The impact of cultural dimensions on customer complaint behaviours: an exploratory study in Antalya/Manavgat tourism region

Gözde Seval Ergün and Olgun Kitapci

Abstract

Purpose – *The study was carried out to better understand the behaviour of tourists from different cultures and backgrounds, and to provide strategic solutions for tourism managers. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between the cultural dimensions of Hofstede and customer complaint behaviours.*

Design/methodology/approach – *Exploratory factor analyses were carried out separately for national culture and complaint behaviour scales and the factor structuring was then tested using a confirmatory factor analysis. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test theoretical correlations and a conceptual model was created to put forward the correlations between national cultural dimensions and complaint behaviours, as well as to examine the impact of variation in one dimension on the other.*

Findings – *Significant correlations were observed between power distance and both public action and no action behaviours, uncertainty avoidance and public action and private action, as well as individualism/collectivism and public action.*

Research limitations/implications – *The sample population of the study included foreign tourists visiting Manavgat district in 2015. Manavgat as a destination is preferred by foreign tourists, rather than domestic tourists. In addition, many accommodations in the region only host guests from particular nationalities. For this reason, domestic tourists were not included in the survey. A limitation of the research is the fact that it focused only on hotel management. Extending the scope of the study in future research—the study could be carried out for a wider area and include other sectors—would increase the effectiveness of the study.*

Practical implications – *The results shed light on the fact that customers perform different complaint behaviours depending on variation in national cultural dimensions. In this context, the findings contribute to the hotel management literature and to the development of management strategies such as staff training, effective complaint solution methods, increasing customer complaints, using indirect resources effectively and decreasing the cost of solutions. The research also aims to create awareness in hotel managers by highlighting the importance of this issue.*

Originality/value – *In many of the studies where customer complaint behaviour and culture are analysed together, culture is regarded primarily as a geographical region, or as ethnical origin. Using Hofstede's national cultural dimension scale, and taking into consideration all the national cultural dimensions, adds originality to this research. This study is one of the first to explore the impact of cultural dimensions on customer complaint behaviours in Turkey. This is also one of the first studies on complaint behaviour in the hotel industry.*

Keywords *National culture, Antalya, Customer complaint behaviour, Hotel managements, Manavgat*

Paper type *Research paper*

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Introduction

When market development to date is examined, one of the basic contributions of modern marketing is its role in the shift in management from a product-oriented view to market- and

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customer-oriented views (Varinli, 2012). In recent years, hotel managers have tried various ways to compete, with more qualified, less costly, faster, more flexible, more innovative strategies. However, in today's globalized market, many hotel managers have started to use these strategies as standard. Therefore, to have a competitive advantage, managers now focus on the customer and try to maintain their position in the market by improving their service standards. Despite these efforts, the services provided are sometimes unsatisfactory to the customer, which leads to disappointment. From the customer's perspective, if customer relations leave a bad impression because of poor service, it may be possible to regain a customer's approval by applying complaint-management and service-recovery strategies.

Customer service is generally regarded as the main reason that customers prefer particular retailers, or other services. For instance, many customers prefer to shop at certain markets, carry out financial transactions at particular banks, stay at certain hotels, eat at known restaurants and buy their clothes from popular brands, and this largely depends on the customer service of the preferred company. Another factor that affects the retailers' and/or service providers' customer management, is the manner and style in which they respond to customer complaints (Blodgett *et al.*, 1995; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1988).

Suppliers, retailers and managers in the service sector must reach their unsatisfied customers and encourage them to voice their complaints in various ways, which can help managers find solutions to the problem (e.g. repayment, change or repair) and ensure that the customer continues to work with the management (Blodgett *et al.*, 1995).

Research on complaint behaviours, conducted for various sectors, has determined that there is a correlation between culture and customer behaviour (Kitapci and Dortyol, 2009; Liu and McClure, 2001). In the tourism sector, the same service is often provided to more than one culture in a restricted area, and it is, therefore, important to develop different perspectives and solutions for different customers. In tourism management, acting within the framework of a single culture, the issues of achieving customer satisfaction and addressing customer complaints become even more complicated. In this context, analysing the correlations between national cultural dimensions and customer complaint behaviours has practical implications for the tourism industry and will contribute to the literature. Our study aims to contribute to research in this area in terms of both its findings and research methods.

First, we present a review of the literature on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and consumer complaint behaviours in the tourism sector, and then present the methodology used in the current study. The article ends with a review of the main results and a discussion of the implications, and limitations, of the study.

Literature review

National culture

The concept of culture reflects the meaning we attribute to "the various aspects of life in the context of perspectives towards the world such as good and bad in the thought system, reality and fake in the social belief, beautiful and ugly in the artistic expressions as well as the roles played" (Hofstede, 1984).

Throughout history, many different definitions have been developed for culture. Until the seventeenth century, the word culture was used in the sense of cultivating and it was Voltaire (cited in Güvenç, 2011) who first defined the word as the "formation, development, and emblazoning of human intelligence". The word was transferred to German and German ethnologist Klemns (1843) used the word "culture" as an equivalent for civilization and cultural revolution. The word was then conceptualized in Spanish, English and Slavic languages (Güvenç, 2011).

When the definitions used in the recent past are considered, culture is described in a variety of ways: as the whole of thoughts and components that an individual bears as a member of a society (Ueltschy *et al.*, 2007); the permanent and dominant characteristics of a society that do not change for long periods and most of the members of a society abide by (Lee, 2008); the complicated structure including the common actions and reactions, typical cognition (beliefs) and characteristic behaviour models shared by the whole of a society or country (Kassim and Abdullah, 2010). Hofstede (2001), on the other hand, defines the concept of culture as "the collective programming of the mind" that differentiates one group from another. The concept of national culture is defined as the values, beliefs and assumptions that separate one group from another, are learned during childhood, are embedded in daily life and are relatively difficult to change (Newman and Nollen, 1996). The cultural systems of nations and their subsections are seen as too complicated and, therefore, cannot be expressed in simple terms.

