0.244	0.063	0.032

*Value effect sizes are namely level of 0.02 is small, 0.15 is medium and 0.35 is large.

Table 9. Hypothesis and decisions of the model

Hypothesis	Beta	T Statistics	P Values	
H1. ICC -> CS	0.187	3.303*	0.001	Supported
H2. ICC -> IAC	0.552	14.928*	0.000	Supported
H3. ICC -> IRC	0.539	16.358*	0.000	Supported
H4. IAC -> CS	0.091	1.664***	0.096	Supported
H5. IRC -> CS	-0.097	1.899**	0.058	Supported
H6. IRC -> IAC	0.322	8.188*	0.000	Supported
H7. PCD -> IRC	0.122	3.461*	0.001	Supported
H8. PCD -> IAC	-0.050	1.805**	0.071	Supported
H9. PCD -> ICC	0.082	2.233**	0.026	Supported
H10. SE -> ICC	0.244	7.689*	0.000	Supported
H11. SE -> IAC	-0.050	1.714***	0.087	Supported
H12. CS-> L	0.586	22.276*	0.000	Supported

p*: 0.01; 2.58, p**: 0.05; 1.96, P***:0.10; 1.65

5. Conclusion

The most significant contribution of the study is that it is a theoretically and empirically integrated model developed from social psychology, sociology of culture and marketing communication and consumer behaviour in marketing. The boundaries of these disciplines provide a comprehensive framework for understanding antecedents and the impact of customer behaviour in grocery retail

marketing in Asia. The study has extended the understanding of major and confirmed the relationships among these constructs and the proposed hypotheses.

The relationships of perceived cultural distance, interrole congruence (IRC) and interaction comfort (IAC) were illustrated by hypotheses H11 and H12. In accordance with Sharma *et al.* (2012), perceived cultural distance (PCD) determines IAC and IRC; according to outcomes of the study, hypotheses for the model were admitted as *"fail to reject"*. In other words, perceived cultural distance has a statistically significant impact on IAC and IRC and findings of the study were matched with findings of Sharma *et al.* (2012) (as illustrated in Table 10). In parallel with these perspectives, impact of social environment on perceived cultural distance enlighten and therefore the retailers should consider to improve their strategies on *"reducing negative perceptions of cultural variety on culturally diverse customers"*.

Concerning inter-role congruence, interaction comfort and customer satisfaction (CS), the constructs have not been tested directly. The aim of establishing a direct interrelationship instead of an indirect perspective, as mentioned in Sharma *et al.* (2012) and Paswan and Ganesh (2005), is that customers and employees identified are as a service encounter by role theory and interdependence theory. Both theories explain that service encounters are dependent on each other because the behaviour of customer or employees influence the perceptions of other. In other words, the interaction between service encounters is clearly interrelated with the definition of scripts and roles during the interaction of encounters. Therefore, any fluctuations, misunderstanding and confusion from this relationship lead to a dissatisfactory shopping experience and hence, role clarification for enhanced interaction between customers and employees are key components for many service settings (Ranjan *et al.*, 2015; Zhang *et al.*, 2014; Sharma *et al.* 2012).

The model also examined the mediator effects according to the statistical outcomes whereby the majority of the hypotheses failed to be rejected (except H16, H22 and H23). Hence, the present study reveals the mediation effects of intercultural communication competence (ICC), IAC, and CS. In addition to this, the model also conceptualised and justified the social environment (SE) for the model. In explaining related hypotheses, the relationships of between social environment, and IAC, ICC and PCD respectively and associations with assumed theories were examined. Social environment is crucial dimension for understanding the complicated process of communication and its impact on other constructs. Individual differences and its background in terms of behavioural aspects such as socio-cultural experiences influence interaction involvements and perceptions on cultural encounters (Harrison, 2012).

Intercultural communication poses one of the considerable challenges for service providers in the multicultural service environment, and Malaysia is included. Particularly, when the communication strategy of the service providers is not correctly executed, intercultural communication conflicts would heat up and generate incurable problems among service encounters such as difficulties in relational exchange, misunderstanding, dissatisfaction and etc. Hence, the findings recommend that managers and entrepreneurs in service settings should consider these suggestions to resolve intercultural communication conflicts and increase intercultural communication awareness, training in communication skills, encourage to improve general knowledge of other cultures, as well as setting up a unique organizational culture that integrates both cultures.

