

Abstract

National culture determines consumer attitudes and behaviour. While this holds true for tourism consumption, little research has sought to better understand the effect of culture on tourist destination choice. The geographical scope of analysis has also been restricted. This study employs the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework to conduct an exploratory, qualitative evaluation of the influence of the tourist cultural background on destination choice. It focuses on the UK and Venezuela, the two countries with significant cultural differences and forecast growth in outbound tourism. The study shows the distinct role of culture in tourist preferences for destination choice and structure of travel groups. The effect of culture is also recorded in how tourists research destinations prior to visit and perceive travel risks, thus ultimately influencing their motivation to travel. Recommendations are developed on how to integrate knowledge on the cultural background of tourists into tourism management and policy-making practices.

Key words

National culture, tourist attitudes, consumer behaviour, destination choice, Venezuela, UK

Highlights

- The effect of national culture on tourist destination choice in the UK and Venezuela is explored
- Significant differences are found in destination preferences, size and structure of travel groups
- National culture impacts risk perception and affects motivation to travel
- The validity of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework to study tourist destination choice is demonstrated

1. Introduction

Globalisation is making a profound effect on tourism where it has encouraged “the [enhanced] movement of bodies across borders” (Wonders and Michalowski 2001, p. 545) and contributed to the rapid development of the travel industry (Seddighi *et al.* 2001). When people travel abroad, they get exposed to the new cultures, thus making tourism a critical enabler of cross-cultural interactions (Evans 1976). The role of tourism in global cross-cultural exchange and the effect of national cultures on international tourism development represent established, and yet growing, research subjects, as a result (Aramberri 2009; Reisinger and Crofts 2009).

The influence of cultural values on consumer behaviour is well recognised (Blodgett *et al.* 2008; Kotler and Keller 2009) and hence the relationship between these two variables has been studied extensively in marketing. Here, the role of national culture in shaping consumer decision-making, purchasing and consumption habits alongside the level of customer satisfaction with products and services has been diligently reviewed (Petersen *et al.* 2015). According to Manrai and Manrai (2011), the influence of national culture on consumer behaviour is particularly pronounced in the tourism domain due to the steady growth of international travel which has become a truly cross-cultural phenomenon. Reisinger and Crofts (2009) posit that cultural differences shape tourist attitudes and determine their purchasing decisions. Likewise, tourist motivation for travel is affected by national culture where it represents a determinant of destination choice (Seddighi *et al.* 2001). This underlines the importance of better understanding cultural influences in tourism for the success of the industry’s planning and development of more effective marketing strategies (Lam and Hsu 2006).

Existing literature on the inter-linkages between tourism and culture has only established some general differences between the behaviour of western and eastern tourists (Lam and Hsu

2006). It is limited in geographical scope as only a few national cultures have been studied (Ng *et al.* 2007). While Europe and North America have been relatively well explored from a cultural perspective, countries in South America have been excluded from analysis despite the growing significance of this tourism market (United Nations World Tourism Organisation-UNWTO 2015). Within this region, due to its specific political and socio-economic regime, Venezuela remains particularly under-researched and yet it holds substantial tourism potential (Vanegas 2009). Furthermore, the scale of cultural analysis in tourism is also restricted. While culture is one of the reasons for the discrepancy in tourist consumption patterns (Ng *et al.* 2007), research into this topic is under-developed as only few studies have examined the cultural implications for tourist motivation and destination choice (Jackson 2001; Ng *et al.* 2009; Yang and Wong 2012).

Studying the influence of national culture on tourist destination choice is crucial as it aids in understanding the tourist decision-making process which should consequently help forecast tourist flows (Moutinho 2000). It can further foster tourism planning, budgeting and marketing, thus being useful for tourism management and policy-making (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007). While the role of culture in shaping consumer demand for particular destinations is recognised, the economic indicators have been the focus of existing research seeking to predict tourist demand (Ng *et al.* 2007). It is however paramount to add national culture as another variable to this analysis as it has been largely overlooked in peer-reviewed literature (Jackson 2001).

This study aims to critically evaluate the influence of the cultural background of tourists on their destination choice. The UK and Venezuela are used for comparative analysis due to the substantial differences in national cultures. Furthermore, Venezuela is viewed as an appropriate choice because it has been under-studied by tourism scholars despite the envisaged growth in its outbound tourism (UNWTO 2015). Similarly, the UK's tourism industry is expected to increase

(UNWTO 2015). This implies that the study of the influence of culture on destination choice will be beneficial to understand the tourist behaviour from a cultural perspective, being imperative as outbound tourism grows in both nations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consumer behaviour in tourism

As a research subject, consumer behaviour has been under scrutiny since 1960s and substantial efforts have been applied to its categorisation to date (see, for example, seminal works by Jacoby 1976; Solomon 2015; Swarbrooke and Horner 2007). It has been argued however that existing studies offer a rather limited understanding of such a complex phenomenon and further, in-depth exploration of consumer behaviour is necessary, especially as applied in various sectoral and disciplinary contexts (Pachauri 2002).

Understanding consumer behaviour in the tourism context is imperative. This is because, unlike other industries, tourism has unique characteristics since it represents an investment with an intangible return and given that its purchase is usually carefully planned over time (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007). This complicates the consumer behaviour process in tourism and makes it more sophisticated, thus calling for more advanced research efforts to comprehend it (Moutinho 2000). Investigating tourist behaviour is crucial for tourism marketing as it aids in optimising the efficiency of marketing efforts since it fosters understanding of how and why consumers make certain decisions and finding the most efficient way to facilitate these (Buhalis 2000). Furthermore, the comprehension of tourist behaviour patterns is beneficial for public policy-making and tourism planning as it enables better understanding and more accurate forecasting of tourist demand, thus allowing destinations to tailor their product offer to match consumer expectations to retain existing and attract new tourists (Demir *et al.* 2014). In an

attempt to simplify the relationship between the diverse factors that can drive consumer decision-making in tourism, thus influencing their purchasing behaviour, several models have been created (Nayeem 2012).

2.2. Consumer decision-making models in tourism

Tourism purchase varies from that of traditional products as consumer decisions start prior to a holiday and continue during the holiday (Blichfeldt 2008). This study is concerned with the elements of the destination decision-making process which happens prior to travel. This is because pre-travel represents the most important stage of decision-making as it reveals most of the tourist's reasoning about their attitudes towards various destinations, but also because it is the very first step in tourist consumption (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007).

Among a diversity of consumer decision-making models, the most popular are so-called grand models (Nayeem 2012) that offer a framework of the main aspects that can explain buyer behaviour by identifying the factors influencing consumer decision-making (Kassarjian 1982). This type of models traditionally follows a five step categorisation of the consumer decision-making process, including: (1) need recognition; (2) information search; (3) alternative evaluation; (4) choice or purchase; and (5) consumption or outcome evaluation (Schiffman *et al.* 2012). A number of grand models have been developed (see Jarvis *et al.* 2003 for a review) where the 'Model of Buyer Behaviour' by Howard-Sheth (1969) remains most widely cited as it highlights the significance of inputs in the decision-making process while suggesting how consumers organise those inputs prior to making a final decision (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007).

