BREAKING BARRIERS FOR BANGLADESHI FEMALE SOLO TRAVELERS

**ABSTRACT**

Asian Muslim women's travel habits are sorely under-researched. In response to various calls for research in this area, this study utilizes Hofstede's five cultural dimensions to determine how Bangladeshi cultural values inhibit and/or enhance travel constraints for solo Muslim female travelers and the subsequent effects on solo travel behavior. We propose solo travel as a strategic tourism development tool to achieve mobility rights and gender equality particularly for destinations that are highly populated with more women than men. Introducing an interpretivist qualitative approach, the study extracted both survey and open-ended responses from 307 frequent Bangladeshi solo travelers that were recruited from a women-only English-speaking Facebook Bangladeshi travel group. The findings reveal that this group is constrained by a unique combination of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural factors. Power-distance, masculinity, and uncertainty-avoidance also play key roles. Sustainable and practical applications are outlined for destination management organizations, travel planners, policy makers, non-governmental organizations, and for-profit tour companies that benefit both Bangladeshi solo female travelers and those with whom they interact.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Although recent studies emphasize the importance of solo travel for Asian women to build their courage and confidence (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018) and breakthrough social gender systems (Xu & Liu, 2018), most research to date has focused on Western solo female travelers from countries that typically enjoy strong economic success and are rooted in Christian or secular cultures (Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2018). There is a growing base of work regarding women traveling with a family or group from Eastern/Asian world regions, focusing on Chinese (Guo, 2014; Li, Wen, & Leung, 2011; Zhang & Hitchcock, 2017), Taiwanese (Tseng & Li, 2004), Korean (Bui, Wilkins, & Lee, 2013; Kim, Lee, & Chung, 2013) Japanese (Fan & Zheng, 2007; Okazaki & Hirose, 2009), and Southeast Asia (Asbollah, Lade, & Michael, 2013; Othman, 2006; Tran & Walter, 2014). However, very little research has focused on Asian solo women travelers.

Particularly, work examining female solo travelers from Muslim societies is scarce (Nikjoo, Markwell, & Nikbin, 2021). Chang (2015) suggested that to better understand the Asian tourism market, the research lens should be more inclusive. Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, and Arcodia's (2017) review of research on Asian travelers found only one study that discussed the constraints of Muslim female travelers from Southeast Asia (Asbollah et al., 2013). This work found that women's travel behavior was constrained by a 'culture bubble' characterized by domesticated gender roles and religious rituals that required women to comply with Islamic dress codes, choose specific destinations to access halal food, and seek prayer room spaces. Despite the distinct challenges and travel patterns of solo women travelers in Muslim countries, particularly in Asia, travel constraint research in countries such as Bangladesh has not been explored.

Approximately 88% of the Bengali population is Islamic (nationsonline.org). Although half of the population is female (Asaduzzaman, Kabir, & Radovic-Markovic, 2015) and the country has had two female prime ministers at various times since 1991, the general opportunities for women in Bangladeshi society are perceived as limited. In particular, the status of women in Bangladesh has been ranked as the lowest in the world based on metrics related to education, health, children, employment, marriage, and social equity (Gocio & Kulkarni, 2016). Entrenched patriarchal Muslim norms have left some women with little control over their resources (Yount, et al., 2018). Although rapid migration from rural to urban locations (e.g., the city of Dhaka) for better education and employment has been found to increase women's financial independence, communal rather than individualistic ties to home villages, family, and customs remain deeply rooted and limiting (Hossain, Khan, & Ahmed, 2016). These cultural contradictions highlight the unique background of the emerging Bangladeshi solo female traveler and reflect similar changes and trends in many predominantly Muslim countries in Asia and the Middle East.