Acknowledgment

References

Ahmad, F.S., Ihtiyar, A. and Omar, R. (2014), "A comparative study on service quality in the grocery retailing: Evidence from Malaysia and Turkey", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 109, pp. 763-767.

Al-Ali, Mohammed, Bazin, Nen., and Shamsuddin, S. (2015) "Key determinants of customer satisfaction: evidence from malaysia grocery stores", *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology,* Vol. 74 No. 3, pp. 286-299.

Awang-Shuib, A.R., Sahari, S.H. and Ali, A.J., (2012), "Multicultural awareness and urban communities: Validating a multicultural awareness scale", *Journal of Asian Behavioural Studies*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 49-62.

Baker, J. (1986). "The role of the environment in marketing services: the consumer perspective", *The Services Challenge: Integrating for Competitive Advantage*, Vol. 1 No.1, 79-84.

Baron, R.M., and Kenny, D.A. (1986), "The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical consideration", *Journal of personality and social psychology*, Vol. 51 No.6, pp.1173.

Biddle, B. J. (1979), *Role Theory: Expectations, Identities, And Behaviors,* Academic Press, New York.

Chen, G. M., and Starosta, W.J. (2000), "The development and validation of the intercultural sensitivity scale", *Human Communication*, Vol. 3, pp. 1-15.

Chin, W.W. (1998), "The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling", *Modern Methods for Business Research*, Vol. 295 No. 2, pp. 295-336.

Chin, W.W. (2010), *How to Write Up and Report PLS Analyses, Handbook of partial least squares,* Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Cottrell, D.W. (2010). *Global Agricultural Information Network*. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

Friedman, V.J. and Antal, A.B. (2005), "negotiating reality: A theory of action approach to intercultural competence", *Management Learning*, Vol. 36, pp. 69-86.

Gold, M.S. and Bentler, P.M. (2000*),* "Treatments of missing data: A Monte Carlo comparison of RBHDI, iterative stochastic regression imputation, and expectation-maximization", *Structural Equation Modeling*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 319-355.

Hair Jr, J.F., Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C. and Sarstedt, M. (2013), *"A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)",* SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. (2014), *"Multivariate Data Analysis 7th Edition",* Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.

Harrison, N. (2012), "Investigating the impact of personality and early life experiences on intercultural interaction in internationalised universities", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp.224-237.

Hashim, K.F. (2012), *"Understanding the determinants of continuous knowledge sharing intention within business online communities",* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology).

Hashim, M.A., and Mahpuz, M. (2011), "Tackling multiculturalism via human communication: a public relations campaign of Malaysia", International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol. 2 No. 4

Hill, S.R. and Tombs, A. (2011), "The effect of accent of service employee on customer service evaluation", *Managing Service Quality,* Vol. 21, pp. 649-666.

Huang, M.H., Huang, M.H., Cheng, Z.H. and Cheng, Z.H. (2016), "Strategies to enhance consumers' identification with a service firm", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 449-461.

Huddleston, P., Whipple, J., Nye Mattick, R. and Jung Lee, S., (2009), "Customer satisfaction in food retailing: comparing specialty and conventional grocery stores", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 37 No.1, pp.63-80.

Ihtiyar, A. (2017), "A conceptual framework to explain transition of intercultural communication conflict, social environment and personality", *Journal of Management, Economics and Industrial Organization,*, Vol. 1, pp. 37-50.

Ihtiyar, A. and Shannon, R. (2016), "The role of social environment on interaction of intercultural service encounters and its effects on customer satisfaction", in the Oxford's 8th Retailing in Asia Conference, Bangkok.

Ihtiyar, A. and Ahmad, F.S. (2015), "The impact of intercultural communication competence on service quality and customer satisfaction", *Services Marketing Quarterly,* Vol. 36, pp. 136-152.

Ismail, I.R. (2015), "Investigating intercultural communication demonstrated among staff at University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)", (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Queensland).

Jeong W.S., Stoel, L. and Chung, J-E. (2012), "Impacts of store type importance and country of origin: Exploring the case of dietary supplements in the Chinese market", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management,* Vol. 40 No.6, 471-487.

Jim, C. Y. and Chen, W.Y. (2007). "Consumption preferences and environmental externalities: A hedonic analysis of the housing market in Guangzhou", Geoforum, Vol. 38 No.2, 414-431.

Iwao, S. (1997), "Consistency orientation and models of social behavior: Is it not time for West to meet East", *Japanese Psychological Research,* Vol. 39 No.4, pp. 323-332.

