

Discovering Islamic Values: A Classical Grounded Theory Approach

Abstract

Purpose: Values are both an effective variable and a powerful stimulus for consumer behavior. Values are different concepts and classifications influenced by factors such as culture and religion in different societies. This paper seeks to identify the classification of values in an Islamic country's context, Iran.

Methodology: Iranian dominant values were identified through a qualitative analysis and in-depth interviews with 77 interviewees. Grounded Theory was used to identify theoretical categories that are derived from the interview data through the use of the constant comparative method.

Findings: The findings revealed three categories of hedonic, utilitarian, and Islamic spiritual values, which include 10 types of values. The third values (Islamic spiritual) were identified and defined according to the Iranian Islamic religion and ideology. Interviewees expressed their values, attitudes and behaviors within the framework of their unique value system.

Originality: This article is one of the first articles that pays special attention to Islamic spiritual values as an influential value category in the buying behaviors and intentions of Iranian consumers. Undoubtedly, identifying these values can be an introduction to studying behaviors influenced by values and a powerful tool for managers to predict and evaluate Islamic consumers' behavior and lifestyles.

Keywords: Grounded theory; hedonic values; Islamic spiritual values; Iranian value system; utilitarian values.

Introduction

In postmodernism, there is a special emphasis on differences rather than similarities: differences in traditions, lifestyles and values. Therefore, consumers in this period also consider consumption as a way to highlight their differences (Erol, 2021). The shift in marketing approach from mass marketing to product-based marketing and then consumer-oriented marketing has highlighted the need for market segmentation (James et al., 2017). Marketers need to segment the market based on demographic, geographical, and behavioral variables, thereby tailoring their marketing strategies and tactics to the target consumer segments (Sharma et al., 2020; Nugraha et al., 2022). By market segmentation, they divide the heterogeneous market into homogeneous subgroups. Each subgroup has different and specific needs and characteristics (Kucukusta and Denizci Guillet, 2016).

Of all the main variables used in segmentation studies, two groups received the most attention: psychographic variables and socio-demographic variables. Among these, socio-demographic variables are not sufficient to analyze consumer behavior because people with similar socio-demographic characteristics can have different behaviors, while psychographic variables have a significant advantage in identifying consumer groups and behavior analysis (Kabadayi and Paksoy, 2016; Díaz et al., 2018). Psychographic variables such as attitudes, interests, beliefs, and especially values and lifestyles show more meaningful information about consumer behaviors (Kucukusta and Denizci Guillet, 2016). From the wide range of products and services, consumers often choose goods and services that are commensurate with their values and reflect their lifestyle. In fact, values and lifestyles are the system of consumer internal preferences that shape all their activities (such as consumption) (Gzgül, 2010: 120). According to Rokeach (1973), values are firm and enduring beliefs that guide human behavior and through which one prefers certain behaviors and goals to others. In other words, values are abstract ideas of the individual that distinguish right from wrong in determining goals and behaviors (Erol, 2021). Thus, values are of particular importance because they influence a wide range of behaviors (such as consumer decision-making processes and attitudes) (Lee et al., 2015).

Giddens (1991) highlights the importance of the concept of value in the social sciences by making it the most fundamental component of culture. Culture is "beliefs and values" and "the way things are done and shared". According to Der and Laurent (1989), cultures develop within countries as the product of national patterns of childhood, experience and education, religion, geography, and language. In addition, culture can be divided into five levels: international, national, regional, industrial and organizational. Significant cultural insights into local conditions are needed to understand the processes and philosophies of national models. National differences can have the greatest impact on value orientations (Liu and Wilson, 2011). Therefore, due to these differences, values should be studied in different countries in accordance with national culture. Undoubtedly, the value system identified in the West with Western culture will be different from the values identified in the East with Eastern culture.

Although several studies have been conducted on the importance and impact of values in other countries, there are few studies in Iran. Iran is a country in Southwest Asia and the second largest country in the Middle East. The population of this country is over 83 million and it has a society with different ethnicities and cultures. The dominant ethnic and cultural group of this country is derived from its Persian speakers. The predominant religion of the country is Islam. Despite the high attractiveness of the Iranian commercial market, a comprehensive and unique value system for Iranian consumers has not been identified. Previous studies have generally tested and applied the value systems (LOV, VALS, RVS, etc.) provided by researchers from non-Islamic countries.

Given the importance of market segmentation and the prominent role of values in the typology of consumer lifestyles, as well as cultural, religious and ideological differences of people in different countries, the purpose of this article is to identify and develop the dominant value framework of Iranians that may differ from other frameworks (Díaz et al., 2018; Husić-Mehmedović et al., 2015) provided to date. Identifying these values is an

effective step for future studies towards Iranian lifestyle typology and segmentation of the Iranian market as a large and pristine market in Asia.