In 1980, Hofstede developed five main cultural dimensions to identify cultural differences (Ansah, 2015). These five dimensions represent the common structural elements in the culture systems of countries and depend on five issues to which each society gives typical answers. For each of the dimensions, the situation of the country is indicated with a score and the score intervals represent the different answers given to the issues (Hofstede, 1984). These dimensions are listed as follows:

■ Power distance – the degree of inequality existing in a society or organization;

■ Uncertainty avoidance – the degree to which individuals in a society tolerate unknown aspects of the future and the developments resulting from uncertainty;

■ Individualism/collectivism – the degree to which an individual focuses on him-/herself versus the group, as well as the degree of independence of individuals within an organization or society;

■ Long-term/short-term orientation – time orientation within the society (future-oriented or present-time-oriented societies); and

■ Masculinity/Femininity – the level of social differentiation between the sexes.

Complaint behaviour

It is a known fact that the best way to maintain customers is to make them feel good. However, not all companies can achieve 100 per cent customer satisfaction. It is common to face customer dissatisfaction because of a variety of reasons (because of certain product types and various customer demands) (Fornell and Wernelfert, 1987).

Broadbridge and Marshall (1995) – who declare that a problem is really a problem when a customer actually feels that it is so – define customer dissatisfaction as the result of a difference between expected and achieved performance.

When approached from a cost perspective, it is five or six times cheaper to retain existing customers than to gain new customers (Hui and Au, 2001; Ndubisi and Ling, 2005; Phau and Baird, 2008; Kotler, 2000) and this fact causes management to put effort into solving problems, in accordance with the customers' desires.

The existing literature on customer satisfaction shows that customers tend to show dissatisfaction with 25 per cent of transactions experienced (Kotler, 2000). Therefore, customer complaints are defined as the reactions arising in the case of dissatisfaction (Donoghue and Klerk, 2006), or expressions resulting from unexpected situations during the purchase and consumption of a service or good (Kılıç and Ok, 2012).

While a complaint is an oral expression of an unfulfilled expectation, it is also accepted as an opportunity to get in contact with the customer again, to repair the failure in the service or goods and eliminate the customer's dissatisfaction (Barlow and Moller, 2009).

Complaints are extremely valuable for managers. According to research conducted to measure the value of a complaint, the complaints and the complaining customers are more valuable to managers than plans and planners because the complaining customer provides the management with important feedback about the goods and services, with no expectation of personal gain (Barış, 2006).

The complaints that provide managers with an opportunity to compensate mistakes that occurred during service delivery, are regarded as some of the most significant reactions that customers have to management. Although service mistakes are perceived as management failures by customers, customers reporting a problem they faced is regarded as a significant opportunity for the management to keep the customers by compensating the mistakes, and thereby achieving longer-term profit. Compensation for mistakes, and coming up with solutions that are appropriate for each complaint, gain high recognition as they encourage customers to report any complaints (Schoefer and Ennew, 2004). Credible responses to complaints contribute to consumers' positive beliefs about a firm's readiness to resolve problems. The result of this is a more positive attitude towards the firm overall (Dewitt and Martin, 2009).

There is a theoretical framework, developed by Hirschman (1994), that is accepted as a basis for these types of studies. According to Hirschman, managers discover failures in achieving satisfaction through two different feedback mechanisms, called "exit" and "voice". Whereas "exit" means the customer stops purchasing from the firm, "voice" is explained as the customer directly reporting his/her dissatisfaction to the firm (Hirschman, 1994).

Detailed research has been conducted to understand how customers act in the case of dissatisfaction and some different classifications of customer-complaint behaviour have been presented (Day, 1977; Crie, 2003; Zaugg, 2006; Velázquez et al., 2006; Tronvoll, 2007; Kim et al., 2010). A variety of customer-complaint-behaviour classifications used in the literature are summarized in Table I.

Different classifications of complaint behaviour have been found in studies focusing on the tourism sector. These classifications are as follows: public complaints, private complaints and no action (Ngai et al., 2007). These complaint categories are reflected in consumer behaviour in a variety of ways: warning family and friends, ceasing to patronize an establishment, complaining to upper levels, writing comment cards, writing complaint letters, writing to newspaper/mass media, complaining to consumer council (Heung and Lam, 2003); voice response, exit, word of mouth, third-party response (Kim and Chen, 2010); exit, negative word of mouth and voice (McQuilken and Robertson, 2011); voice complaint, negative word of mouth, intentions to revisit, third party (Yang and Mattila, 2012); voice, private, third party, no action (Jahandideh et al., 2014).

Table I Customer complaint behaviour classifications	
Author(s)	*Customer complaint behaviour classifications*
Hirschman, 1994	Exit/Voice
Day, 1977	Take Action (Public Action, Private Action)/No Action
Crie, 2003	Public Action, Private Action
Zaugg, 2006	Silence/Voice (Voice Company, Voice Third Party, Negative WOM)
Velázquez et al., 2006	Complaint Action/Private Action
Tronvoll, 2007	No Action/Public Action/Private Action
Kim et al., 2010	No Action (Inertia)/Negative WOM/Third Party Complaint/Voice

Public actions include actions where the customer desires other consumers to be aware of their dissatisfaction. These actions include requesting compensation from the manufacturer, complaint to the business, complaint to the agency and taking legal action. It may be said that the driving force behind the first two actions can be categorized as personal character (Phau and Baird, 2008).

Customers' private actions may include negative word of mouth, warning family or friends and boycott a store (Broadbridge and Marshall, 1995; Ndubisi and Ling, 2005).

In this research, we used a basic, dual classification of complaint behaviour as public action and private action, as in Velázquez et al. (2006) (shown in Table I). Besides these actions, a "no-action" case, which is not accepted as a complaint behaviour but is worthy of mention, was also used as it is described in the literature as a separate dimension (Day, 1977).