According to Pizam and Mansfeld (2000), the grand models of consumer behaviour suffer from their limited applicability to tourism which is due to the substantial differences in tourist purchasing behaviour as highlighted above. Hence, a number of tourism-specific models have

been devised in an attempt to explain consumer behaviour of tourists (for a detailed overview, see Sirakaya and Woodside 2005). Like any other model, these have advantages and shortcomings, and yet a distinctive feature of tourism-specific models is in that they all consider tourist decision-making process as a functional multistage activity which is influenced by various psychological and non-psychological variables (Sirakaya and Woodside 2005). Yoo and Chon (2008) compare the tourist decision-making process with a funnel which narrows down towards the end. Among tourism-specific models, the Moutinho's model (Moutinho 1987) has attracted particular attention to date and therefore been adopted for the purpose of this project. This is because, unlike other models of tourist decision-making, the Moutinho's model recognises culture as one of the major external drivers of travel decisions (Sirakaya and Woodside 2005), thus being compatible with the aim of this study.

2.3. The Moutinho's vacation tourist behaviour model

The Moutinho's model capitalises upon the major principles of the grand consumer decision-making models but adapts them specifically for tourism (Decrop and Snelders 2004). Despite criticism (Gilbert 1991), the Moutinho's model is considered one of the most encompassing consumer decision-making models in the tourism domain as it provides a comprehensive synopsis of the key variables that can influence the tourist decision-making process (Sirakaya and Woodside 2005).

The Moutinho's model consists of three major parts: (1) pre-decision and decision-making processes; (2) post-purchase evaluation; and (3) future decision-making (Moutinho 1987). According to Moutinho, the tourist's initial decision on which destination to visit (Part 1) is driven by diverse factors, comprising internal environmental influences (for example, cultural values, reference groups and social class) and other individual, usually psychological,

determinants (for instance, motives, lifestyle, personality). The post-purchase evaluation stage (Part 2) deals with the post-choice evaluative response of the tourist (Umashankar 2006). This relates to the cognitive dissonance mechanism, resulting in three zones of commitment to later behaviours known as ‘latitudes’ which are: positive for acceptance; negative for rejection; and neutral for non-commitment (Pizam and Mansfeld 2000). Lastly, future decision-making (Part 3) is concerned with the evaluation of subsequent tourist behaviour by looking at the probabilities of purchase repetition (Umashankar 2006). Part 1 of the model is of primary interest to this study due to its focus on tourist destination choice and the crucial role played by national culture in it.

2.3.1. Destination choice

Due to its importance for policy-making and management, destination choice has for long represented an established research object in tourism studies (see, for example, Woodside and Lysonski 1989; Um and Crompton 1990; Crompton 1992; Keating and Kriz 2008; Ahn *et al.* 2013). Despite being a long-standing study object, deriving a ‘universal’ definition of destination choice is difficult, if not impossible, which is due to the diversity and complexity of tourist motives that underpin destination selection (Jang and Cai 2002). In simple terms, destination choice can be conceptualised as a tourist's selection from a set of destination alternatives (Hsu *et al.* 2009). The process of selecting a destination can be contemplated as a complex decision-making process which stretches from: 1) need recognition to information search; 2) evaluation and comparison of alternatives; 3), and then to final purchase; along this process 4) various factors can influence the final tourist choice (Woodside and Lysonski 1989; Crompton and Ankomah, 1993). Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) synthesised all determinant factors in four categories in an attempt to explain the complex variables affecting destination choice (Figure 1).

[Insert Figure 1 here]

According to Sirakaya and Woodside (2005), national culture of tourists represents one of the external variables driving destination choice (Figure 1). This is further supported by Patel (2013) who however views culture as an *internal* variable because it is internalised in people's minds. Culture can influence destination choice in two ways: (1) tourists from different cultural backgrounds may behave differently when choosing a destination (Wong and Lau 2001) and (2) the cultural distance between the tourist and the host may represent an important factor in destination choice as some may prefer to visit destinations with a similar culture to their own (Crouch 1994). This notwithstanding, the exact role of national culture in tourist destination choice remains understudied which calls for a change (Ng *et al.* 2007).

2.4. National culture

Defining national culture is difficult and the definitions vary from being very inclusive, like that of Herskovitz who sees national culture as 'the human-made part of the environment', to the very focused, such as that of Shweder and LeVine who view culture as 'a shared meaning system' (Ali and Brooks 2008, p.2). National culture has also been defined as a 'pattern of thoughts' (Brown 1991 cited by Minkov *et al.* 2013) and as a 'social norm' (Hechter and Opp 2001 cited by Minkov *et al.* 2013). Parsons and Shils (1951 cited by Straub *et al.* 2002, p.14) propose that national culture is 'a set of values, norms, and symbols that guide individual behaviour' while Huijser (2006) argues that those values are common and shared across a country's population, rather than an individual. This study adopts the definition of national culture by Hofstede as it is the most widely cited in cultural studies (Jones 2007). Hofstede (2003, p.5) defines culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others'.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) claim that national culture is problematic to verbalise. However, it has the power to shape individuals' behaviours (Matsumoto and Wilson 2008). Consequently, in an attempt to comprehend the visible and invisible traits of national culture as to facilitate the anticipation of one's behaviour, a number of conceptual frameworks have been devised (Table 1). Taras *et al.* (2009) posit that all cultural frameworks are conceptually similar as most of them have at least one dimension that is alike to those proposed by Hofstede. Hence, Soares *et al.* (2007) argue that the Hofstede's multidimensional framework of national culture is universal and can be applied to various disciplines and in different contexts.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Hofstede's framework has six major cultural dimensions that have been developed to diminish complexity of understanding culture by interpreting cultural values and behavioural patterns for a wide range of countries while facilitating their comparison (Hofstede *et al.* 2011). These cultural dimensions are: Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) and Long-term Orientation (LTO) and Indulgence versus Restraint (Beugelsdijk *et al.* 2015; Hofstede 2003). Despite its international recognition, Hofstede's work has been criticised for being out-of-date and single company-focussed (Hollensen 2011; McSweeney 2002). In particular, Holden (2004) suggests that Hofstede's theory was created before globalisation happened, meaning that many aspects that can influence national culture (for instance, enhanced travel and technological innovations) were not taken into consideration. However, Hofstede (2011) argues that his theory's validity would continue until 2100 or later as culture changes at a very slow pace and any variations would have to be very intense to invalidate his work. In light of this criticism, there have been attempts to recreate Hofstede's study with different sample sizes but these had generated comparable results (Soares *et al.* 2007).

This demonstrates that Hofstede's work holds the highest validity (Magnusson *et al.* 2008), hence its adoption for this project.

2.5. The influence of national culture on tourist destination choice

As suggested by Moutinho (1987), national culture can provide individuals with implicit and explicit nudges. These shape tourist behaviour, including consumption patterns (Filimonau *et al.* 2017). This proposition has been scrutinised in literature and some evidence has been collated showing that national culture can indeed influence tourist motivation (Ahn and McKercher 2015; You *et al.* 2000), determine tourist information search, planning and final purchase decisions (Money and Crofts 2003), drive travel behaviour (Crofts 2004) and impact on destination choice (Jackson 2001; Ng *et al.* 2007; 2009; Yang and Wong 2012). As effectively summarised by Stylos *et al.* (2017), national culture underpins the significance attributed by tourists to the choice of destinations and the specific features within these destinations by exemplifying differences in travel motivations.