Literature Review

The concept and importance of values

Consumers consider their consumption as a reflection of their underlying values (Rahman, Stumpf, and Reynolds, 2014). According to Schwartz's (1992) values theory, values are "desirable, trans-situational goal, varying in importance that serve as guiding principles in peoples' lives" (Rahman and Reynolds, 2017). The predominant role of values in all aspects of life (Sony and Ferguson, 2017) has motivated empirical research in a number of social science disciplines. Values are a powerful explanation for human behavior and influence behavior as well. Extensive research has addressed the importance of values, especially their effects on various consumer behaviors (Chung, 2015).

Previous studies show that differences in values are significantly related to differences in a variety of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes including: 8), religion (Ilter et al., 2017), choice of leisure activities (Schubert, Sohre and Ströbel, 2020.), healthy lifestyle (Bryndin and Bryndina, 2017), purchase intention (Anderson et al., 2014; Ozturk et al., 2016), green consumer behavior (Fraj and Martinez, 2006; Rahman and Reynolds, 2017), green lifestyle behaviors (Sony and Ferguson, 2017), Consumer Online Purchase Intention (Chugh, 2020), online fashion retail market (Dahana et al., 2019), sustainable consumption (Erol, 2021), cinema consumers (Díaz et al., 2018), Tourism (Noor et al., 2020), Halal Lifestyle (Sukardani, Setianingrum and Wibisono, 2018).

Generic value classification studies

There have been various classifications attempting to gather the generality of the value system, its relevance, formation, and changing process. For example, Rokeach (1973) presented two groups of values: "terminal (representing the goals people would like to achieve); and instrumental (representing the means or preferred ways of behaving to obtain the first ones)" (James, 2012).

One of the more intriguing developments in value methodology in recent years has been the Values and Life Style (VALS) methodology developed at SRI International by Mitchell (1983) based mainly on Maslow's (1954) need hierarchy and the concept of social character (Nugraha et al., 2022). Through statistical and theoretical means, 34 questions were identified as useful in classifying people into one out of nine lifestyle groups. These questions include various specific and general attitude statements and several demographic items. Lifestyle groups in the United States include: survivors (4 percent), sustainers (7 percent), belongers (35 percent), emulators (9 percent), achievers (22 percent), I-am-me (5 percent), experiential (7 percent), societally conscious (9 percent), and integrated (2 percent) (Erol, 2021).

List of Values (LOV), developed by researchers at the University of Michigan Survey Research Center, is an alternative to VALS (Begunca, 2016). LOV is theoretically based

on Feather's (1975), Maslow's (1954), and Rokeach's (1973) work on values to assess “adaptation to various roles through value fulfillment”. It is most closely tied to social adaptation theory (Kahle, 2013; Romo-Muñoz et al., 2018). Study participants see a list of nine values including: self-respect, security, warm relationships with others, sense of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, sense of belonging, being well respected, fun and enjoyment in life, and excitement. These values are used to classify people on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy. In LOV method, study participants are asked to identify their two most important values or to rank values (Kucukusta and Denizci Guillet, 2016; Begunca, 2016). Homer and Kahle (1988) proposed another classification that regroups some of Rokeach's values as: 1) internally oriented: self-fulfillment, emotion, sense of success, dignity and 2) externally oriented: sense of property, self-respect, safety (Fraj and Martinez, 2006).

Within this framework, researchers wonder if it would be possible to develop a universal set of values recognisable in different cultures. Schwartz (1994: 21) differentiates between the following 10 values: conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, and security. These values are typically depicted as categories forming a circular continuum. This circle includes two dimensions related to major motivational forces. The first dimension expresses the conflict between openness to change and conservation values. The second dimension directly corresponds with self-serving and other serving motives, as it includes self-transcendence values on one end of the continuum and self-enhancement on the other end. Self-transcendence values consist of universalism and benevolence, both of which represent the human desire to make the world a better place to live (Zasuwa, 2016). With respect to self-enhancement values, their common denominator is that they attach great importance to personal well-being and superiority over others. This category of higher values includes power and achievement (De Groot, 2008; Rahman and Reynolds, 2019; Zasuwa, 2016).

Table I depicts some recent studies on identifying the classification of values based on LOV and VALS value systems in different countries. Most of the studies presented in Table I, attempt to localize the globally identified value categories, in their own country, based on the religion and culture.

[Table I here]

Value studies in Islamic countries

Religion is an important cultural factor, and one of the most universal and influential social institutions that have significant influence on people's attitudes, values and behaviors at both the individual and societal levels. Measures for measuring religiosity are defined. Some of the existing scales used for Christians, although they may contain concepts and items that can be used by Muslims, but in general, these scales are culture bound and inappropriate for measuring religiosity among Muslims. Therefore, the study of Muslim values has recently attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners from around the world. This increase in attention can be explained by the increasing economic, commercial, cultural and political power of Muslims in countries with Muslim populations, as well as the emergence of a new and attractive class of Muslim consumers in an effort to balance their Islamic values with tempting offerings of global markets (Ilter et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, corporate executives, even Western companies, must have a clear

understanding of the Muslim consumers and Muslim entrepreneurs who compete with them, so that they approach each market with a view to its specific characteristics (competitive, moral, socio-historical and political context) (Sandıkçı, 2011; Siyavooshi et al., 2019).