Understanding these contradictions and complexities has potential for both applied and theoretical contributions. Practically, the importance of examining constraints to international travel for women in developing countries is crucial in order to broaden this group's experiences and provide exposure to new and varied ideas, but equally importantly, to create opportunities to educate the world regarding the ideas, capabilities, intellects, and importance of women in these countries. Acknowledging women placed-based identity as linked to development and livelihood opportunities reduces tendencies to glamourize customs that reinforces traditional gender roles (Jim enez-Esquinas, 2017). Accordingly, traveling impacts women empowerment in several ways; for example, several studies of female tourists in western societies affirmed that they became more confident and independent after engaging in adventure travel (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Doran, 2016). Movements induce socio-cultural change and can disrupt and transform

gender norms and roles (Eger, Munas, & Hsu, 2021). For example, Nikjoo et al.'s (2022) study that examined experiences of Iranian middle-aged women who participated in all women tours reported how this kind of tourism made women feel happy due to a sense of freedom from their daily responsibilities. The women noted that being away from Muslim impose rules provided an "exciting sense of emancipation" (p. 6) and a forum where they can engage in deep communications with women of similar age on a wide range of issues related to life challenges. Also, Nepali women felt empowered when they challenged the patriarchy systems in tourism by engaging in entrepreneurial activities, trekking and tour guiding (Hillman & Radel, 2022). This research provides evidence that tourism, when developed correctly and equitably, has potential to empower women. Women traveling solo can be seen as an indicator of women's empowerment and progress towards achieving gender equality (Cornwall, 2016). Accomplishing gender equality and empowering women features are among the most important sustainable development goals (SDGs) set forth by the United Nations and is key to achieving social sustainability (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). Yet the sustainable tourism paradigm has resisted incorporating gender equality and gender analysis as core principles (Ferguson & Alarcón, 2015).

When solo female travelers from countries like Bangladesh are constrained from travel, there are also disadvantages to the larger society. Lack of travel exposure can play a role in perpetuating the cycle of imposed social norms that leaves women with limited control over their self-identity (Bosangit et al., 2015), and resources (Yount, et al., 2018). Conversely, when women travel, individual and collective benefits can be realized. Prior studies suggest that travel experiences can be transformational for women, thus leading to self-actualization (McClinchey, 2015). Solo travel provides a space for women to resist perceived social and sexualized surveillance, self-reflect, self-develop and educate themselves about the world by overcoming travel barriers imposed on by family and society (Jordan & Gibson, 2005). These attributes produce a sense of confidence that permeates from their traveling endeavors to their day-to-day life. Also, the tourism industry can benefit from the development of policies, products, and promotions aimed at this growing group in order to enhance and encourage their solo travel experiences as they gain economic independence and engage with destinations around the globe. The findings could provide a more innovative approach in how destination marketing organizations, travel planners, tour operators, regional and national policy makers, non-governmental organizations, and for-profit tour companies can recognize the benefits, lower barriers and create experiences for this niche of travelers, facilitating cultural interaction.

Although there is a growing interest in studies on the social development of tourism, the emphasis has been on the enabling or disabling effects of tourism on hosts' residents and communities (e.g., Nunkoo, Smith & Ramkissoon, 2013). However, tourism activities that engage women from host communities (e.g., solo travel) to enhance their confidence and quality of life have been overlooked (King et al., 1993; Qiu Zhang et al., 2017). Empowering women, especially those living in vulnerable societies, can reduce barriers that prevent them from realizing their full potential. Empowerment is defined as "an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life" (Sahay, 1998). It involves the successful pursuit of livelihoods and opportunity to enjoy their human rights as meaningful participants, actors, and leaders in their communities (Esquivel, 2016). For example, Nassani et al. (2019) discovered that financial empowerment policies act as a catalyst to empower women through tourism development. These changes resulted from implementing Standard and Poor's global equity indices, that specifically target gender disparities in primary

3

and secondary school enrolment and increase women's employment opportunities across various tourism sectors including transportation, food and beverage, and handicraft. Accordingly, these opportunities give women autonomy to make decisions pertaining to travel, education, and household size (Nassani et al., 2019).