Despite the growing academic recognition of the role played by national culture in tourist destination choice, Kozak (2002) argues that existing tourism literature lacks empirical studies on this important subject. It is paramount to address this knowledge gap since each destination provides a number of traits to attract tourists. Many of these traits are designed to target tourists from specific consumption contexts, including their country of origin (Chen and Gursoy 2000). This implies that the final choice of destination is highly dependent on tourists' own assessment of the diverse attributes and the perceived utility of each destination. These are often driven by national culture (Ng *et al.* 2009).

In a handful of empirical investigations on the role of national culture in destination choice, the different dimensions of the Hofstede's cultural framework have been utilised as a primary

measurement scale (Rinuastuti *et al.* 2014; Woodside *et al.* 2011). The findings suggest that underpinning travellers' perceptions towards a destination and their holiday pre-planning attitudes are paramount in determining final destination choice and yet these are highly influenced by culture (Lam and Hsu 2006). Although Reisinger and Crofts (2009) claim that the Hofstede's cultural dimensions cannot perfectly predict how a tourist will behave as personality also plays an important role, they concurrently posit that they can facilitate the measurement of the significant effects that national culture is likely to have on tourists as to identify the main tendencies. The above analysis implies that tourism providers should adapt and modify their product offer for each culture, and yet there is a paucity of studies that compare the differences and similarities of tourists depending on the country of origin (Le Serre *et al.* 2013). This study contributes to knowledge by reporting on the outcome of an exploratory, comparative analysis which has evaluated the role of national culture in tourist destination choice. To better demonstrate the effect of national culture, it is necessary to select two countries that are culturally remote. According to Hofstede's framework, the UK and Venezuela represent two cultures that are very distinct (Haffar and Perez 2015), thus making them suitable subjects for analysis (Figure 2). The following section highlights the key differences between the UK and Venezuela in the core cultural dimensions as proposed by Hofstede.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

3. Methodology

3.1. National cultures in the UK and Venezuela

Regarding PDI, Venezuela is considered a very hierarchical society (De la Garza-Carranza *et al.* 2009; Hofstede 2015) while the UK has only marginal societal inequalities (Haffar and Perez 2015). Hofstede (2015) argues that in Venezuela, due to their high PDI, power tends to be

centralised. Haffar and Perez (2015) confirm that in Venezuela, unlike in the UK, the reinforcement of status is highly desired by the society. Hence, in such high PDI cultures privileges are typical of the powerful while in low PDI cultures equality reigns (Hui *et al.* 2004; Bialas 2009; Hofstede *et al.* 2010).

Concerning IDV, Venezuela is highly collectivist; therefore, relationships are fundamental (Basabe and Ros 2005; Stefanidis *et al.* 2013) as they tend to be integrated into cohesive groups (Javidan and House 2001 cited by Huettinger 2008). Instead, the UK demonstrates high individualism (Hofstede 2015). Therefore, it is typical for the British to be only concerned about their very close family as in their daily life they tend to act as a 'self' and not as a group (Soares *et al.* 2007; De la Garza-Carranza *et al.* 2009).

Regarding MAS, both cultures are masculine (Hofstede 2015) which implies they are competitive, success-oriented and assertive, and have well-defined gender roles (Fougère and Moulettes 2007; Yeganeh 2013). This notwithstanding, Hofstede (2015) debates that, in Venezuela, due to their collectivist traits, there is competition only with outsiders, and not with in-group members, which is confirmed by Haffar and Perez (2015).

Concerning UAI, the score of Venezuela is high Hofstede (2015). Therefore, the Venezuelans are risk averse as they tend to experience anxiety in unstructured or unpredictable situations (Ghauri and Usunier 2003). Reisinger (2009) suggests that high UAI cultures would also emphasise loyalty to the known and strive for consensus when making decisions to reduce risks. In contrast, the UK demonstrates low UAI scores (Hofstede 2015) meaning that uncertainties are well tolerated while the British are innovative as they allow new events or experiences to occur easily (De Mooij and Hofstede 2002).

Regarding LTO, Venezuela is very short-term oriented (STO) (Hofstede 2015) which suggests a very normative society that respects past traditions while not caring about the future (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). Moreover, Hopkins (2009) argues that STO cultures seek immediate gain from every situation while Moon and Choi (2001) suggest they prioritise the accomplishment of their social obligations. Conversely, the UK sits in the middle of the scale (Figure 2) implying its dominant preference cannot be established (Hofstede 2015).

Both cultures are indulgent societies (Hofstede 2015). Pratt (2012) argues that high-indulgent cultures encourage the expression of opinions and the engagement in leisure activities to feel happier. Griffith and Rubera (2014) add that indulgent cultures encourage the gratification of their desires as to improve enjoyment of life.

Given the substantial cultural distance between the UK and Venezuela, these two countries represent suitable objects for a comparative, exploratory study. The study's research design is explained below.

3.2. Research design

The study has adopted the interpretivist paradigm as it facilitates contrasting and understanding of the differences between individuals and their behaviours within the wider society (Saunders *et al.* 2012). This is closely linked to qualitative research as it aids in clarifying and exploring in depth the complex social phenomena that represent traditional interpretivist research subjects (Bryman and Bell 2011; Grbich 2011). Qualitative research is exploratory and has inductive nature as it focuses on words instead of numbers (Hennink *et al.* 2011). It traditionally aims at investigating certain beliefs and behaviours that occur in a given situation; hence, it has been broadly utilised for the research of people from diverse cultures to unveil the cause behind their behavioural patterns (Adams *et al.* 2007). High subjectivity, low

generalisability and insufficient representativeness of qualitative research is seen as major shortcomings of the interpretivist paradigm (Bryman and Bell 2011) and yet this approach is deemed feasible given this study aims to investigate the role of national culture in destination choice of individual tourists. Importantly, qualitative research represents the only feasible means to study the social phenomena in Venezuela, the country with very peculiar political settings, where quantitative population surveys can only be conducted by authorised governmental agencies while the outcome of these surveys is not always available /cannot be disseminated in the public domain.

Within the portfolio of qualitative methods for primary data collection and analysis, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were employed. These were preferred to structured interviews and focus groups due to their ability to provide detailed data, thus being useful to unveil the participants' true attitudes and beliefs (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2005). This is in line with Woodside *et al.* (2011) who studied the effect of national culture on tourist behaviour and used semi-structured interviews for data collection and analysis. The interviews were held in the native language of the participants which had enabled collection of top-of-mind responses to generate quality data. Professional translations of interviews in Spanish were subsequently made.

Non-probability, purposive sampling was utilised to recruit willing participants (Adams *et al.* 2007) as it provided the opportunity to approach those people who would fit the criteria considered necessary for this study (Jankowicz 2005). Participants were recruited from among permanent residents of the UK and Venezuela, who were born and raised in their respective countries. This is to overcome the potential effect of migration on the growing multi-culturalism of the modern society, especially in the UK context. The balance was striven for in the socio-demographical profile of participants to ensure it was broadly representative of the British and

Venezuelan population in terms of travel patterns. The main socio-demographic characteristics of tourists from the UK and Venezuela were derived from analysis of national tourist statistics provided by Office for National Statistics (2018) and MINTUR (2018), respectively. The other two criteria applied when recruiting for interviews were: 1) active tourists (taking one or more holiday trips per year) and 2) active involvement in the decision-making process on the selection of the destination to visit or when purchasing holidays. Morse (1995 cited by Guest *et al.* 2006) claims that reaching saturation is crucial for qualitative research while Thomson (2010 cited by Marshall *et al.* 2013) argues that it is generally achieved with 10 to 30 interviews. In this study, the saturation effect was recorded after 20 interviews (ten Venezuelans and ten Britons) have been conducted as no new themes were emerging from the iterative process of data collection and analysis (Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 here]

Interviews were conducted over a three-week period in November 2015 and lasted, on average, between 30 and 60 minutes. As the interviews attempted to explore the influence of national culture on tourist destination choice, the questions were designed to investigate the impact of the Hofstede's dimensions as these were broadly utilised in previous studies (see, for example, Jackson 2001, Manrai and Manrai 2011). The interview schedule (Table 3) was devised based on the major themes that had emerged from literature review and regularly updated to account for any new themes identified during the interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and no financial incentives were offered.