Table II shows some of the studies conducted in the last 5 years in Islamic countries on the dominant values of Muslims and their impact on various areas of business. The results of these studies prove the importance of recognizing and uniqueness of these values in order to develop the frontiers of knowledge.

[Table II here]

Islam combines the life of the world and the hereafter in a balanced manner as described in the Quran. God has endowed human life with two main things, both of which have their own purposes: physical needs and spiritual needs. Physical needs (food, drink, jewelry, beauty, etc.) are related to material satisfaction and spiritual needs (worship, peace, compassion and love) are related to social, intellectual and otherworldly satisfaction. (Amaliah et al., 2015). Therefore, Iranian people as a Muslim nation believe in principles other than hedonic and utilitarian values, which are called *spiritual values* in Islam. Utilitarian value can be defined as “an overall judgment of functional benefits and sacrifices” (Overby and Lee, 2006). From a utilitarian point of view, consumers are essentially task-oriented and rational in their behavior. Hedonic value, alternatively, is more subjective and personal than utilitarian value (Yang, 2010). In a hedonic perspective, consumers are looking to derive pleasure, such as fun and playfulness from the use of a product or service, they desire entertainment and consider the purchasing process an enjoyable experience in which completing the transaction is not required (Anderson et al., 2014; Ozturk et al., 2016). The place of spiritual values in Islam is related to the spiritual dimension of human existence and his/her relationship with God and human endeavor to reach God as his/her ultimate goal. Concepts such as worship, self-sacrifice, fear along with respect for God, morality, prayer, thanksgiving, nearness to God are examples of this category (Ivanova et al., 2021).

Many researchers, like Williams (1979), have addressed theoretical arguments suggesting that values have a causal influence on subsequent behaviors. Williams maintains that explicit and fully-conceptualized values become the criteria for “judgment, preferences, and choice”. Nevertheless, values function "as if" they were grounds for behavioral decisions when they are implicit and unreflective. Values influence attitudes and behaviors in a wide range of contexts (Schwartz, 2013). However, it is explicitly acknowledged that religious values govern the daily activities of followers of a particular religion and affect the economic, legal, social and political aspects of their lives (Rehan et al., 2019). Whereas the present study seeks to identify and discover the dominant Iranian-Islamic values and a review of the theoretical literature has shown that past studies and value systems identified in other countries cannot be a complete set of values for Iranians; Therefore, collecting data from the Iranian people is essential to discovering a value system compatible with Iranian culture and beliefs in the context of Iranian-Islamic religion, culture, and ideology. Identifying these values is a big step in analyzing and predicting the attitudes and behaviors

of the Iranian people, the results of which will certainly be very effective for managers and researchers in various fields and disciplines.

Methodology

Research design

Regarding the nature of the research question and the method for undertaking it, the design of this study is based on the classic grounded theory (CGT). Since the late 1980s, classic Grounded theory (CGT) has become the dominant qualitative approach in many fields of study with different approaches and for different purposes (Matavire and Brown, 2013; Wolfswinkel et al., 2013; Walsh et al., 2015). CGT has also been used with both qualitative and quantitative data (Walsh, 2014). Some scholars (e.g., Manuj and Pohlen, 2012) use it as a full methodological ‘‘package’’ while others (e.g., Lawrence and Tar, 2013; Amsteus, 2014) use only some of its precepts (e.g., as a coding procedure). A major differentiating feature of CGT is the emphasis on the close examination of empirical data prior to focused reading in the literature (Evans, 2013; Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021). By doing so, previous findings are adapted to the outcomes of the study in question, rather than developing preconceptions based on the extant literature that can influence research design and data interpretation. Also, by commencing with the phenomenon or behavior rather than theories, there is less chance that the research outcomes will be theoretically removed from the needs of the subject under study (Evans, 2013; Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021). CGT involves identifying theoretical categories that are derived from the data through the use of the constant comparative method (Glaser et al., 1968; Evans, 2013). The constant comparative process involves three types of comparisons: (1) incident to incident for the emergence of concepts, (2) concepts to more incidents for further theoretical elaboration, saturation, and densification of concepts, and (3) concepts to concepts for their emergent theoretical integration and through theoretical coding (Evans, 2013). Although interview and observational data might be the types most typically seen in our work, GTM does not call for a specific form of data, and practitioners use a wide variety of strategies to gather theirs, including both individual and focus group interviews, document collection, observations, mixed methods, and more (Belgrave and Seide, 2019).

Sampling and data analysis

Qualitative interviewing, which has been referred to as ‘‘nondirective, unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended interviewing’’ (Taylor et al., 2015), is flexible and dynamic in contrast to structured interviewing. We use the phrase *in-depth interviewing* to refer to this qualitative research method. By in-depth qualitative interviewing, we mean face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words. As Seidman (2013) noted, ‘‘At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience’’ (Seidman, 2013). The in-depth interview is modeled after a conversation between equals rather than a formal question-and-answer exchange (Taylor et al., 2015). Since the present study seeks to identify and discover the dominant Iranian values and the

review of theoretical literature has shown that past studies and identified value systems in other countries cannot be a complete set of values for Iranians; It is therefore necessary to collect data from the Iranian people to discover a value system that is consistent with Iranian culture and beliefs, and GT (due to the features described above) is the way that will provide value system derived from the data collected through in-depth interviews.