Conceptual framework

National cultural dimensions and customer complaint behaviour

Research on customer complaint behaviour has primarily considered western cultures. As a result of the fast globalization of management, as well as the acceptance of cultural norms, people have realized that the available information on customer complaint behaviour in western cultures is not valid for non-western markets (Li, 2010). Thus, additional research has been conducted on cultural differences in complaint behaviours.

It is important for managers to understand the cultural characteristics of societies and use this information to determine the correlation between a customer's behaviour, during purchasing and post-purchasing, and their given cultural characteristics. In the literature on this issue, it has been observed that generally the concept of nationality is highlighted in discussions about cultural differences (Kim and Lynn, 2007; Ekiz and Au, 2011; Hernandez et al., 1991; Kim and Lee, 2009; Voss et al., 2004).

Chinese consumers tend to forgive and forget service failures, whereas Americans complain to third parties (Ekiz and Au, 2011). According to Kim and Lee (2009), American customers report their dissatisfaction to the company and take private action, Chinese customers take legal action and complain to third parties, Japanese customers complain to the company and tend to complain to third parties, as do South Koreans. In their study, Hernandez et al. (1991) concluded that Puerto Rican customers tend to complain less than Americans. They also found that Puerto Ricans were engaged in less public action than Americans.

However, from another perspective it seems possible that individuals may bear the cultural characteristics of more than one culture (Wong et al., 2014). In this context, it does not seem totally correct to discuss only the concept of nationality during the analysis of cultural differences. In our research, the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1984), which are thought to have great importance for customer complaints, are considered. Previous studies presenting a correlation between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and customer complaint behaviours were used as a resource to develop the hypotheses and provide a model for this research.

In an analysis of the literature, it was noted that there are significant differences between the complaint behaviours of individuals from individualist and collectivist cultures. According to this observation, customers in individualist cultures have a greater tendency to report their complaints to the management than those from collectivist cultures. Despite this, collectivist cultures prefer to show their dissatisfaction through negative word-of-mouth communication. While customers from individualist cultures prefer public action, the individuals in collectivist cultures have a greater tendency towards private action (Liu and McClure, 2001; Chapa et al., 2014; Ngai et al.,

2007; Kitapci, 2009; Lowe and Corkindale, 1998; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011; Watkins and Liu, 1996). Collectivist consumers tend not to complain, as they consider that this will cause them to lose face; they are, therefore, more likely to express their responses in private than consumers from individualist cultures (Liu and McClure, 2001).

In societies where strong uncertainty avoidance prevails (one of Hofstede's cultural dimensions), individuals are known to consider other people's recommendations to minimize the anxiety that may occur during, or after, the act of purchasing (Singh, 2006). In the literature, the issue of whether there is a significant correlation between individualism/ collectivism and uncertainty avoidance has been addressed. People from collectivism-orientated cultures tend to develop collectivist mechanisms, rather than following individual ways, to protect themselves from perceived risks (Park et al., 2002). Risitano et al. (2017) found that national culture was a determinant of tourist behaviour. The study demonstrated that national culture can affect tourists' behavioural intentions, and in particular that this dimension is higher in cultures with a higher level of uncertainty avoidance and is lower in individualistic countries.

The tendency of customers to resort to complaint behaviour when faced with a low-quality service is higher in cultures where uncertainty avoidance is high, in comparison with societies where uncertainty avoidance is low (Liu et al., 2001). In some studies, the rate of private action, in the case of dissatisfaction among customers with high uncertainty avoidance, was observed to be high (De Matos and Leis, 2013).

In empirical studies, a correlation has been determined between complaint behaviour and power distance, which is another cultural dimension (Ngai et al., 2007; Goodrich and De Mooij, 2013). The studies carried out suggest that in societies with high power distance (Asian guests), the guests did not tend to report their dissatisfaction to the hotel management (Ngai et al., 2007). In addition, people in cultures with high power distance were more likely to share their dissatisfaction through word-of-mouth communications in online groups, which also means they preferred private action compared to cultures with low power distance (Ngai et al., 2007; Goodrich and De Mooij, 2013). It has been claimed that there is an inverse correlation between the power distance dimension and individualism. This accounts for the fact that cultures with low power distance are the ones with highly individualist societies, whereas cultures with high power distance manifest collectivist characteristics (Singh, 2006).

Other dimensions that may also influence customer complaint behaviour include masculinity and femininity, as well as long-term and short-term orientation, which are relatively less touched upon in the literature. It is expected that individuals from more masculine cultures would be more comfortable with reporting their complaints to the hotel management to be compensated, as well as with sharing their problems with institutions fighting for customer rights (Yüksel, 2006). In case of dissatisfaction, this tendency would be interpreted as individuals from masculine cultures engaging in public action and reporting their complaints.

In the societies where long-term orientation is observed, customers tend to tolerate faulty or uncertain things, and act in a more constructive manner in admitting poor service. In short-term orientation societies, on the other hand, it is known that customers expect perfection from goods and services provided and demand timely improvement during the purchasing process (Donthu and Yoo, 1998). According to Dortyol et al. (2014), there is a significant, but poor, correlation between word-of-mouth communication and orientation. According to this study, as the tendency of an individual for long-term orientation increases, the level of participation in word-of-mouth communication also increases.

Previous studies have proposed a direct relationship between cultural dimensions and complaints. For example, Asian guests who are accustomed to a higher power distance, have been reported to respond less actively to dissatisfaction and were less likely to

complain to hotel management. In addition, Asians were more likely to take private action, such as negative word-of-mouth, than non-Asians (Ngai *et al.*, 2007). Asian guests with higher uncertainty avoidance and collectivist cultures, tended to be more fearful of losing face when making a complaint than non-Asian guests (Ngai *et al.*, 2007). According to another study, American consumers (individualist nation) were more likely to complain to hotel management, warn family and friends and stop patronizing a hotel, in response to unsatisfactory service. Japanese guests (collectivist nation) were more likely to take no action than American customers (Huang *et al.*, 1996). According to research by Jahandideh *et al.* (2014), Arabic guests were more likely to inform their relatives and friends about a bad experience at a hotel, because of the embedded nature of, and greater focus on, group-relations in Arabic societies, which have high uncertainty avoidance. Comparatively, Chinese guests, who have higher power distance, were less likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth about their bad hotel experiences than Arabic guests. In a study carried out in hotels in Antalya, customer complaints and complaint behaviours were found to be correlated and customer complaint behaviours showed fundamental differences between customers from different countries, such as Turkey, Russia, The Netherlands and Germany (Emir, 2011). Yüksel's (2006) study, in which hotel management was considered, observed that people from masculine cultures were more willing to report complaints. According to another study, guests from South Korea (a collectivist culture), showed a greater tendency for all types of complaint behaviour (voice, private action, and third-party) than American guests. However, when American customers expressed their complaints to third parties, they did not expect much from the company (Park *et al.*, 2014).