Therefore, the research is timely, responding to Ferguson's call for more studies that offer "alternative ways of understanding the relationship between gender and tourism development and provide inspiration for creative and progressive ways of harnessing tourism to meet this goal." (Ferguson, 2011, p.246). While a great deal of work has focused on theories surrounding constraints to travel (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey; 1991; Hung & Petrick, 2010; Lai, Li, & Harril, 2013; Han et al., 2019; Ratthinan & Selamat., 2019), very little has examined how theory holds up in the context of Muslim female travelers, particularly in terms of cultural identity (Asbollah et al., 2013; Aichison, Hopkins, & Kwan, 2007). Applying a theoretical framework such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions on constraints to travel can illuminate the challenges for Bangladeshi solo women travelers and further refine the theory. Specifically, although Hofstede's theory has been used in previous cross-cultural research contexts, there are few studies in which researchers have assessed in-group cultural orientation at the individual level (Yoo, Donthu, & Lenartowicz, 2011). In response to various calls for research in this area (e.g., Ferguson, 2011; Godbey et al., 2010; Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2019) this study utilizes Hofstede's five cultural dimensions to determine how Bangladeshi cultural values inhibit and/or enhance travel for solo Muslim female travelers and the subsequent effects on solo travel behavior from a south-central Asia perspective. The three research questions explored are:

1. What are the travel constraints of Bangladeshi solo female travelers?
2. How do cultural identity dimensions influence travel constraints for Bangladeshi solo female travelers?
3. How do travel constraints influence current solo travel behavior and future solo travel intentions for Bangladeshi solo female travelers?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Travel constraints for women: the case of Bangladeshi Muslim women*

Through steady economic growth, poverty levels in Bangladesh have reduced from 44% in 1991 to 14.8% in 2017 (World Bank, 2020). While this economic boon has raised the standard of living for most Bangladeshis, social norms continue to impede women's progress compared to men's (Asaduzzaman & Radović-Marković, 2015). For example, Bangladeshi women experience safety-related issues, abuse, and exploitation in the labor market, are often dependent on relatives for economic support, face patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted negative stereotypes, and in some cases may not be educated (Refworld, 2014). In general, Bangladeshi women are treated as subordinate to men both within the home and in public society (Chowdhury, 2016). Despite these limitations, some women who migrate to urban areas have increased access to savings, manage their household expenses, and are able to travel freely (Kabeer, 2017), thus defying their societies' gender limitations. These factors contribute to the liberation of urban Bangladeshi working women to pursue their travel desires. In Bangladesh, access to transportation is pertinent to the ability to travel; however, the mobility of women is constrained by the lack of affordability and safety of both domestic and international public

4

transport (Rahman, 2010). In particular, 94% of Bangladeshi women who use public transportation have experienced physical and verbal abuse along with other forms of sexual harassment (*Daily Star*, 2018). These barriers may motivate women to alter arrangements to travel, when possible, but the majority must continue to negotiate these constraints since public transport is the only way to fulfill their desire to travel for leisure purposes.

Although a few studies have explored the barriers and constraints for Bangladeshi women specific to mobility (Kabeer, 2017; Kotikula & Raza, 2020), there is limited work exploring certain power dynamics constraining Asian Muslim women's travel experiences (Tavakoli & Mura, 2021). It may be presumed that Muslim women prefer to travel to other Muslim countries, or that they are averse to travel altogether, when in reality, the Qur'an encourages Muslims to travel for cultural, historical, and social engagement with others in order to disseminate God's word (Falk, Ballantyne, & Packer 2012), relieve stress, and improve travelers' faith in Allah (Battour et al., 2011; Yusof & Muhammad, 2013; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Like other tourist groups, Muslims are connected by their religion, culture and gender (Asbollah et al., 2013). As a result, these components must be examined when determining the travel constraints of Muslim women. While travel constraints may vary across national borders, Tavakoli and Mura's (2021) critical review of Muslim women travelers' constraints suggests that constraints are recurringly experienced at both the micro (individual and family) and macro (national and international) levels. At the micro level, solo female travelers are concerned about their safety due to high incidents of sexual harassment and may perceive wearing a hijab as a risk because of the rise in Islamophobia following the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). Others are deterred by guilt, as thoughts of leaving their family and day to day duties behind causes mental stress (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). This is because many solo female travelers are financially dependent on family and seeks to preserve a loving relationship with them (Tavakoli & Mura, 2021). In fact, it is quite normal for Muslim women to seek approval from other family members prior to traveling (Tavakoli & Mura, 2017), which requires their prioritization of work and family obligation, leaving limited time for travel (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). For example, the social and cultural norms of Malay Muslim women expect them to be subservient wives, caring mothers, and obedient daughters (Abdullah et al., cited in Ratthinan & Selmat, 2019). Travel becomes even more restricted for women engaged in professional careers, who would prioritize their cultural responsibilities above opportunities to travel for self- fulfilment (Tavakoli & Mura, 2021)