In this context, the method of collecting data was in-depth interviews. We conducted 77 in-depth interviews lasting 1 to 2 hours each, between 5th May and 20th June, 2018. Interviewees were between 20 and 55 years of age, urban, and approximately equally male and female (45% male and 55% female). The interviews were carried out in a comfortable and intimate environment, and the interviewees were assured of their personal privacy. The interviewer had a set of open-ended questions before the interview, and each interviewee answered approximately 20 questions during the interview. However, the number of questions might be raised in proportion to the responses. So as to discover the hidden views of the interviewee. The general framework of the questions was formulated in such a way as to cover different aspects of personality, morality, beliefs, interests and concerns of the person, and the design of open-ended questions was helpful in this direction. For example, in some questions, interviewees were asked to define a word or phrase from their own perspective (right action, ideal life), some questions measured the interests of the interviewer (leisure, travel, media) and in some others, the interviewee was asked to describe his/her behavior in a particular situation (what would you do if a car on the road needed help?). The criterion for selecting the interviewees was the snowball method and the sample size was determined by the theoretical saturation method.

In order to analyze the data obtained from the interviews, MAXQDA10 software was used. The advantage of using this software was its special feature in Persian text analysis. As recommended by many scholars (Bryant, 2017; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin and Strauss, 2014; Glaser et al., 1968; Gregory, 2010) and in order to achieve a high level of abstraction and better conceptualization, data collection and analysis took place simultaneously. During coding, the process of comparing and reciprocating codes, concepts, categories, and even smallest pieces of data was done on a regular basis.

After collecting the interview data and converting them into textual data, this data was entered into MAXQDA10 software for qualitative analysis. MAXQDA10 organizes data by categorizing data and making connections between related quotes, identifying key information with codes, colors, symbols and shapes, fast drag-and-drop encoding (auto-encoding), organizing opinions and theories in the form of memos that stick to every part of the research and quickly retrieving coded sections for continuous review and comparison of codes.

Results and Discussion

As shown in Figure 1, the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews identified 10 types of values. These values are grouped into three categories: utilitarian values, hedonic values, and Islamic spiritual values. We identify and define the third (Islamic spiritual) values with respect to the Iranian Islamic religion and ideology.

Islamic value system	Utilitarian values	Self-fulfillment	Perfectionism	Security		
		- Job & educational achievement - Gradual improvement - Growth & advancement	- Self-esteem - Long sightedness - Counseling	- Conservatism - National security - Family security		
		Freedom	Being well-respected	Enjoyment & excitement		
	Hedonic values	- Democracy - Elections - Hijab	- Powerfulness - Fashion-oriented - Being approved by others	- Adventure - Diversity seeking - Travel & music		
		Islamic Spiritual values	Humanity & altruism	Patriotism	Godliness	Self-respect
			- Philanthropy - Charity - Environment	- National pride - military service - homeland	- Tawheed - God willing - Religious duties	- Independence - Equality - Justice

Figure 1. Research model based on grounded theory

After coding qualitative data, three values of self-fulfillment, perfectionism, and security in the category of utilitarian values, three values of freedom, being well-respected, enjoyment and excitement in the category of hedonic values and four values of patriotism, humanity and altruism, Godliness, self-respecting the category of Islamic spiritual values were identified. Given the hierarchy described above (value-attitude-behavior), we have identified attitudes and behaviors proportional to any value. Below, we provide a critical discussion of each value derived from the analysis of the interview data.

Utilitarian values

Self-fulfillment: Brownie and Horstmanshoff (2012) define self-fulfillment as: achieving goals and aspirations and becoming a person who strives to be. Self-fulfillment plays an important role in shaping one's goals, beliefs, and needs throughout one's life (Vyncke, 2002). The importance of self-fulfillment in one's life can increase a positive outlook or interest toward life satisfaction (Woo et al., 2016; Chang and Suttikun, 2017). Self-fulfillment is a person's empowerment of his personality, himself and his meaning. Self-actualization is the desire and effort to achieve high self-esteem and related behaviors. This is the empowerment of oneself as a person in the world, the authentication of one's own "Self " in relation to the "Not Self ". Self-actualization is achieved only in the process of interaction with people in society and in the social space. Therefore, high self-esteem and social status are the two main goals that one strives to achieve in the process of self-fulfillment (Barsukova et al., 2021).

Interviewees emphasized this value by referring to categories such as career achievement, growth in life, academic migration, career advancement, and gradual improvement. For example, Interviewee 19 discussed that “so, when I leave my work, I'm quite satisfied with

and feel that I have done a good job that day. This means progress. Little by little, step by step progress will be achieved. For example, when I work for some time and no change is not reached, I get nervous because I do not see what I want and I do not see any progress in my work. It's too bad, I'm totally depressed". Similarly, Interviewee 64 argued "progress means you have a goal and try to reach it in the short and long term. My goal is to continue my education and get into the research work. I plan for that and there is not much opportunity for this field of study in Iran, so I have to leave Iran. I am strengthening my foreign language skills and may have to do a lot of things that I do not really agree with, but I need to complete my resume". Interviewee 45 also argued "if I have a lot of money, I will do a manufacturing job, or whatever I know I can do to make me grow. Whatever it takes to make me and my community close to our goals".