Kays, K., Gathercoal, K. and Buhrow, W. (2012), "Does survey format influence self-disclosure on sensitive question items?", *Computers in Human Behavior,* Vol. 28 No.1, pp.251-256.

Kelman, H.C., and Baron, R.M. (1968*), "Inconsistency as a psychological signal. Theories of cognitive consistency: A source book",* pp. 331-336.

Kraay, A., Mastruzzi, M. and Kaufmann, D. (2003). "Governance Matters III: Governance Indicators for 1996–2002", *Informe de investigación* No. WPS, 3106.

Kuo, Y.-F., Wu, C.-M. and Deng, W.-J. (2009), "The relationships among service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and post-purchase intention in mobile value-added service", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 25, pp. 887-896.

Lew, Y.K., and Sinkovics, R.R. (2013), "Crossing borders and industry sectors: behavioral governance in strategic alliances and product innovation for competitive advantage", *Long Range Planning,* Vol. 46 No.1, pp. 13-38.

Lewis, E.F., Hardy, M., and Snaith, B. (2013), "An analysis of survey reporting in the imaging professions: Is the issue of non-response bias being adequately addressed?", *Radiography,* Vol. 19 No.3, pp. 240-245.

Lloyd, A.E. and Luk, S. T. (2011), "Interaction behaviors leading to comfort in the service encounter", *Journal of Services marketing*, Vol. 25, pp.176-189.

MacKenzie, S. B., and Podsakoff, P. M. (2012), "Common method bias in marketing: causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies", Journal of Retailing, Vol. 88 No. 4, pp. 542-555.

Matos, C.A. and Leis, R.P., (2013), "*The antecedents of complaint behaviour for Brazilian and French consumers of services*", International Journal of Consumer Studies, Vol.37 No.3, pp.327-336.

Messner, W. and Schäfer, N. (2012), *The ICCA Facilitator's Manual: Intercultural Communication and Collaboration Appraisal,* GloBus Research Limited.

Mulyana, D. and Zubair, A. (2015) "Intercultural Communication Competence Developed by Chinese in Communicating with Malays in Bangka Island, Indonesia", *Sino-US English Teaching*, Vol.12 No. 4, pp. 299-309.

Neupane, A., Soar, J., Vaidya, K. and Yong, J. (2014), "Willingness to adopt e-procurement to reduce corruption: Results of the PLS Path modeling", *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy,* Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 500-520.

Oliver, R.L. (1981), "*Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction processes in retail settings", Journal of retailing.*

Omar, N.A. and Musa, R. (2011), "Measuring service quality in retail loyalty programmes (LPSQual): Implications for retailers' retention strategies", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management,* Vol. 39, pp. 759-784.

Parker, R., Osboda, T., Smith, M., Margerum, R., Young, R., Turnoy, S. and Steckler, B. (2012). "Oregon Statewide Economic Development Needs Assessment: A Survey of Economic Development Specialists", University of Oregon, Eugene, USA.

Paswan, A.K. and Ganesh, G. (2005), "Cross-cultural interaction comfort and service evaluation", *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 18, pp. 93-115.

Pekerti, A.A. and Thomas, D.C. (2015*),* "The role of self-concept in cross-cultural communication", *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 167-193.

Phau, I., and Ferguson, G. (2013), "Validating the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) Scale in the Australian fast food industry", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 147-154.

Polsa, P., Fuxiang, W., Sääksjärvi, M. and Shuyuan, P. (2013), "Cultural values and health service quality in China", *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance,* Vol. 26, pp. 55-73.

PWC (2011), *Strong and Steady Outlook for the Retail and Consumer Products Sector in Asia.* New York, USA.

Ranjan, K.R., Sugathan, P. and Rossmann, A. (2015), "A narrative review and meta-analysis of service interaction quality: new research directions and implications", *Journal of Services Marketing,* Vol. 29 No. 1, pp.3-14.

Rezaei, S. (2015), "Segmenting consumer decision-making styles (cdms) toward marketing practice: A partial least squares (pls) path modeling approach", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 22, pp.1-15.

Rusbult, C.E. and Van Lange, P.A.M. (2003), "Interdependence, interaction, and relationships", *Annual Review of Psychology,* Vol. 54, pp. 351-375.

Rusbult, C.E. and Van Lange, P.A. (2008), "Why we need interdependence theory", *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, Vol. 2 No. 5, pp. 2049-2070.