[Insert Table 3 here]

Thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcriptions (Braun and Clarke 2006) as it represents the most established and broadly used method in qualitative research (Jankowicz

2005). The codes and thematic categories were created to aid in the identification and comprehension of tourist consumption trends and behavioural patterns (Adams *et al.* 2007), Table 4. Although thematic analysis is criticised for decontextualising information, Grbich (2011) considers it to be the most accurate approach due to its ability to translate extensive transcripts into attitudes and intentions to meet the research needs.

[Insert Table 4 here]

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. The influence of power distance on tourist destination choice

Woodside *et al.* (2011) establish that tourists from high PDI cultures prefer visiting well-known destinations since this underlines high societal status. Lord *et al.* (2008) add that this is often reflected in tourists' willingness to pay where high PDI cultures tend to go for high-end and luxurious holidays. Most Venezuelan participants (high PDI) agreed with these propositions highlighting PDI as an important determinant of destination choice. In contrast, most British participants (low PDI) did not link destination choice to one's societal status and denied that they would visit a well-known tourist destination solely for this purpose:

'I think it does actually provide good status because when a place is trendy, luxurious or fashionable everyone wants to go there and, when you go, everyone is impressed' (Participant 2V)

'I don't do it [holidaying] for my social group or status, I do it for myself. Not to impress people' (Participant 2UK)

The decision-making process when selecting a destination was further explored; here, most Venezuelans agreed that they would usually try to achieve a consensus on preferred options, but the final decision would be made by the eldest person in a travel party. In most cases this action was justified by the fact that senior people were the ones paying for holidays which reflects their power. However, the fact that the Venezuelans strive to mutually agree on which destination to visit may signify their collectivist trait which is discussed in section 4.2. As for the British, it was made clear that there was not one specific person designated for final decision-making and the responsibility could be delegated to other members of the family or travel party, depending on their ability to convince the rest. This is in line with Reisinger (2009) who posit that in high PDI cultures the head of the family, or someone with a similar rank, usually makes travel decisions as there is respect for seniority:

'My father [would choose the destination] because he's the one who pays. We usually go through a consensus but he always makes the final decision' (Participant 4V)

'It depends [on] who I'm going with because my husband chose the next one and my sister chose the last one and then when I've been to Thailand and Singapore was because somebody else chose that destination, so it really depends on who I'm travelling with' (Participant 9UK)

4.2. The influence of individualism on tourist destination choice

Jackson (2001) suggests that IDV is the most influential Hofstede's dimension in terms of destination choice. Reisinger (2009) proposes that travel decisions are made through a consensus in collectivist cultures to preserve the group harmony. Likewise, Lord *et al.* (2008) claim that, in collectivist cultures, satisfaction descends from the satisfaction of the group while the destination decision-making process is determined by the group norms and harmony. This was confirmed by the Venezuelan participants who admitted to put the group's preferences before the personal desires, to avoid hostility and disbalance. In contrast, Reisinger (2009) finds that individualistic cultures make decisions on an individual basis which was not however confirmed by the British participants as a mix of opinions was recorded. Nevertheless, some correlation was identified between the marital status of the participants and the destination decision-making process in the UK. Single/divorced tourists agreed they would make decisions individually while married/in a relationship tourists claimed they would go through a consensus process:

'We always consult each other in our travel group because the idea of a holiday is for everyone to enjoy' (Participant 8V)

'I chose the last holiday destination but it was not a completely one-sided decision but from both sides because we're husband and wife and that's what we do'
(Participant 10UK, Married)

Moreover, Lord *et al.* (2008) claim that, when selecting a destination, individualistic cultures favour the fulfilment of personal desires over those of the group and their decisions are determined by the individual attitudes and careful cost-benefit calculations. This was confirmed as most British tourists agreed that, although reaching an intra-group consensus was important, they would still try to push hard their personal preferences.

Pizam and Sussmann (1995) and Woodside *et al.* (2011) recognise that collectivist cultures tend to travel in groups to fulfil their desire to socialise with their in-groups as this provides them with a sense of social identity and security. Most of the British participants admitted they would prefer traveling alone due to the freedom solitary travel brings, although this was not always feasible due to family commitments. Instead, all Venezuelan participants favoured group travel as holidays were seen as an occasion to spend quality time with family or friends:

'No, I'd never do that [solitary travel] because I don't like it. How horrible it'd be to see places and have no one around to discuss it or to share. I need to communicate'
(Participant 2V)

'I'd actually love to do that [solitary travel] because, as I said, I like going alone sometimes, I don't mind. Because you can basically do what you want' (Participant 6UK)

Jackson (2001) and Ng *et al.* (2007; 2009) find that tourists from collectivist cultures are more likely to choose destinations that possess different cultures to theirs as they can easily

develop relationships with the host while tourists from individualistic societies tend to choose culturally alike destinations to facilitate better interaction with the host. The majority of both Venezuelan and British participants agreed they would favour destinations with a different culture to their own due to this being an interesting learning experience. This partially contradicts the findings of previous research. However, what was confirmed is that Venezuelan tourists would prefer exploring unknown destinations in groups as to reduce the uncertainty levels that this experience may bring. This is attributed to the high UAI score of Venezuela and will be discussed in section 4.4.

'I find it really interesting going to the unknown. I really enjoy, like, trying new food and, when you go away on a holiday and they have different dances, it's really interesting to see because when you're at home you see the same things every day, when you go out you can see completely different things' (Participant 7UK)

'I love it [travelling to an unknown destination] because I like learning from those cultures, trying new things, seeing different things. In fact, we try to travel to places with different cultures most of the time' (Participant 9V)

Additionally, Kim and Lee (2000 cited by Manrai and Manrai 2011) establish that destination novelty motivates individualistic cultures to visit while collectivist cultures are attracted by the destinations that enable them to spend quality time with their in-groups. Most British participants agreed they would value holidays with innovative or different experiences

which partially explains the reason for why they prefer destinations that are culturally different. The Venezuelan participants confirmed that they would not only look for the different experience at a destination, but also ensure this experience is valued by other group members. This is thus in line with the outcome of previous research:

'You don't go to a place to isolate yourself with your family from the world but you're there WITH [emphasised by the participant] your family. For instance, when we went to the US, I thought it was pleasurable to see my parents amazed with things they had never seen before, making it a better experience' (Participant 5V)

4.3. The influence of masculinity on tourist destination choice

Although Jackson (2001) does not detect a major influence of masculinity on tourist destination choice, Reisinger (2009) and Woodside *et al.* (2011) argue that masculine societies are success-driven and favour materialism; subsequently, they view travel, especially travel to unknown and exotic destinations, as a good investment. This study supports this latter proposition as the majority of Venezuelan and British participants admitted they would happily invest excess money in holidays, seeing this as an indicator of success and as an opportunity to enrich personal experience:

'I'd always be going on holidays and getting to go around the world because I think those are unique experiences that other material items do not provide you with. So,

you get to learn about other cultures and other interesting things. So, I believe travelling is a very enriching experience from all perspectives' (Participant 2V)

'[If I had spare money], I'd go on holidays because it's probably harder to find time to go on holidays than it is to buy a property. And, definitely, I'd go somewhere that's expensive and you've got like Michelin star restaurants and you're dining in the nice places, so you kind of feel that you sort of made it. It'll make you feel like you've achieved something because you went there instead of going to a small Greek cottage' (Participant 6UK)

4.4. The influence of uncertainty avoidance on tourist destination choice

Litvin *et al.* (2004) suggest that monetary risk is one of the prime risks that high UAI cultures worry about when travelling abroad. This study confirmed this standpoint; furthermore, it identified travel costs as an overarching factor in tourist decision-making that stretches beyond the influence of culture. Jackson (2001) claims that tourists from high UAI cultures tend to reduce the uncertainty of traveling to an unknown destination by increasing the pre-planning effort. This enables them to visit cultures that are different to their own as uncertainties are managed by careful pre-planning. They are also more likely to purchase packaged escorted tours as found by Ng *et al.* (2009) and Woodside *et al.* (2011). This study provides further empirical evidence to support this as the majority of Venezuelan tourists admitted they would always prefer to well pre-plan/pre-book their holidays in order to reduce risks or minimise uncertainties. This gives them an opportunity to travel to unfamiliar and culturally-different destinations. This

is in contrast to British tourists who claimed that the availability of holiday packages would not affect their final destination choice; in fact, holiday packages were seen by some as an unnecessary restriction to the freedom which traveling brings. This is in line with recent UK tourism statistics that indicate that independent bookings dominate the market (Mintel 2016):

'When we're travelling to Egypt, we purchased a holiday package because of the political and safety issues they have there. This is to evade those risks we purchased a holiday package so if that holiday package had not been available at that time we'd have probably gone elsewhere' (Participant 4V)

'I don't think it will sway my choice that much. I think I'd rather go to a destination that I want. The destination is more important than having a pre-booked package'
(Participant 3UK)

Money and Crotts (2004) and Reisinger and Crotts (2009) argue that tourists from high UAI cultures stay at a destination for shorter periods of time as to manage the ambiguities and lower the risks that a longer holiday can bring. This was not confirmed throughout this study as both the Venezuelan and British mostly agreed they would travel for an average of one to two weeks and no relationship was found with regard to destination choice. However, the UAI dimension seems to affect the stage of the tourist decision-making process which deals with information search. Most Venezuelans agreed they would use the Internet to explore a destination they would like to visit, but they would also ask friends/family as these are seen as

more reliable information sources. This is done to reduce risks and uncertainties attributed to the impersonal and often biased travel advice the Internet provides. Conversely, most British participants preferred searching for travel information online and little concern was expressed in regard of this information being untrue or biased. This is in line with statistical data from Mintel (Mintel 2016) showing that the internet represents the main source of holiday information for British holidaymakers. This finding can be partially attributed to the low UAI score of the UK which supports Litvin *et al.* (2004) who posit that tourists from high UAI cultures tend to acquire information from known and trustable sources, such as personal networks, while low UAI cultures utilise travel guides or marketing dominated sources, such as the Internet:

'On the internet, when I'm looking for specific destinations and then I try to look for my friends' and family's reviews... because I believe usually my friends and family may have similar standards and expectations than me, so it'll be safer to follow their recommendations than those online' (Participant 5V)

'I'd look for travel advice on the internet. Yeah, TripAdvisor or the like. Because of the reviews you can get and it gives you the opportunity to find the best deal'
(Participant 5UK)

Ghauri and Usunier (2003) claim that high UAI cultures are risk averse as they tend to experience anxiety in unpredictable situations while in low UAI cultures uncertainties are well tolerated; tourists from these cultures are innovative as they allow for new experiences to occur

easily (De Mooij and Hofstede 2002). Most Venezuelan participants established that they would require extensive information about a destination prior to travel so that they could plan ahead to control uncertainties. In contrast, the majority of the British did not express any concerns about travelling to an unknown destination as they would enjoy improvising and exploring it upon arrival; as a result, they would not do much research prior to departure, thus highlighting their low UAI score:

'It takes me long to research, even a month, I'd say, because I prefer to have everything well planned and for that I look for so much information' (Participant 6V)

Reisinger (2009) finds that high UAI cultures tend to be loyal to known destinations as this reduces risks while low UAI cultures look for novelty. This study did not support this argument as both Venezuelans and British expressed preference towards new, previously unseen, destinations. In the case of Venezuela, this can be partially explained by their high MAS and PDI scores (Figure 2) which provides them with a more materialistic sense of innovation and higher status. They also tend to travel in groups (see section 4.2) which suggest that the risk of travelling to a novel destination can be offset by selecting reliable travel companions. Reisinger (2009) argues that low UAI cultures make quicker travel decisions. This was supported herewith as most Venezuelans claimed it would take them between one and two months to make a decision on where to go which is due to the time spent on research and in-group discussions. Conversely, most British participants admitted they would make quick travel decisions as they liked being spontaneous.

4.5. The influence of long-term orientation and indulgence on tourist destination choice

Gholipour and Tajaddini (2014) and Manrai and Manrai (2011) posit that LTO and indulgence remain under-researched in terms of their effect on tourist behaviour. As the LTO dimension deals with time, an attempt was made to explore the effect of travel time to a destination on tourist destination choice. Contrasting views were recorded across cultures. All Venezuelan participants (STO culture) agreed that time would not affect their destination choice and they would be prepared to travel longer should the chosen destination provide them with desired experience. Instead, most British participants (LTO culture) affirmed that they would prefer shorter flights and departures from local airports to spend more time at a destination.

This contradicts the findings of Lord *et al.* (2008) who establish that tourists from STO cultures give extra consideration to the time required to reach a destination, implying that long-haul flights should be avoided while nearby destinations preferred. Further research into the effect of this cultural dimension is required to validate the outcome of this study. In terms of indulgence, Venezuela and Britain were both found to be highly indulgent cultures. This is reflected in the gratification and enjoyment attributed to destination choice by this study's participants:

'Pleasure and satisfaction are the main purposes of my holidays' (Participant 1V)

'Enjoyment and relaxation would be the main influence for me to travel' (Participant 8UK)

To investigate the effect of this cultural dimension further, a probe was made into the appeal of dark tourism which is currently on the rise globally despite its controversial nature (Stone 2005 cited by Hartmann 2014). The idea of taking a dark tourism tour was rejected by all with participants claiming that holidays were for enjoyment, rather than for thinking of fatality. This is in line with Gholipour and Tajaddini (2014) who suggest that tourists from indulgent cultures seek gratification from holidays, fulfilling the need for having fun and enjoying life which implies that in both Venezuela and the UK enjoyment plays a crucial role in destination choice:

'No, I don't think it [dark tourism] will appeal to me because it'd be somehow depressing and for me the main purpose of a holiday is to enjoy and be happy and dark tourism seems too dark for me' (Participant 3V)

'No, I wouldn't like to go there [dark tourism destinations] because I'm not really into that side of history and it's, like, too dark and holidays are more to go and enjoy yourself and cheer yourself up' (Participant 1UK)

5. Conclusion

It has been well established that consumer behaviour can be influenced by national culture. This is particularly true for tourism as this is the industry which facilitates cross-cultural interaction and is characterised by a complex consumer decision-making process. It is therefore

paramount to understand the cultural background of tourists and study its effect on their destination choice. This will aid tourism management and policy-making in better understanding of the target markets. Despite its importance, research on the impact of national culture on tourist destination choice is scant, especially in relation to empirical studies undertaken in chosen geographies.