Perfectionism: Perfectionism is defined by striving for perfection, setting very high standards of performance, and a tendency to Over-critical evaluation of one's behavior (Madigan, 2019). Perfectionism has attracted increasing attention from scholars over the past three decades (Joachim, 2017; Curran and Hill, 2019). Cultural changes such as more difficult social and economic conditions and increasing meritocracy – in which individuals are constantly "sorted, screened and ranked" - have actively increased perfectionism in industrialized countries (Ocampo et al., 2020). Researchers (Raesi et al, 2020) suggest that perfectionism should be viewed from two dimensions. A positive dimension is called normal perfectionism, which is characterized by high personal standards, positive evaluation of past successes, striving for excellence, positive expectations in relationships, and better performance. The other is the negative or abnormal dimension, which is characterized by issues such as excessive worry about mistakes, feeling the difference between expectations and results, hesitation about actions, fear of negative evaluation, negative consequences such as anxiety and stress, and poor self-esteem (Malazm et al., 2021).

Self-perfectionism involves very critical evaluations of the self. Perfectionism may also come from others and may appear as socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP). When perfectionism is thought to come from others, people believe that others judge them harshly and that they must show their perfection in order to gain the approval of others (Curran & Hill, 2019). For example, what advertising promotes as standards of beauty that is not realistically achievable to most people. However, many viewers of these images experience negative feelings and dissatisfaction with their appearance or body due to their inability to meet these perfectionist standards. This value is widely considered by marketers in their advertising programs (Kemp et al., 2020). Various positive and negative attitudes and behaviors were presented by the interviewees, which can be considered as rooted in perfectionism, such as personal independence, foresight, utilitarianism, greed, flattery, and selfishness. Interviewee 56 for instance argued that "if I go to an organization I want to be at the highest organizational level. I do not like being ordered by anyone. I like to implement what I have in my mind. I have the ability to manage other people. I like to be famous in my field. In my opinion, life with a lot of reputation is not hard". Interviewee 9 also discussed "I like to always learn valuable things. I want to be completer and more experienced. I do not want my life to be empty". Interviewee 3 stated in relation to his

material perfectionism “the more money I have, the better. If I already have one third of the world’s assets, I will think about getting the other part too”.

Security: Security is the state of being safe. Security can be expressed as: freedom from danger, fear or anxiety. The term security is described by different disciplines in different contexts because security is used in specific environments for example: governments seek to protect their nation through internal and national security; The private sector (i. e., business) uses the term security as “the collateral that is given, deposited, or pledged to guarantee an obligation or the payment of a debt”; Cyber experts refer to security as the protection of information and privacy in cyberspace (De Goede, 2018; Purpura, 2016). The essential role of security is to protect people, property, buildings and operations. Undoubtedly, organizations, businesses and institutions are looking for peace in the workplace so that they can achieve their goals with minimal interruption and cost. Senior executives in organizations and businesses who are aware of the importance of security for the survival of businesses influence the role of security. In such organizations, security operations are integrated with the company's tasks (such as risk management, legal, facilities, business continuity, human resources, information technology, audit and safety) (Purpura, 2016).

In the comprehensive definitions of security, the causes of insecurity are broader and include threats to socio-economic and political conditions, food, health, the environment, society, and personal safety. In such a context, policy initiatives created take into account issues beyond the traditional focus on military force and greatly reduce the emphasis on armies, if not completely replaced (Jolly and Ray, 2017). Interviewee 70 for example argued that “I think most people do not stop for help. It is the fact that if anyone in the past asked me for help, I would stop but now I do not do that, my beliefs have not changed, but some of the things you hear do not make you dare again. It may be a fraud, because in some cases there is no security”. Interviewee 17 similarly discussed that “the thought stream is not so important. If I get to know one day that I am going to suffer because of the choice of this stream or I will be deprived of things in the future, I will definitely change it. My comfort and security are more important to me than my thought stream”. In another example, interviewee 56 pointed to the importance of security for herself and her family “I am not a risk taker person. If I see that something has the slightest risk to me or my family and brings us trouble, I try not to do it at all.