Samovar, L.A., Porter, R.E., McDaniel, E.R. and Roy, C.S. (2014), *Intercultural communication: A reader.* Cengage Learning.

Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C.M., Henseler, J., and Hair, J.F. (2014), "On the emancipation of PLS-SEM: A commentary on Rigdon (2012)", *Long range planning*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 154-160.

Sharma, P., Tam, J.L. and Kim, N. (2012) "Intercultural service encounters (ICSE): an extended framework and empirical validation", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 26, pp. 521-534.

Shen, L.Y., Ochoa, J.J., Shah, M.N. and Zhang, X. (2011), "The application of urban sustainability indicators–A comparison between various practices", *Habitat International*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 17-29.

Sinha, J.B., Singh, S., Gupta, P., Srivastava, K.B., Sinha, R.B.N., Srivastava, S. and Pandey, A. (2010), "An exploration of the Indian mindset", *Psychological Studies*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 3-17.

Sizoo, S., Iskat, W., Plank, R. and Serrie, H. (2004), "Cross-cultural service encounters in the hospitality industry and the effect of intercultural sensitivity on employee performance", *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration,* Vol. 4, pp. 61-77.

Solomon, M.R., Surprenant, C., Czepiel, J.A. and Gutman, E.G. (1985), "A role theory perspective on dyadic interactions: the service encounter", *The Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 49 No. 1 pp. 99-111.

Souiden, N. and Pons, F. (2009), "Product recall crisis management: the impact on manufacturer's image, consumer loyalty and purchase intention", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 18, pp. 106-114.

Spanierman, L.B., Oh, E., Heppner, P.P., Neville, H.A., Mobley, M., Wright, C.V. and Navarro, R. (2010), *The Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale: Development And Initial Validation.* Urban Education.

Surprenant, C.F. and Solomon, M.R. (1987), "Predictability and personalization in the service encounter", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 86-96.

Statistics Department of Malaysia. (2013), *Population Projection Report*, available at: http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/images/stories/files/LatestReleases/population/Ringkasan_Penemuan-Summary_Findings_2010-2040.pdf

Statistics Department of Malaysia (2010), *Population Distribution And Basic Demographic Characteristic Report*, available at: http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=1215%3Apopulation-distribution-and-basic-demographic-characteristic-report-population-and-housing-census-malaysia-2010-updated-2972011andcatid=130%3Apopulation-distribution-and-basic-demographic-characteristic-report-population-and-housing-census-

malaysia-2010andlang=en,

Tam, J., Sharma, P., and Kim, N. (2014), "Examining the role of attribution and intercultural competence in intercultural service encounters", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 159-170.

Thomas, D.C. and Peterson, M.F., (2014), *Cross-cultural management: Essential concepts*. Sage Publications.

Tombs, A. and McColl-Kennedy, J.R. (2003), "Social-servicescape conceptual model", *Marketing Theory,* Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 447-475.

Urbach, N. and Ahlemann, F. (2010), "Structural equation modeling in information systems research using partial least squares", *Journal of Information Technology Theory and Application,* Vol. 11 No. 2, pp.5-40.

Uhrich, S. and Benkenstein, M. (2012), "Physical and social atmospheric effects in hedonic service consumption: customers' roles at sporting events". *The Service Industries Journal,* Vol. 32 No. 11, pp. 1741-1757.

Vater, A. and Schröder-Abé, M. (2015), "Explaining the link between personality and relationship satisfaction: Emotion regulation and interpersonal behaviour in conflict discussions", *European Journal of Personality*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp.201-215.

Vesel, P. and Zabkar, V. (2009), "Managing customer loyalty through the mediating role of satisfaction in the DIY retail loyalty program", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 16, pp. 396-406.

Wang, C.-Y. and Mattila, A.S. (2010), "A grounded theory model of service providers' stress, emotion, and coping during intercultural service encounters", *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, Vol.20, pp. 328-342.

Wang, Z., Arndt, A., Singh, S. and Biernat, M. (2009), "The impact of accent stereotypes on service outcomes and its boundary conditions", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 36, pp. 940-941.

Wong, K.K.K. (2013), "Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) techniques using SmartPLS", *Marketing Bulletin*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp.1-32.

Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L.L. and Parasuraman, A. (1996), "The behavioral consequences of service quality", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 60 No. 2, pp. 31-46.

Zhang, M., Jin, B., Wang, G.A., Goh, T.N. and He, Z. (2014), "A study of key success factors of service enterprises in China", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 134 No. 1, pp. 1-14.