This project critically evaluated the cultural distance in tourist consumption between Venezuela and the UK by utilising the Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework for a comparative analysis. The Hofstede's framework was applied to aid in predicting how tourists decide on which destination to visit and how to organise their travel. It was established that Venezuela and the UK hold very distinct cultures that are very influential on their destination choice patterns. It was found that national cultures affect not only tourist destination choice prior to travel, but also tourist consumption behaviour during and post travel. It was revealed however that destination choice is underpinned by the cultural background of tourists the most. Although final destination choice depends upon individual careful assessment of the diverse attributes and the perceived utility of each destination, this exploratory study found that national culture may contribute to this complex assessment process, thus calling for better understanding of the scope and extent of this contribution in subsequent research.

The effect of culture on tourist destination choice in Venezuela and the UK can be presented in the form of a pictorial diagram (Figure 3). Here, cost is a major overarching factor in tourist decision-making that goes beyond culture while the IDV and UAI dimensions are the most influential in destination selection. These and other Hofstede's dimensions determine the destination preference structure of tourists, the influence of social groups, travel information search and analysis, and the way how tourists perceive risks. Ultimately, national culture affects

the overall tourist motivation to travel and shapes the final choice made prior to going on holidays. The effect of national culture persists during and after holidays which had substantial implications for the design of policy-making and managerial interventions. These should aim at capitalising upon the knowledge on the national culture effect in order to develop more effective marketing campaigns and destination management strategies. For example, the marketing campaigns for tourists from Venezuela should account for their, possibly national culture induced, preference for group travel and packaged tours. These preferences are different from those demonstrated by tourists from the UK, suggesting the marketing campaigns for these two countries should be designed accordingly.

In terms of future research needs, more attention should be paid to the empirical investigation of the role national culture plays in destination choice of tourists from different countries in South America, Africa and Asia. This is due to the envisaged growth of these emerging tourism markets. To better understand how culture affects the decision-making process of outbound tourists from these countries, future research should utilise confirmatory, rather than exploratory research techniques, such as large-scale quantitative consumer surveys, to generate results of better generalisability and representativeness. A subsequent comparative analysis across national cultures will enable identification of major trends in consumption patterns.

[Insert Figure 3 here]

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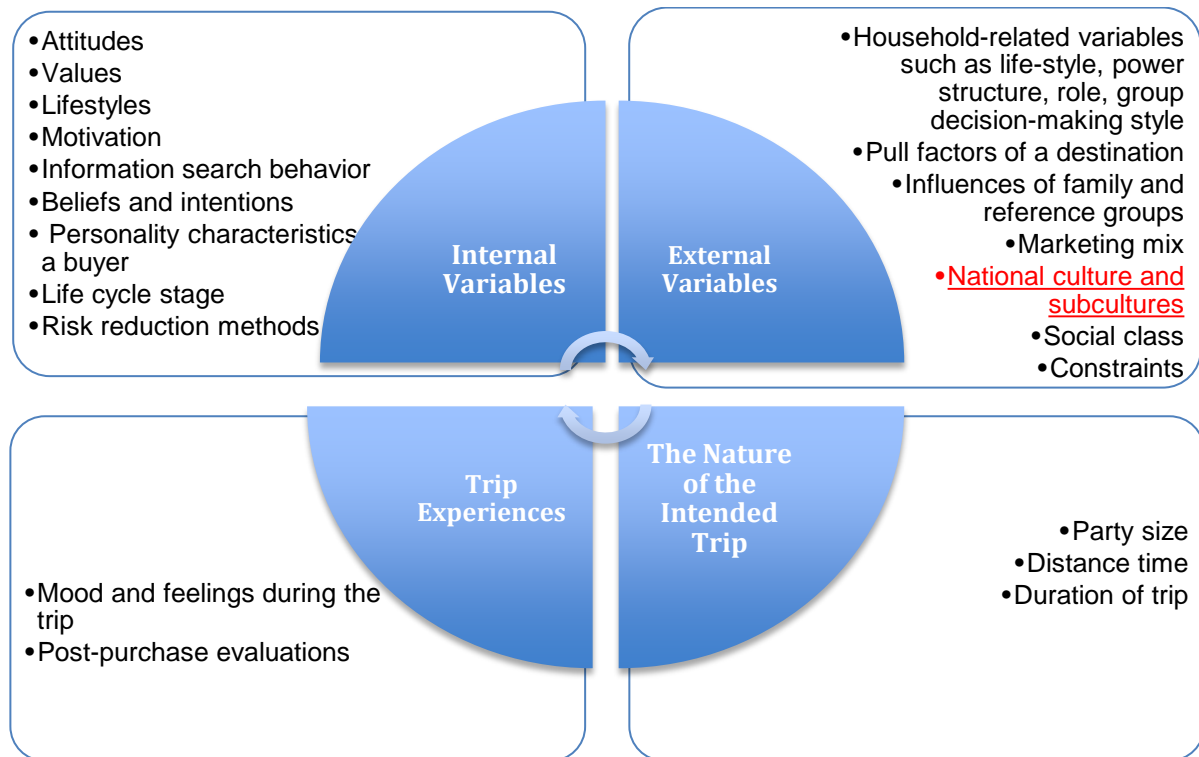


Figure 1. Key variables that affect tourist destination choice. Source: Amended from Sirakaya and Woodside (2005).

Comparison between the UK and Venezuela

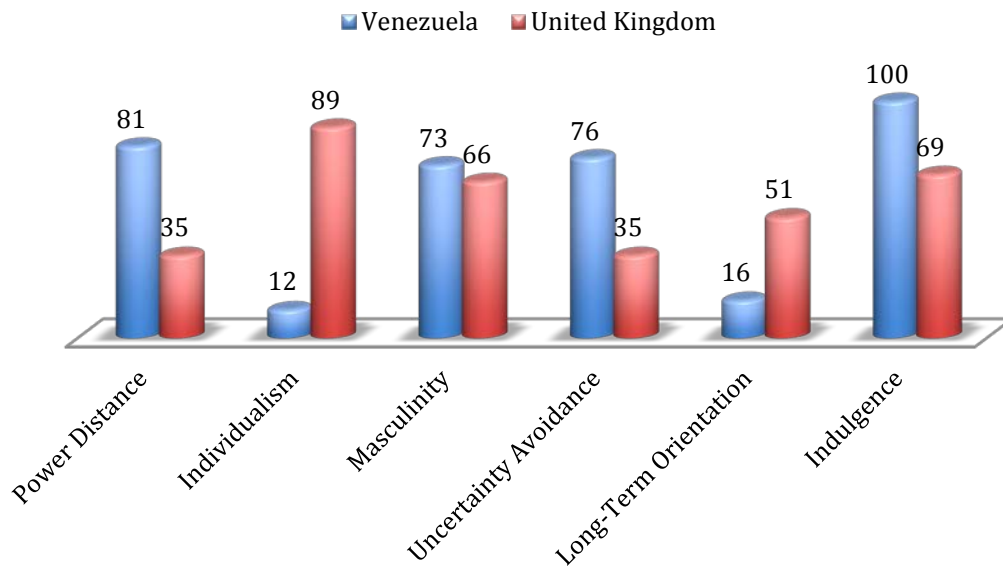


Figure 2. The UK versus Venezuela according to Hofstede's cultural framework. Source: Hofstede (2015).