Hedonic values

Freedoms: Human rights are by definition focused on the individual. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has placed special emphasis on fundamental human rights, human dignity and equal rights for men and women. All governments and organizations that adhere to this Declaration want to focus on individual rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression and thought, freedom of movement, property rights, adequate living and working conditions, and the right to enjoy a wide range of civil, political, and educational rights (Auslin, 2019). In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an international instrument, political parties, labor groups, voluntary associations and many other organizations work to ensure and protect this vital freedom and human rights (Fox and Finke, 2021). In the field of democratization, today most countries with

different religions have moved towards expanding the scope of religious freedom and guaranteeing equality for their respective religious communities (Elbasani, 2017). One of the issues mentioned by interviewees with respect to individual and social freedoms was the freedom of women to choose their coverage in the community. Naturally, this has been mentioned more often by women. Interviewee 17 for instance, argued that “we have Islamic and Shiite history and I believe we should keep our traditions. Of course, not so much as putting pressure on people and getting out of moderation. It should not be compulsory so that people are discouraged from religion”. Interviewee 70 also discussed “I do not believe that hijab should be free because it will harm others. Actually no one has absolute freedom”.

Being well-respected: This value is one of the 9 values mentioned in LOV value system (Begunca, 2016), which is formed as an external value and results from the individual's relationship with others and social groups (empathy value). The list of values is a scale developed for direct application in marketing and consumer behavior. These values have been shown to influence the consumer decision-making process (Yilmaz et al., 2016). Helmi (2016) shows that this value has a significant relationship with hedonist, perfectionist, loyal and sensitive to promotional shopping styles. Thompson (2009) in his research project achieved the following expressions to describe the value of being respected: treatment according to fair procedures, treating others how you want to be treated, when someone values you for your ideas, people look to you as being a good role model. What can be inferred is that being well-respected is the reflection of an inner desire. Humans need and want to be approved and respected by others, and they even sometimes behave in such a way that can get that approval and attention. In this regard, Interviewee 19 discussed “my ideal is to have a socially reasonable personality and to be one of the best in my position, that's when everyone approves me. I want my presence or absence to be important, and if I'm not present, part of the work will be interrupted”. Interviewee 43 similarly argued “the other people's opinion is so important to me. What people say about me, what they think of me”. Confirming the previous two examples, interviewee 16 stated that “I do not like to go shopping alone. The opinion of others about my purchases is very important to me”.

Enjoyment and excitement: One of the values mentioned by most of the interviewees is fun and excitement. Interviewees were asked about their willingness to travel to different parts of the world and to describe their destination and its characteristics. Another question was about how they spend their leisure time. These were all questions by which the interviewees expressed this value and its intensity. For instance, interviewee 51 stated that he likes to experience exciting places and have fun there. he loves the places with huge rocks and oceans and sometimes even googles these photos. One of the categories of excitement and entertainment mentioned by the interviewees is shopping. Shopping has become an enjoyable leisure activity that is socially approved and easy to access. As a result, consumers engage in the buying process for hedonistic purposes, such as instant gratification and immediate sensory stimulation; to escape from negative emotions and instead to achieve positive emotions, to improve their social- and self-image (Ridgway et al., 2008; Horváth and Adıgüzel, 2018). People not only shop to satisfy their needs, but also shop for hedonistic reasons: they go shopping when they “need attention, want to be with

their peers, want to meet people with similar interests, feel a need to exercise, or need leisure time” (Horváth and Adigüzel, 2018). Interviewee 21 admitted that she enjoys shopping with her family because she has a great time with them. She explained “we generally shop with my family. We all go shopping together, enter the store together, choose one product and everyone expresses their opinion, even if one person does not like that product, we do not buy it. It is hard but we love it. It is fun”. Some interviewees found pleasure in the convenience of online shopping and preferred to shop online in a comfortable home environment. Because online shopping eliminates the physical transport of goods, consumers feel comfortable (Campo and Breugelmans, 2015). When one feels comfortable, she/he will feel happy. It can be said that convenience can affect consumers' enjoyment of online shopping (Swilley and Goldsmith, 2013; Marza et al., 2019). Interviewee 55 for instance, argued that “I do not go out shopping. I search a lot on the internet, for example, clothes and cosmetics. This is how I do most of my shopping. I prefer to do my shopping at home calmly and away from the hustle and bustle of the streets and shops”.

Islamic spiritual values

Humanity and Altruism: The value of altruism (or self-transcendence) includes universalism and benevolence, which requires concern for the well-being and interests of others (Lee et al., 2015). Altruism is defined as voluntary action performed without expectation of reward (Figini et al., 2014). Altruism is measured in two main ways. In the first criterion for altruism, a person's willingness to give to another person – especially money – is examined in an empirical situation (Camerer, 2011). For the second method of measuring altruism, a person is asked a series of questions about how he or she reacts and behaves in different situations (Zarghi and Bolghan-Abadi, 2021). The interviewee 72 acknowledged that the ideal life is to be happy with family and to be able to share some of this happiness with others. In this regard, the interviewee 9 emphasizes that “I like to be mindful of other people. I cannot think only of myself”. Many studies have shown that individual differences lead to differences in altruistic traits. Much scientific research has been done on these differences. Differences in religious beliefs are one of these factors (Saroglou, 2013). Studies in recent decades have shown that people who are religious (inner religion, beliefs or practices) consider themselves more altruistic. Altruism in religious people is equivalent to being more useful and honest (Zarghi and Bolghan-Abadi, 2021).