Research model and hypotheses

Based on an analysis of the literature, the model and hypotheses for this study were formed.

As indicated in the research model in Figure 1, the correlations between the national culture dimensions (power distance, certainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, long-term/

Figure 1 Model of research
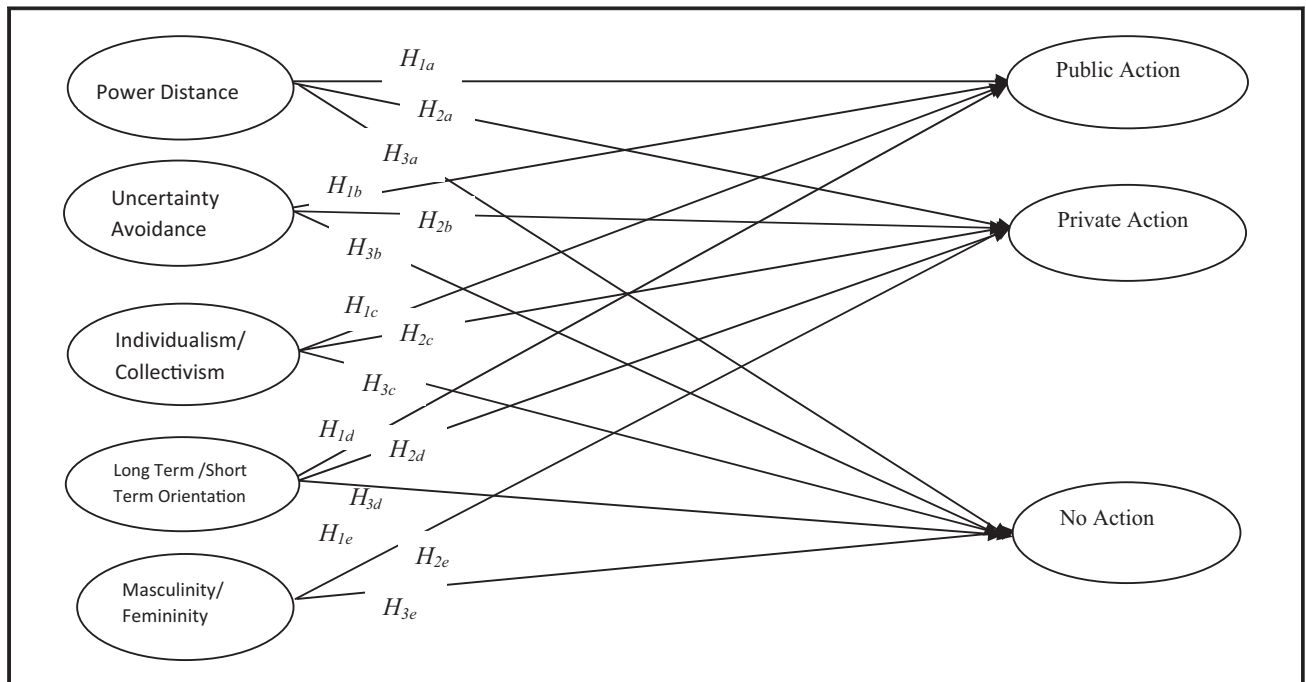
short-term orientation and masculinity/femininity) and two complaint behaviour dimensions (public action and private action) were examined. In addition, the correlation between the national cultural dimensions and a no-action dimension was also indicated in the model.

The following hypotheses determine the scope and depth of the study:

H1. There is a significant correlation between national culture and public action behaviour; (H_{1a}) there is a significant correlation between power distance and public action; (H_{1b}) there is a significant correlation between uncertainty avoidance and public action; (H_{1c}) there is a significant correlation between individualism/collectivism and public action; (H_{1d}) there is a significant correlation between long-term/short-term orientation and public action; (H_{1e}) there is a significant correlation between masculinity/femininity and public action.

H2. There is a significant correlation between national culture and private action behaviour; (H_{2a}) there is a significant correlation between power distance and private action; (H_{2b}) there is a significant correlation between uncertainty avoidance and private action; (H_{2c}) there is a significant correlation between individualism/collectivism and private action; (H_{2d}) there is a significant correlation between long-term/short-term orientation and private action; (H_{2e}) there is a significant correlation between masculinity/femininity and private action.

H3. There is a significant correlation between national culture and no action behaviour; (H_{3a}) there is a significant correlation between power distance and no action; (H_{3b}) there is a significant correlation between uncertainty avoidance and no action; (H_{3c}) there is a significant correlation between individualism/collectivism and no action; (H_{3d}) there is a significant correlation between long-term/short-term orientation and no action; (H_{3e}) there is a significant correlation between masculinity/femininity and no action.

Method

Data collection

The population for the study was foreign tourists visiting Manavgat in 2015. Surveys were used for data collection. From 620 face-to-face surveys, 595 were found to be usable; the rest were incomplete. According to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2015), tourist density reaches its highest point in July and August; therefore, data collection was carried out during these months. The precise size of the target population was difficult to ascertain. However, according to published data, the total number of incoming tourists in 2015, was 3,586,667 (Turkish National Statistics, 2016). Convenience sampling was implemented because of time and budget constraints. Therefore, the sample size was calculated to be 500, with a 5-per cent sampling error (Gegez, 2007).