COST

Pre-holiday Behaviour: Destination Choice
Behaviour During the Holiday
Post-holiday Behaviour

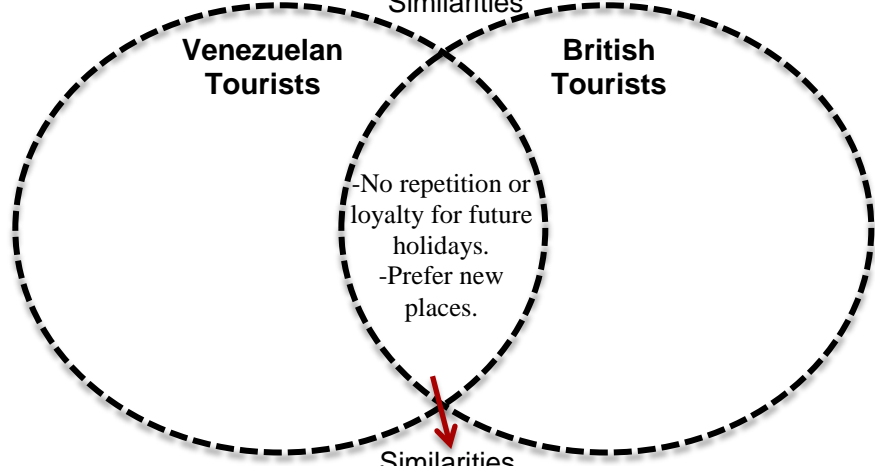
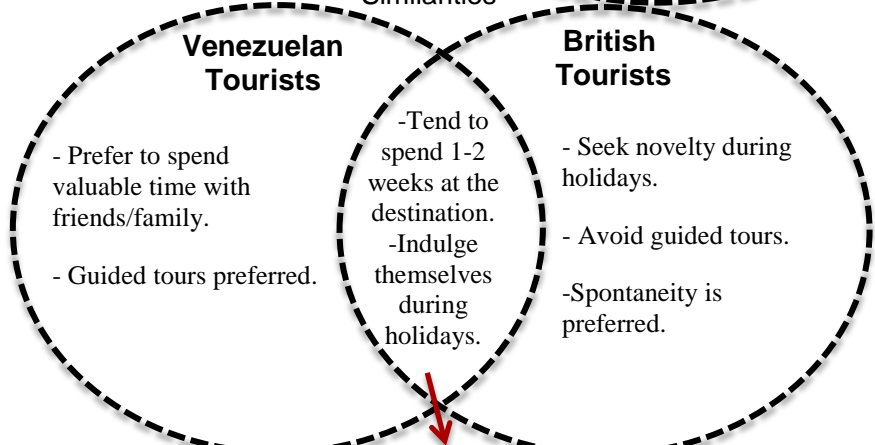


Figure 3. The effect of culture on destination choice of Venezuelan and British tourists.

Table 1. Major cultural frameworks. Source: Author's own compilation.

Framework	Dimensions	Description
Hofstede (1967-1973)	Power distance	The extent and acceptance of unequal distribution of power.
	Individualism	The extent the individual is emphasised over the group.
	Masculinity	The extent of emphasis on competitiveness, assertiveness, achievement, and money.
	Uncertainty avoidance	The extent people are comfortable dealing with the unknown.
	Long-term orientation	The extent of emphasis on thrift and perseverance
	Indulgence	The extent to which different societies allow the gratification of basic human desires, specifically with regard to enjoying life and having fun.
Schwartz (1988-1992)	Conservatism	The extent the status quo is emphasised.
	Intellectual autonomy	The extent of emphasis on curiosity, creativity, and independent intellectual ideas.
	Affective autonomy	The extent of emphasis on affective stimulation and hedonism.
	Hierarchy	A society's acceptance of unequal distribution of power.
	Mastery	A society's desire to control its own environment.
	Egalitarian commitment	The desire to forfeit selfish interests in favour of the group.
	Harmony	Ability to harmonize with nature.
Trompenaars (1980s-1990s)	Universalism – Particularism	Does a universal set of rules always apply or can cases be dealt with on an individual basis?
	Individualism– Communitarianism	Society's emphasis of the individual or the community.
	Neutral – Emotional	The amount of feelings that is deemed acceptable to display publicly.
	Specific – Diffuse	The extent we engage others in specific areas of life.
	Achievement – Ascription	The extent certain members of society are given higher status.
	Attitude towards time	How members of a society view the past, present, and future?
	Attitude towards environment	Do we have an urge and ability to control nature, or does nature control us?
Hall and Hall (1960s)	High- and Low-context	How information that surrounds and event is transmitted across the society?
	Monochronic vs. Polychronic	How members of a society perceive time?
GLOBE (1990s)	Uncertainty avoidance	The extent uncertainty is avoided by relying on established social norms.
	Power distance	The extent and acceptance of unequal distribution of power.
	Institutional collectivism	The degree collective distribution of resources is rewarded.
	In-group collectivism	The degree individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in society.
	Gender egalitarianism	The degree the society minimizes gender role differences.
	Assertiveness	The degree individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships.
	Future orientation	The degree the society engages in future planning, investing, and delaying gratification.
	Performance orientation	The degree individuals are rewarded for performance improvements.
	Humane orientation	The degree individuals are rewarded for being fair, altruistic, friendly, and kind.
Lewis (1990s)	Linear-actives	Those who plan, schedule, organise, pursue action chains, do one thing at a time.
	Multi-active	Those who do many things at once, planning their priorities not according to a time schedule, but according to the relative thrill
	Reactive	Those who prioritise courtesy and respect, listening quietly and calmly to their interlocutors and reacting carefully to the other side

Table 2. Participants' profiles.

Venezuelan Participants (V)				British Participants (UK)			
Participant	Gender	Age Range	Marital Status	Participant	Gender	Age Range	Marital Status
1V	Female	50-59	Divorced	1UK	Female	30-39	Single
2V	Female	30-39	Married	2UK	Female	60-69	Divorced
3V	Female	40-49	Single	3UK	Female	50-59	Single
4V	Female	20-29	Single	4UK	Female	20-29	Single
5V	Female	20-29	Single	5UK	Female	40-49	In a relationship
6V	Male	30-39	Married	6UK	Male	20-29	Single
7V	Male	30-39	Married	7UK	Male	60-69	Married
8V	Male	60-69	Married	8UK	Male	50-59	Married
9V	Male	30-39	Married	9UK	Male	30-39	Married
10V	Male	20-29	Single	10UK	Male	40-49	Married

Table 3. Interview schedule.