From the perspective of Islam, the term “Islamic” is used to reflect the purity of Islam and the nature of a true Muslim. Islamic scholars (Simon, 1993; Hopkins and Powers, 2009) state that a true Muslim is an altruistic, obligated and honest being, because Islam emphasizes friendly behavior and considers altruistic behavior to promote goodwill and cooperation in human life. Although altruism has been extensively studied in the psychological field, it also has a significant effect on consumer behavior (Sayuti and Amin, 2019). Studies on concepts such as waqf (i.e. special kind of philanthropic deed in perpetuity) (Rizal and Amin, 2017), zakat (i.e. charity) (Sayuti and Amin, 2019; Adhiatma and Fachrunnisa, 2021) show the importance of the issue of altruism from the perspective of Islam. The Arabic word “Ihsan” with the same meaning of altruism, literally means

kindness to others, especially the weak or helpless. For example, Islam demands moderation in consumption, because it makes the poor receive a greater share of good deeds (Rizal and Amin, 2017). In this regard, Interviewee 20 argued “altruism is important. It does not matter whether you are Muslim or Christian or [any other religion], so many problems are solved if people have humanity. But when a person easily hurt other people to serve his/her own interests, he/she neither believes in any religion nor humanity.

Patriotism: Social identity theory explains how and why an individual develops and maintains his or her ego in relation to the groups to which he or she belongs. In particular, this theory states that individuals tend to evaluate their social groups positively and distinguish themselves from members of other social groups. In the marketing literature, national identity has been discussed using the concept of patriotism. Patriotism shows a person's pride and emotional dependence on his nation and country (Nadiri and Tumer, 2010). Patriots value national interests more than their own (Kim et al., 2013). The Interviewee 20 for example discussed that “Iran is my homeland and I do everything for the dignity of my homeland”. In marketing research, the conceptualization and application of patriotism is somewhat different from its general meaning (strong emotional attachment to one's country and love for it). For example, from a marketing perspective, patriotism is an emotional factor that determines and evaluates individuals' choices between national and international products (Park and Avery, 2016). Meas (2014) states that patriotic consumers, in a situation where the quality of imported products is comparable to domestic products, refuse to buy and consume imported goods and thus support national products (Costa et al., 2018). For example, Interviewee 56 argued that “if I want to create a job, I will go to manufacturing jobs. In my opinion, the young Iranian people have many abilities. I will create a big factory and use talented people to produce products that are not produced in Iran. I will help the economy of my country”. Similarly, interviewee 14 emphasized “I do not want to leave Iran. Even if I go on a trip, this trip should be short. It is difficult for me to accept the food, relations and culture of other countries. I miss my city and country. I feel a strong attachment to my homeland”.

Godliness: The Muslim community is the second largest religious community in the world. The value system of Islam is based on two dimensions: the values related to man's relationship with God and the values related to the cohesion of society. Different social values are rooted in religion. These religious values govern the daily activities of followers of a particular religion and affect the economic, legal, social and political aspects of their lives (Rehan et al., 2019). Islam, like other religions, has a set of laws that its followers must follow not only in matters of worship, but also in various aspects of life (Sukardani et al., 2018). In this regard, Interviewee 1 discussed “I am fully committed to religious and moral principles. It all comes down to the religion filter to see if it's good or bad”. The most important principle of Islam is Tawheed to which Muslims adhere in both the world and the hereafter. This principle states that everything is in the hands of God and that God is the absolute power and the one God (Yusfiarto and Pambekti, 2019).

Islam defines a special lifestyle for Muslims in the direction of God-centeredness and the rule of Islamic values in life, which aims to get rid of non-Islamic life and achieve a good life. In this lifestyle, man considers his ultimate goal as closeness to God, and in this way,

he prefers a model that is most in harmony with this ultimate goal (Saki and Far, 2021). In this regard, interviewee 10 discussed “I believe that many things, maybe all things should be done for God because God is everywhere in our lives”. Muslims believe in afterlife and know their true happiness at that time. They live their lives on earth according to God's commands to do good deeds and believe that the weight of their good deeds must be greater than their sins to ensure that they will enter one of the seven layers of heaven. Sins and deeds will be measured by angels, judged by God, and each person's position will be determined (Wilson and Hollensen, 2013). In relation to life after death, the Interviewee 12 explained “everything that is said about the hereafter in the Qur'an is undoubtedly true. But the problem is that no one has returned from that world”.

Self-respect: Axel Honneth (1995, 2012) in his effective theory of cognition, has pointed to three different dimensions of self, one of which is the ability to see oneself as someone who has the same basic rights and dignity as others. This self-view is referred to as self-respect. In modern societies, people need social recognition of their achievements, emotional needs, and the need to be recognized as counterparts with equal basic rights. Equal rights represent the institutionalization of equal value and dignity, and the granting of such rights is a matter of respect (Renger, 2018). People with self-respect think they are being taken seriously. They expect others to respect their rights and boundaries. Once self-respecting relationships are institutionalized, people can make legitimate claims in cases where their personal rights are restricted or violated, or when others ask for something they do not want to do. Self-respect makes people assert their rights and therefore reject such requests and protest against injustice (Renger, 2018). Interviewee 20 for example, strongly emphasizes this value and argued that “I always do what I think is right, now it may be right in my opinion and not in yours. No one can force me to do something I don't want to do”.