Measures

The survey consisted of three parts. The first part included statements to measure the level of dissatisfied complaints in the hotel where respondents were staying. While complaint behaviour dimensions in the research model were formed in two dimensions as public action and private action, the studies of Day (1977) and Velázquez *et al.* (2006) were used as references. The expressions used to measure complaint behaviour dimensions were developed using the research of Liu and McClure (2001), Volkov *et al.* (2002), Kitapci and Dortyol (2009) and Ndubisi and Ling (2005). Five expressions were used to measure the public action dimension and five expressions were used to measure the private action dimension on a complaint behaviour scale.

The "no action" response, which was considered as an additional dimension by Day (1977), has been accepted by some authors as an additional dimension in the complaint behaviour model (Kitapci and Dortyol, 2015; Tronvoll, 2007; Kim *et al.*, 2010; Ndubisi and Ling, 2005),

while others either do not show "no action" as a complaint behaviour or do not include it in the research at all (Velázquez *et al.*, 2006). In some other research, "no action" was given as a single expression within one of the other complaint behaviour dimensions (Volkov *et al.*, 2002; Liu and McClure, 2001). The common characteristic in all these studies was that the "no action" reaction was measured using a single expression. In the research, "no action" in the case of dissatisfaction, in other words doing nothing, is a reaction that was not transformed into a complaint; therefore, it was not included on the complaint behaviour scale. However, because this reaction was highlighted, and is considered significant, in the complaint literature, it was included in the study as a separate expression (Day, 1977). In the research described here, "no action" was measured with a single expression as "I forget a bad experience or a problem I face and do nothing" and used like this in the research (Liu and McClure, 2001; Volkov *et al.*, 2002; Ndubisi and Ling, 2005; Kitapci and Dortyol, 2009).

Second, the national cultural dimensions of the visitors were measured. For the expressions used to measure the national cultural dimension, the research by Yoo and Donthu (2002) was used as a reference. All the expressions containing the five dimensions of national culture were taken from this study. On the scale, there are five expressions to measure power distance, five expressions to measure uncertainty avoidance, six expressions to measure individualism/collectivism, six expressions to measure long-term/short-term orientation and four expressions to measure the masculinity/femininity dimension. A five-point Likert-type rating scale, in which (1) indicates "strongly disagree" and (5) indicates "strongly agree" was used.

The third part of the survey pertains to the measurement of demographic characteristics of the respondents. A pilot test was conducted with 25 foreign residents residing in Manavgat. The results enabled us to gain valuable information about the wording of the survey. As a next step, the original Turkish version of the questionnaire was translated into German, English and Russian.

Data analysis

SPSS 22.0 was used for data analysis. While testing the reliability of the national culture and complaint behaviour scales, dimensions were considered in terms of alpha values. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated separately for the five dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, long-term/short-term orientation and masculinity/femininity) as well as for public action and private action on the complaint behaviour scale. Values are shown in Table II. When the reliability values indicated in Table II were considered, it was concluded that both the national culture and complaint behaviour scales were highly reliable. On the national culture scale, one item, "for success in the future, one should stop having fun today", in the long-term/short-term orientation dimension was excluded from the scale to increase the level of reliability; Cronbach's alpha for the long-term/short-term orientation dimension

Table II Reliability test results for scales	
Structures	*Cronbach α alpha*
National Culture	*0.844*
Power Distance	0.828
Uncertainty Avoidance	0.731
Individualist/Colectivist	0.710
Long Term Orientation/Short Term Orientation	0.820
Masculinity/Femininity	0.821
Complaint Behaviour	*0.873*
Public Action	0.924
Private Action	0.772

increased from 0.740 to 0.820. When the research conducted with a single expression scale was analysed, it was observed that there were no reliability calculations made regarding that single expression (Kitapci and Dortyol, 2015; Ahearne *et al.*, 2007; Arnold *et al.*, 2009; Patterson *et al.*, 1997). In our research, the reliability analysis of the "no action" dimension measured with a single expression scale could not be analysed by the statistical programme used.

In this research, factor analysis was carried out to evaluate the validity of the research data. For each scale, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out and following this, factor structuring was tested using confirmatory factor analysis.

The KMO values obtained from the factor analyses carried out for the national culture and complaint behaviour scales were determined to be 0.860 and 0.871, respectively. The fact that the significance level of KMO values and x-square were good indicated that the data obtained from the sample was appropriate for factor analysis.

According to Table III, the factor load magnitude formed for the national culture scale ranged from 0.410 to 0.835. The variation rate of the scale scattered across five factors was 54.947 per cent.

Table IV shows that the factor load magnitude for the complaint behaviour scale ranged from 0.523 to 0.904. The variance rate of the scale scattered across two factors was 66.720 per cent.

The goodness-of-fit values obtained for the confirmatory factor analysis carried out for each scale are shown in Table V. Table V shows that the values for the fit indices pertaining to the scales were acceptable.

Results

Demographic characteristics of the participants

The responses of 595 participants to the demographic questions in the survey were analysed and the descriptive statistics are shown in detail in Table VI.

The gender distribution was balanced, with 56 per cent females and 44 per cent males. In terms of education level, 64.9 per cent of the respondents had (at a minimum) graduated from high school. According to this result, it can be said that the sample consisted of educated participants. When the occupation distribution of the respondents was considered, workers made up the highest percentage, with 25.5 per cent. Of the respondents, 64.2 per cent had been to Manavgat district at least once before and 81.8 per cent stated that they were there for recreational or holiday purposes. The majority of respondents were German (51.1 per cent), while Russian (24.9 per cent) and English (6.1 per cent) tourists ranked second and third, respectively. None of the other nationalities represented in the group included more than 2.5 per cent of the respondents and, thus, they are not shown under a single heading.

Hypothesis tests

To test the theoretical relationships and conceptual framework shown in Figure 1, regarding national culture and complaint behaviour, and to show the impact of variation in one dimension on the other factors, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used.