Questions	Rationale
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about the last time you went on a holiday and tell me what drove your choice of destination? (e.g. due to being well-known, famous attractions, its image, friend recommendations) 2. What factors do you consider when selecting a tourist destination? (price, distance, image, visiting family or friends, etc.) 	<p>These questions were designed as icebreakers. Moreover, they enabled the participants to provide preliminary thoughts for the research that might subsequently correspond to some of the cultural dimensions being tested.</p>
Power Distance	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To what extent do you believe that visiting a well-known tourist destination provides you with a good image or status within your social group? (Why?) 	<p>Woodside et al. (2011) established that people from high PDI societies tend to visit well-known destinations or attractions. This is because visiting a famous destination enables high PDI tourists to show others that they are engaged in unique experiences that people back in their country have not experienced as to reinforce and demonstrate their high status (Reisinger(2009).</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Who is the main decision maker when it comes to selecting a tourist destination? (e.g. yourself, the head of the family, husband, parents, etc.) 	<p>Reisinger (2009) claims that in high PDI cultures travel decisions are usually made by the head of the family as they respect seniority unlike low PDI cultures.</p>
Individualism	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Tell me a bit more about your process of reaching a destination decision. (Is it usually achieved through consensus or on an individual basis, how many people are involved? Why?) 	<p>Reisinger (2009) proposes that final decisions are achieved through consensus in collectivistic societies as to preserve the harmony of the group, while individualistic societies make decisions on an individual basis.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Who do you normally travel with? 	<p>Pizam and Sussmann (1995) recognised that collectivist cultures tend to travel in groups as to fulfil their necessity to socialise with their in-group or people similar to them, providing them with a sense of identity and security in an unknown culture, unlike individualistic societies.</p>

<p>7. Tell me what do you think about the situation of going on a leisure holiday alone? Why?</p>	<p>Woodside et al. (2011) proposed that the immediate travel party size is of two or more people in collectivist cultures (including friends and/or family) as to gain social approval.</p>
<p>8. How do you feel about travelling to a holiday destination that has a completely different culture to your own? Why?</p>	<p>Jackson (2001) established that tourists from collectivist societies are more likely to choose destinations that possess different cultures to theirs. This is because they can easily develop relationships with the host and they also tend to travel in groups, while tourists from individualistic societies will tend to choose culturally alike host destinations and this is to facilitate their interaction with the host (Ng et al. 2007; 2009).</p>
<p>9. For what purpose do you visit a holiday destination? (Is it because of the innovative experience it can provide you with or just to meet friends/ family to spend valuable time with them? Why?)</p>	<p>Kim and Lee (2000 cited by Manrai and Manrai 2011) established that individualistic cultures tend to be motivated to visit a destination by the novelty it will provide them with.</p>
<p>10. Describe what is your attitude towards selecting a destination? For instance, do you try to put your personal desires first or those of the group you may be travelling with? Why?</p>	<p>Lord et al. (2008) claimed that people from individualistic cultures tend to favour the satisfaction of their personal desires instead of those of the group when selecting a destination and their decisions are determined by their individual attitudes and cost-benefit calculations so needs are recognised according to their own needs.</p>
<p>Masculinity</p>	
<p>11. Describe what your investment priority would be if you had a considerable amount of money? (a holiday or a tangible item like an iPhone, pc, etc.)</p>	<p>Woodside et al. (2011) proposed that masculine societies tend to favour materialism and the purchase of tangible items as they are success-oriented.</p>
<p>12. To what extent do you believe that an exotic or luxurious destination can provide you with an image of success?</p>	<p>Reisinger (2009) claimed that masculine societies are mainly motivated to travel by the material success exotic holidays or luxurious destinations can provide them with.</p>
<p>Uncertainty Avoidance</p>	

<p>13. To what extent the availability of holiday packages and pre-planning or pre-booking your holidays before departure can influence your final destination choice? (E.g. Tours).</p>	<p>Jackson (2001) found that tourists from high UAI cultures tend to reduce the uncertainty of traveling to an unknown destination by increasing the pre-planning efforts, allowing them to visit cultures that are different to their own as uncertainties are managed by pre-planning, pre-paying and pre-booking most of their trip and are also more likely to purchase packaged escorted tours (Ng et al. 2009; Woodside et al. 2011).</p>
<p>14. What is the average number of days that you usually book your holidays for at a specific destination?</p>	<p>Reisinger and Crofts (2009) argue that tourists from high UAI cultures tend to stay for shorter periods of time as to manage the ambiguities and lower the risks that a longer holiday can bring (Money and Crofts 2003).</p>
<p>15. Where do you usually look for information about the destination before selecting it? (e.g. external sources like travel guides or friends.. why?)</p>	<p>Litvin et al. (2004) suggested that tourists from high UAI societies tend to acquire information from known and trustable sources such as friends, family, tour operators and official websites.</p>
<p>16. How much background information about the destination do you require before making decisions?</p> <p>17. To what extent do you search for information on how to get from the airport to your accommodation before selecting a destination?</p> <p>17.1. How would you feel about not knowing this information prior to booking your holidays?</p>	<p>Ghauri and Usunier (2003) claimed that high UAI cultures are risk averse as they tend to experience anxiety in unstructured or unpredictable situations, while in low UAI cultures uncertainties are easily tolerated, being very innovative as they allow new events or experiences to occur easily (De Mooij and Hofstede 2002).</p>
<p>18. To what extent does familiarity with the tourist destination influences your destination choice?</p> <p>19. How long does it usually take you from the time you think you want to go on a holiday until you finally book it?</p>	<p>Reisinger (2009) claimed that high UAI cultures also tend to be more loyal to known destinations as it reduces the risk of going to an unknown place.</p>
<p>Long-Term Orientation</p>	
<p>20. To what extent would a long-haul flight to reach the tourist destination affect your final selection of the tourist destination?</p>	<p>Lord et al. (2008) established that LTO societies value more rewards that are realised over a longer period of time.</p>

Indulgence versus Restraint

21. To what extent do the gratification and enjoyment that certain destinations may provide you with influence your destination choice?
22. Dark tourism has increasingly become popular in the last decades and it involves travelling to certain locations that are related to fatality, death and agony such as 9/11 Memorial Museum, Auschwitz (Nazi concentration), Pompeii. To what extent a holiday destination of this type would apply to you?
 - 22.1. If yes: What type of gratification or enjoyment will this provide to you?

Gholipour and Tajaddini (2014) proposed that tourists from indulgent societies tend to seek gratification from their holidays, fulfilling the need of having fun and enjoying life. Therefore, these questions aim at exploring the role enjoyment plays in their decision-making.

Extra Questions

23. Which tourist destinations do you visit regularly or you have visited the most?
24. Finally, how would you describe the perfect holiday destination?

These questions were designed to conclude the topic and to grab the participants' final thoughts.

Table 4. Coding structure with themes, codes and sub-codes.

THEME	CODE	SUB-CODES
The effect of power distance	The role of (high) societal status	Strong effect
		Medium effect
		Low/No effect
	Willingness to pay for luxury holidays	Strong effect
		Medium effect
		Low/No effect
	Willingness to go to famous holiday destinations	Strong effect
		Medium effect
		Low/No effect
	Decision-making	The need to reach consensus within a group
One decides		
The effect of individualism	Destination preference and related decision-making	Group preferences
		Personal preferences/desires
	Type of destination	Visiting culturally similar destinations
		Visiting culturally diverse destinations
The effect of masculinity	Type of destination	Known and tested
		New and exotic

The effect of uncertainty avoidance	Destination research prior to visit	Intensive pre-planning
		Little planning/No plans
	Duration of stay at a destination	Short
		Long
	Intention to return/Loyalty	Low
		High
The effect of long-term orientation and indulgence	Travel distance to a destination	Short
		Long
	Desire for a specific experience at a destination	In search of gratification and fun
		In search of education and spiritual development