At the national level, Islamic cultural practices and socio-religious norms are also identified as constraints to women travel (Tavakoli & Mura, 2021). For example, unless solo women travelers book hotels in Iran through the authorities or travel agencies, they are not permitted to stay (Tavakoli & Mura, 2017). For women desiring to travel overseas, they would have to go through the process of acquiring a visa, which is particularly difficult if applying from Muslim majority countries (Tavakoli & Mura, 2021). Consequently, these cultural and social norms affect women's mobility decisions, especially those pertaining to travel. Therefore, there if travel is positioned as a viable and vibrant tourist activity for solo women travelers from a Muslim-majority country like Bangladesh, it could potentially improve diplomacy locally and internationally (Nye, 2004) and enhance empowerment for a wide variety of marginalized groups. In addition to constraints Muslim women experience in general, this research also seeks to examine how specific cultural dimensions influence travel constraints for solo female travelers from Bangladesh, and its subsequent effect on solo travel intentions.

The effect of culture on consumer behavior has well been established across various service sectors including travel and tourism (Manrai & Manrai, 2011). Hofstede et al. (1980) defines culture as complex, comprising of individuals' attitudes, values, preferences, and behaviors (Warner & Joynt, 2002). Hofstede (1980) identified five cultural value dimensions that is generally accepted as the most prominent approach when studying differences in human behavior (Manrai & Manrai, 2011). These include power-distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty-avoidance, long-term vs. short-term, and masculinity-femininity (Hofstede, 1994) (Fig. 1). Power-distance refers to power inequality between superiors and subordinates. Individualism-collectivism describes family ties where value is ascribed to self (individualism) vs. extended family (collectivism). Members of collectivism-oriented societies are expected to be loyal to their immediate and extended family without question. Uncertainty-avoidance describes people's tolerance for ambiguity. Societies with high uncertainty avoidance embrace rituals and written rules. Long-term vs. short-term relates to orientation toward the future, and masculinity-femininity dictates the gender roles in society.
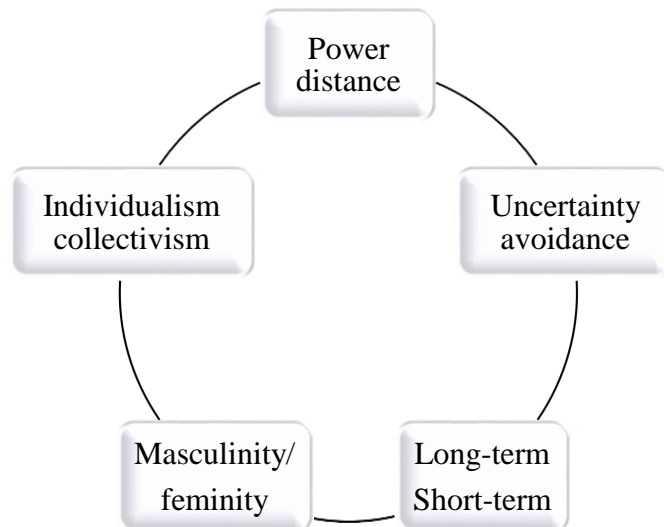