It was concluded from the results of the model fit indices shown in Table VII that the sample was sufficiently large for the research model and that the model was statistically significant and valid.

Table III Results of exploratory factor analysis/national culture dimensions

		Factors			
Variables	Power distance	Long-term orientation/short-term orientation	Masculinity/ feminity	Individualist/ colectivist	Uncertainty avoidance
D12	0.835				
D13	0.835				
D14	0.781				
D15	0.698				
D16	0.603				
D28		0.703			
D29		0.704			
D30		0.774			
D31		0.751			
D33		0.708			
D34			0.631		
D35			0.774		
D36			0.801		
D37			0.734		
D22				0.610	
D23				0.670	
D24				0.696	
D25				0.658	
D26				0.533	
D27				0.410	
D17					0.453
D18					0.637
D19					0.705
D20					0.707
D21					0.728
Eigenvalue	5.240	4.080	1.922	1.323	1.171
Explained Variance %	20.962	16.319	7.687	5.293	4.686
Total Variance	54.947				

Notes: (D12)The people in higher positions should make their decisions without consulting the people in lower positions. (D13) The people in higher positions should not ask the opinions of the people in lower positions. (D14) The people in higher positions should not interact with the people in lower positions. (D15) The people in lower positions should have the same opinions with the people in higher positions. (D16) The people in higher positions should not give the people in lower positions authorization. (D17) It is important to have instructions explaining what is expected from me. (D18) It is important to follow the instructions and procedures. (D19) Rules and regulations are important as they give me information what is expected from me. (D20) Standardized work procedures are helpful. (D21) The instructions about the practices are important. (D22) People should sacrifice their own points of interest for their own group. (D23) The individual should be a part of a group in spite of the difficulties. (D24) The peace of the group is more important than the prizes which you get individually. (D25) The success of the group is more important than the individual success. (D26) People should focus on their own aims as long as they do not break the peace of their group. (D27) One should be encouraged to stay in a group, although this is not good for his/her needs. (D28) Money should be spent in an economic way. (D29) In spite of the tough conditions, one should follow the path that has been followed without hesitation. (D30) Long-term planning is important. (D31) Self-determination and stability are important. (D32) For the success in the future, one should stop having fun today. (D33) For future success, one should work hard. (D34) It is more important for a man to have a professional career than a woman. (D35) Men usually solve problems by using logical analysis, whereas women solve them by their instincts. (D36) Difficult problems can be solved by the effective and powerful attitude of men which is one of the characteristics of men. (D37) Men always do some jobs better than women

Table IV Results of exploratory factor analysis/complaint behaviour

	Factors	
Variables	Public actions	Private actions
D1	0.904	
D2	0.828	
D3	0.912	
D4	0.774	
D5	0.863	
D6		0.800
D7		0.569
D8		0.523
D9		0.726
D10		0.778
Eigenvalue	4.866	1.806
Explained Variance (%)	48.661	18.059
Total Variance Explained	66.720	

Notes: (D1) I would share my bad experiences with the people via using the local or national media. (D2) I would share my bad experiences with the hotel management. (D3) I would share my bad experiences with the authorities in my country. (D4) I would share my bad experiences with the tourism agency. (D5) I would sue the hotel management after my bad experiences at the hotel. (D6) I would share my bad experiences with my family and friends. (D7) I would share my bad experiences with my followers on social networking sites such as Facebook. (D8) I would share my bad experiences on the websites such as Trip Advisor. (D9) I would warn my family and friends not to go on a holiday in that hotel after my bad experiences. (D10) I would not choose the same hotel once again after the bad experiences

Table V Goodness-of-fit measure for confirmatory factor analysis

	X^2	DF	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	CMIN/DF
National Culture Scale	696.328	264	0.053	0.911	0.912	0.940	2.638
Complaint Behaviour Scale	132.657	28	0.079	0.880	0.945	0.893	4.738

Research hypotheses

- The power distance dimension had a positive impact on public action behaviour. According to the results, the correlation was significant at a level of $p < 0.001$, and public action behaviour increased by 0.653 units when the value for power distance increased by 1 unit.

- Uncertainty avoidance had a positive impact on public action behaviour. The correlation between the two variables was significant at the level of $p = 0.010$, and public action behaviour increased by 0.186 units when the value for uncertainty avoidance increased by 1 unit.

- Individualism/collectivism had a positive impact on public action. The correlation between the two variables was significant at the level of $p < 0.005$, and public action behaviour increased by 0.193 units when the value for individualism/collectivism dimension increased by 1 unit towards individualism.

- Uncertainty avoidance had a positive impact on private action behaviour. The correlation between the two variables was significant at the level of $p < 0.001$, and private action behaviour increased by 0.313 units when the value for uncertainty avoidance increased by 1 unit.

- Power distance had a positive impact on the no action behaviour. The correlation between the two variables was significant at the level of $p < 0.001$, and no action behaviour increased by 0.767 units when the value for power distance increased by 1 unit.

	f	(%)
Gender		
Female	333	56.0
Male	262	44.0
	595	*100*
Age		
18-24	136	22.9
25-34	142	23.9
35-44	128	21.5
45-54	106	17.8
55 and above	83	13.9
	595	*100*
Educational Status		
Uneducated	38	6.4
Primary School	69	11.6
Secondary School	101	17.0
High School	149	25.0
Bachelor's Degree	181	30.5
Master's Degree	49	8.2
PhD	8	1.3
	595	*100*
The Reason for Visitation		
Work	52	8.7
Holiday/Entertainment	487	81.9
Health	34	5.7
Sport	22	3.7
	595	*100*
Marital Status		
Single	212	35.6
Married	330	55.5
Divorced	53	8.9
	595	*100*
Nationality		
Germany	304	51.1
Russia	148	24.9
Britain	36	6.1
Other*	107	17.9
	595	*100*
Occupation		
Manager	66	11.1
Self-employment	101	17.0
Employee	77	12.9
Officer	152	25.5
Retired	55	9.2
Housewife	45	7.6
Student	64	10.8
Other	35	5.9
	595	*100*
Number of Visits		
I came to Manavgat for the first time	213	35.8
I have been to Manavgat at least once before	382	64.2
	595	*100*