From what has been discussed above, self-respect is a complex and difficult concept. Developing and maintaining self-respect is a deeply personal matter: no one can take it upon you. Self-respect cannot be given directly to people, it cannot be literally distributed. At the same time, denial of the profound and lasting impact of social and political conditions and processes on the capacity of individuals to develop and maintain self-respect seems unlikely (Schemmel, 2019). According to Rawls (1999: 386), an important characteristic of self-respect is that “if it is missing, then, from the person's point of view, nothing may be worth doing, or if some things are valuable to him, he may not have the will to try for them”. As Schemmel (2019) argues, all desires and activities become empty and useless and sink into indifference and pessimism. To summarize what has been discussed in relation to self-respect, it can be concluded that this value is directly related to the concept of justice and fairness (social justice). A concept that is one of the basic principles of Islam and is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an (Surah An-Nisa ': 58; Surah Al-Ma'ida: 42). In this regard, Interviewee 17 discussed that “I believe that God cares for everyone, so for me, as much as I try, he considers a position that is my right and no one else can take it, and it is a sign of God's justice”. Interviewee 3 similarly explained “if I have a dispute with my family on a subject, I will discuss them. In some cases, I will ignore myself, but in others I will act based on my opinion. It depends on how important it is to me”.

Conclusions and Research Contributions

Qualitative analysis of the interview data resulted in identifying three classes of value and, in general, 10 prevailing value codes among the interviewees. The values identified in this study are comparable to other well-known value classifications such as LOV, VALS, etc. Values such as self-fulfillment, security, being well-respected, enjoyment and excitement, self-respect have been mentioned in LOV model, and Rokeach (1973) pointed out values such as altruism and humanity. However, some values, such as security, self-fulfillment, and enjoyment, are somehow commonly referred to in different categories. Despite the studies in the field of values, we have tried to focus on spiritual values in light of the Islamic ideology of Iranians and taking into account the special emphasis of the people of this country on religion. This research offers a unique value classification for Iranians. In fact, the present study expands previous studies and addresses spiritual values along with hedonic and utilitarian values. Spiritual values which form a significant part of the prevailing values in Muslim countries, including Iran, has not been addressed in studies conducted in other countries.

In addition to theoretical contributions related to the identification and explanation of Islamic spiritual values in the Islamic society of Iran, this study also provides a number of practical contributions: (1) Identifying these values will play a significant role in the development of knowledge. Since values are considered as predictor variables in many humanities studies, the identification of new value categories in this study has led to studies to extend the results of this research in other areas of knowledge. (2) Identifying these values will undoubtedly have a direct impact on better business management by understanding the needs and desires of the consumers. Marketing managers identify and anticipate consumers' behaviors by recognizing these prevailing values. (3) Other achievements in recognizing the value categories in this study include: Providing better product features, creating opportunities for market segmentation strategies, identifying opportunities and marketing threats posed by changes in attitudes and values over time, identifying the type of product or type of brand desired by the consumer according to the type of values, redefining the target market and identifying potential target groups and using communication and promotion tools in line with values. (4) As already emphasized, the results of this research provide a clear image of the prevalent values of Iranians and present a solid framework for researchers to assess the role of values in studying lifestyle of Iranian consumers. Marketers can use lifestyle as a descriptive concept of consumers in the form of a segmentation approach. Lifestyle tells the marketer almost everything about the consumer: how they live, how they spend their money, how they socialize, what activities they are interested in, and how they spend their free time (Gunter, 2016). Researchers have proposed different methods for measuring lifestyle. The researchers of the present study intend to identify and complete the list of identified values (LOV model) in Iran as a developing Asian country, taking into account the cultural, religious and regional differences of people in different parts of the world and then expand their research to identify the typology of Iranian lifestyles. In fact, identifying values in Iran as an Islamic country can be a valuable step in determining the Islamic lifestyle.

Limitations and Possibilities for Future Research

It is important to recognize that every study has its limitations. In this research for instance, some interviewees were reluctant to spend time participating in the interview. It was difficult to reach the interviewees and to coordinate and provide a comfortable and calm atmosphere for conducting the interviews. Due to the significant number of interviews conducted, the interviewers were more than one person, and this may have created different conditions in the way questions were asked and the interview sessions conducted. Due to the open-ended questions, the interviewees sometimes deviated from the main route of the interview and the interviewer had to constantly return them to the main topic of the interview. The main purpose of this study was to identify values as one of the main variables that shape the lifestyle of consumers in an Islamic destination. The framework developed in this study, which consists of 10 prevalent Iranian values, can be the basis for any future research that is in some way influenced by values. Future studies may test and validate this value classification on a larger scale throughout Iran, or other Islamic countries and use this classification to perform Islamic lifestyle typologies. In addition, the results of this study encourage researchers to conduct more in-depth studies in this area in other countries due to cultural and religious differences.

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