**Fig. 1.** Hofstede's (1980) five cultural dimensions

Travel and tourism research combining Hofstede's cultural dimensions to tourist behavior finds that tourist behaviors in the before-travel, during-travel, and after-travel stages differ significantly in terms of the applicability and process through which Hofstede's cultural dimensions operate (Manrai & Manrai, 2011). In the before-travel phase, various motivations/benefits influence travel decision (Prebensen, 2005; Prebensen et al., 2003; Litvin & Kar, 2003). For example, Hofstede's individualism dimension was found to increase tourist satisfaction when there is alignment between destination image and the tourist's self-image (Litvin & Kar, 2004). When the collectivity-driven life cycle concept was compared across western and eastern cultures (March, 2000), consumer behavior was further segmented based on travel duration, experiences and activities sought and travel companion. More relevant to the present study, extensive trip planning (Money & Crotts, 2003), perceptions of travel risk, safety concerns, and travel anxiety were found to influence tourist travel decisions (Ressinger & Mavondo, 2005). Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance tend to have a low threshold for risk

6

and uncertainty and are less likely to engage in risk reducing behavior prior to and during travel stages (Money & Crotts, 2003, Manraj & Manraj, 2011). Also, significant relationships were found between socio-cultural risks, anxiety, and intention to travel internationally (Ressinger & Mavondo, 2005). These studies suggest that the effect of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on tourists' behavior vary depending on culture and group identity. Although several travel and tourism studies have successfully combined Hofstede's cultural dimensions with tourists travel behavior, they predominantly focus on travel motivations (Kotler & Keller, 2009; Chick et al., 2015) and rarely on travel constraints.

Exploring travel constraints are equally significant in that it increases awareness of culture-specific constraints that can potentially impede travel behavior and offer solutions to mitigate these issues. According to Hofstede's (2001) national culture features, Bangladesh is a collective and masculine society with high uncertainty-avoidance and power-distance and a short-term orientation toward the future (Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990), accordingly, these values may further impede women's freedom to achieve gender equality and engage in solo travel experiences that may improve their quality of life. Considering these gaps in literature, the present study extends previous studies by combining travel constraints as experienced by Bangladeshi women to Hofstede's cultural dimensions and travel intention.

2.3 *Applying the hierarchical constraints model as a link between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and travel intention*

Previous studies have built on Crawford and Godbey's (1987) and Chick and Dong's (2003) hierarchical constraints model (HCM) to propose interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints to travel (Fig 2). Intrapersonal barriers refer to people's psychological states and attributes including stress, attitudes, anxiety and perceived self-skill that may prevent one from participating in leisure activities (Fredman & Henberlein, 2005). Interpersonal barriers refer to social interactions with family and friends, and include anxiety, stress, and perceived self-skill, while structural barriers include inaccessibility and lack of time and money (Fredman & Henberlein, 2005). Hung and Petrick (2010) suggested that these defined categories not only have capabilities to prevent the act of travel, but also the quality of travel.
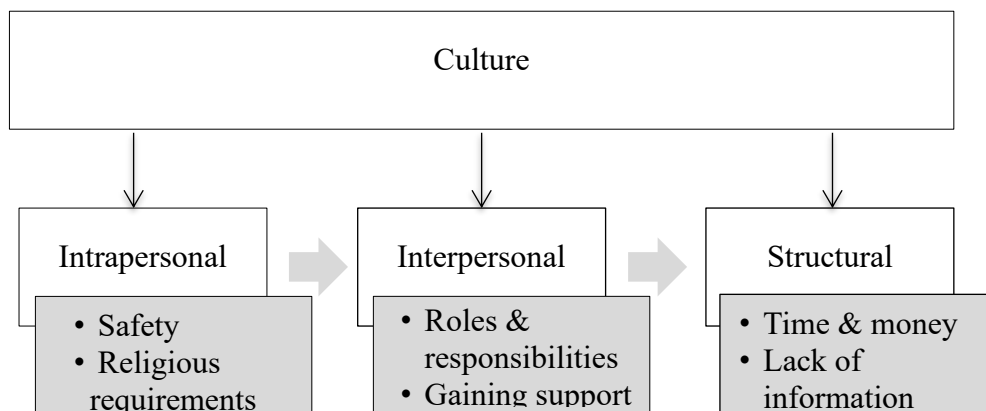