Table VI Demographic characteristics of participants

Note: *Countries with low percentage such as 2.9% from Ukraine, 2.2% from Kazakhstan, 1.7% from Finland are gathered under "Other"

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Table VII	Goodness-of-fit measures for research model	
Statistic	Value	Conformity
CMIN/DF – χ^2/sd	2.590	Good fit
RMSEA	0.052	Good fit
GFI	0.877	Acceptable fit
AGFI	0.854	Acceptable fit
CFI	0.900	Acceptable fit

- In the research, no significant correlation has been found between long-term/short-term orientation and public action (H_{1d}) and no significant correlation has been found between long public masculinity/femininity and public action (H_{1e}).

- In the research, no significant correlation has been found between power distance and private action (H_{2a}); no significant correlation has been found between individualism/collectivism and private action (H_{2c}); no significant correlation has been found between long-term/short-term orientation and private action (H_{2d}) and no significant correlation has been found between masculinity/femininity and private action. (H_{2e})

- In the research, no significant correlation has been found between avoidance and no action (H_{3b}); no significant correlation has been found between individualism/collectivism and no action (H_{3c}); no significant correlation has been found between long-term/short-term orientation and no action (H_{3d}) and no significant correlation has been found between masculinity/femininity and no action (H_{3e}).

Discussion

The findings and related comments are as follows:

- The results of this study are in line with previous research. The tendency of individuals to report their dissatisfaction to the hotel management (public action) was found to be high in societies where power distance is high (Ngai *et al.*, 2007), while these societies are also involved in more word-of-mouth communication (private action) (Goodrich and De Mooij, 2013). In our research, a strong correlation was found between high power distance and public action, as well as no action. It is obvious that the hierarchical steps in societies with high power distance affect these results. In the literature, customers at the low end of the hierarchical steps are called "weak customers" and these customers do not expect the staff to offer sensitive service to them (Tsoukatos and Rand, 2007). As a result, these customers regard the staff offering a service as strong and specialized in their jobs (Donthu and Yoo, 1998) and, therefore, they opt for no action even if they are dissatisfied. On the contrary, with the power acquired from their hierarchical positions, customers at the upper end of the hierarchical steps tend to show public action behaviour by reporting their dissatisfaction to the hotel management or initiating legal action and reporting their complaints. Ngai *et al.* (2007) achieved similar results; Asian guests, who are accustomed to a higher power distance, were more likely to complain to hotel management than non-Asian guests.

- In the research, no significant correlation has been found between power distance and private action. The belief of individuals at the upper end of the hierarchy that they hold power is often accompanied by a sense of privilege. For example, in Chinese culture, hotel employees are in less-powerful positions, and are, therefore, supposed to be highly respectful of the hotel guests and responsive to their requests. This is indicative of the customers' high expectations of error-free service from employees with weak

Table VIII Results of research hypothesis analysis						
Hypothesis links	Standardized regression weights	Regression weights (Estimate)	S.E.	C.R. (Critical ratio)	p	Decision
Power Distance → Public Action	0.653	1.235	0.157	7.876	0.001	Accepted
Uncertainty Avoidance → Public Action	0.186	0.480	0.186	2.577	0.010	Accepted
Individualism/Colectivism → Public Action	−0.193	−0.409	0.145	−2.819	0.005	Accepted
Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation → Public Action	−0.059	−0.109	0.118	−0.924	0.356	Rejected
Masculinity/Femininity → Public Action	0.079	0.910	0.071	1.271	0.204	Rejected
Power Distance → Private Action	0.155	0.195	0.110	1.774	0.076	Rejected
Uncertainty Avoidance → Private Action	0.313	0.534	0.162	3.304	0.001	Accepted
Individualism/Colectivism → Private Action	−0.018	−0.025	0.118	−0.217	0.828	Rejected
Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation → Private Action	0.144	0.177	0.102	1.744	0.081	Rejected
Masculinity/Femininity → Private Action	−0.020	−0.015	0.060	−0.258	0.797	Rejected
Power Distance → No Action	0.767	1.035	0.157	6.576	0.001	Accepted
Uncertainty Avoidance → No Action	−0.099	−0.182	0.197	−0.923	0.356	Rejected
Individualism/Colectivism → No Action	−0.075	−0.114	0.151	−0.752	0.452	Rejected
Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation → No Action	0.053	0.070	0.131	0.534	0.593	Rejected
Masculinity/Femininity → No Action	0.064	0.052	0.078	0.668	0.504	Rejected

power (Wang et al., 2008) and the individuals at the high end of the hierarchy prefer to ask for compensation for bad service, rather than talking about it to other people.

■ For hotel managers, it is preferable to deter individuals from asking for compensation or initiating legal action and complaining about it to third parties and, rather, encourage them to voice their complaints directly to the management. The consequences of the other actions can harm the reputation of the hotel and lead to a loss of money and time. Thus, it is vital to strengthen and popularize complaint-reporting mechanisms. Individuals at the low end of the hierarchy expect to be told what to do and may act in rather a shy manner in the case of dissatisfaction. From our research, we can conclude that individuals at the lower end of the hierarchical steps may accept a service, even if they are dissatisfied with it, and are unlikely to initiate any public or private action. In Chinese society, with a higher emphasis on power distance and hierarchy, guests are more likely to subscribe to the notion that the higher the position held by any given staff member, the more capable they are of handling the complaint. However, guests are less likely to complain if they feel less powerful than hotel management (Jahandideh et al., 2014). According to Yüksel et al. (2006), the greater the power distance in a country, the more likely consumers from the country are to take no action. Whether these individuals are willing to report their complaints depends on the efforts of the hotel management. To this end, hotel managers should appreciate complaints.

■ A partial correlation was identified between uncertainty avoidance and customer complaint behaviour. According to the literature, in cultures where uncertainty avoidance is high, the tendency for complaint behaviour is lower (Liu et al., 2001). In another study, it was observed that high uncertainty avoidance increased the likelihood for an individual to take private action (De Matos and Leis, 2013). In our research, we identified a low-level correlation between high uncertainty avoidance and public action, whereas there is a high correlation between high uncertainty avoidance and private action. Thus, it was observed that among the respondents in our study, those included in the uncertainty avoidance dimension preferred private action in the case of dissatisfaction. In these societies, reacting with praise in the case of high quality service is more common; however, these

guests are also more willing to share their dissatisfaction with others through negative word-of-mouth communication and leave the hotel.

- There was no significant correlation between uncertainty avoidance and no action. This result demonstrates that in the societies where uncertainty avoidance is high, individuals tend to display a complaint behaviour through public or private action.

- Another finding in favour of our hypotheses was the relationship between individualism/ collectivism and public action behaviour. In the literature, various correlations have been identified between the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension and complaint behaviour (Watkins and Liu, 1996). Customers from individualist cultures were more likely to report their complaints to the management than those from collectivist cultures (Liu and McClure, 2001). In cultures with high collectivism, complaints are generally shared with others through negative word-of-mouth communication and, therefore, these societies generally show a preference for private action (Kitapci, 2009). According to collectivist cultures, reporting a complaint is a disturbing action (Liu and McClure, 2001), which can result in "losing face" (Ngai *et al.*, 2007), as well as causing embarrassment (Liu and McClure, 2001). According to our results, there was a negative correlation between individualism/collectivism and public action. The expressions used in our survey were collectivism orientated, it is understood, therefore, that the negative correlation is between individualism and public action. The result obtained supports the existing literature and it is understood that individualist cultures were more willing to voice their dissatisfaction and try to find solutions to their complaints. Apart from this result, no significant correlation was found between individualism/collectivism and private action or no action. According to this result, we conclude that guests from individualist societies prefer to ask for compensation for bad service rather than admitting it, or sharing it with others. In societies with individualist cultural characteristics, individuals adopt an honest and direct communication style and their independent benefits remain at the forefront. In terms of the complaint process for these groups, hotel managers should come up with strategies similar to those for the high hierarchy group mentioned in the power distance dimension.

- No significant correlations were found between either the long-term/short-term orientation or masculinity/femininity cultural dimensions and complaint behaviour. Some researchers have claimed that strict lines should not be drawn about whether a society bears masculine/feminine characteristics and that it is more accurate to use more masculine/more feminine concepts (Sargut, 2001). It is thought that the lack of correlation between masculinity/femininity and complaint behaviour may be caused by blurred concepts of masculinity and femininity in individuals' minds. The lack of correlation between long-term/short-term orientation and complaint behaviour was likely because of the sector of interest in this study. In tourism, participants are distanced from the concept of time during their holiday, so they may not associate the time with their dissatisfaction.

- Yüksel (2006) concluded that individuals from masculine cultures would be more willing to report their complaints; however, this was a hypothesis and was not empirically supported. In Dortyol's (2014) study, where service quality perception— an issue related to complaint behaviour and national culture correlation—was analysed, the authors concluded that because the masculinity values of individuals increase, their service quality perception will also increase, and individuals with higher femininity values have a higher satisfaction level. Donthu and Yoo (1998) focused on the perception of service quality (not directly on complaint behaviour), and concluded that long-term oriented societies were more likely to tolerate bad service, whereas there was a perfect service expectation among short-term orientated societies.

Hotel administration can be provided with the following recommendations regarding cultural characteristics and complaint behaviour:

- generate internal customers willing to receive and solve complaints;

- transfer the authority and the responsibility to receive and solve complaints to the staff;

- develop a strong organizational culture and management principles for achieving customer satisfaction and generating unique service experiences;

- develop easy-to-access complaint channels;

- develop a strong database for customer classification and support this database with user-friendly software;

- prioritize staff training;

- employ staff from different cultures;

- address different customer groups with different service concepts and apply this to each management process; and

- keep up with innovations and current studies on this issue.

Limitations of the research and suggestions for future research

The interpretation of the results, and the solutions developed, are discussed above; however, the study had some limitations. The sample population of the study included only foreign tourists coming to Manavgat district in 2015. Thus, the research findings are obtained only within this period and with the participation of these particular tourists.

Another limitation of the research is its focus solely on hotel management, within the whole tourism sector. Including managers of other products/services within the tourism sector would contribute to generalizing the results. Furthermore, including expressions that measure customer satisfaction (which could also be one of the limitations of the research), would make it possible to obtain more detailed results.

The research presented here only reflects the customer's perspective. However, if the correlations between cultural dimensions and customer relations were also considered, hotel managers would gain a better understanding of the problems, complaint solutions and the areas that should be the focus of staff training.

Research on intercultural differences often focuses on service quality, tourist area selection and information gathering during the purchase process. Apart from this, more research on complaint behaviour and its management, which is a crucial factor in retaining current customers and achieving satisfaction, needs to be conducted. Larger samples and reaching more participants would be useful in future studies.

Various suggestions for additional studies on masculinity/femininity and long-term/short-term orientation – where no correlation was determined based on the results of this study – are given below. Our sample population included mostly German, Russian and English participants. When compared to the nations in our sample, the scores of guests from countries such as Japan, Sweden, and Norway are rather dominant. When the country limitations in the research of Hofstede (1984) are considered, where masculinity/femininity dimensions were generated, it is seen that Japan bore high masculine characteristics, whereas countries such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark bore very high feminine characteristics. Thus, conducting a study in the context of the nations mentioned above, where masculine/feminine characteristics are dominant, may reveal relationships with complaint behaviours more clearly.

The lack of correlations related to time orientation seemed to arise from the study being conducted within the tourism sector, with customers on holiday who are removed from matters of time. It is thought that a study conducted on a sector such as finance, where time dimensions can more clearly be traced, may obtain more specific results.

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