**Fig. 2.** Source: Ratthinan & Selamat (2019), refined from Crawford & Godbey (1987) and Chick & Dong (2003)

After 20 years of evaluating the HCM, Godbey et al. (2010) made an appeal for contributions aimed at reforming impressions of the negotiation and constraint processes, particularly for women in developing countries in order to increase their leisure opportunities that will ultimately contribute to gender equality. Negotiation is defined as strategies and measures implemented to overcome travel constraints and rejecting related socio-cultural norms (Masika & Bailur, 2015; Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). This was relevant to the present study because social behaviors are governed by norms and rules that align with national values in several Muslim-majority countries (Shakeela & Cooper, 2009), including Bangladesh. If these rules are not negotiated, a traveler may become disempowered (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019), thus reversing the quest for mobility rights and gender equality. Additionally, previous research has indicated that since cultures perceive constraints differently (Chick & Dong, 2003), examining the ethos of people sharing a common culture could further the understanding of constraints (Shinew, Floyd, & Parry, 2004).

While prior studies validated the effect of culture as a significant constraint in relation to the HCM (Chick & Dong, 2003; Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019), few established a link between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and travel constraints in a cross-cultural context. Furthermore, in these cases, few dimensions were used as a proxy of culture. Particularly, individualism-collectivism was the most widely studied of Hofstede's five dimensions to show various psychological differences across cultures in a leisure constraint context (Walker, Jackson, & Deng 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995) or to assess cross-cultural differences in relation to travel and destination image (Chen, Chen, & Okumus, 2013; Chick et al., 2015; Dong & Chick, 2012). The literature has not applied HCM as a link between Hofstede's five cultural dimensions and travel intention. Considering the need to unmask the cultural contradictions and complexities of travel for women in Muslim-majority destinations, this study responded to Godbey et al.'s (2010) appeal for contributions aimed at reforming impressions of negotiation and constraints processes, particularly for women in developing countries, to increase their leisure travel opportunities. Therefore, a new link between Hofstede's five cultural dimensions, HCM, and current and future travel intentions was established, thus extending the literature on solo travel, cultural identity values, and travel constraints (Fig. 3).

| Hofstede's (1980) Cultural Dimensions | Bangladeshi Women's Travel Constraints | Behavior Intentions |
|---|---|---|
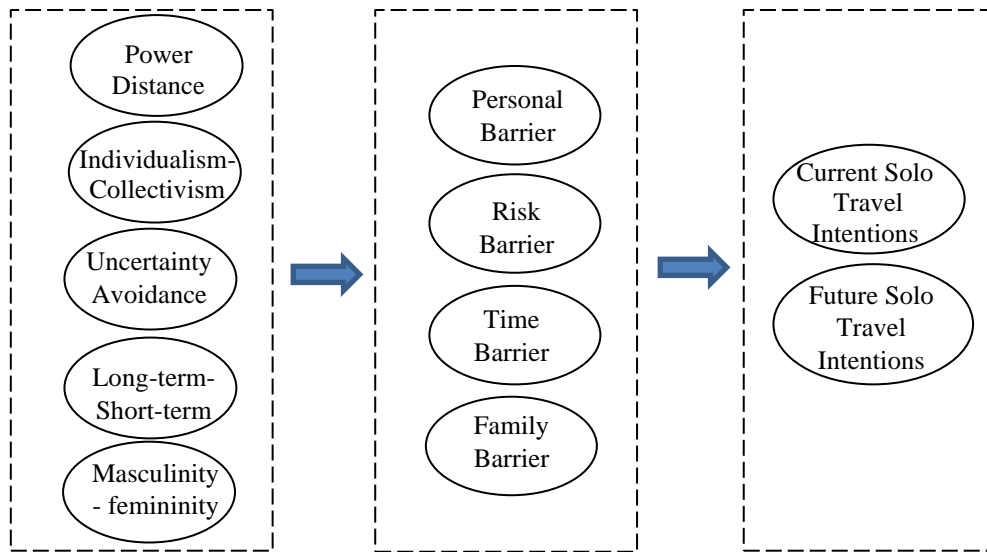
**Fig. 3**. Proposed conceptual model connecting Bangladeshi women travel constraints to Hofstede cultural dimensions and solo travel intentions

## 3. **METHODOLOGY**

### 3.1 *Critique of Hofstede's dimensions and scale*

Prior studies aimed at understanding the effect of culture on tourism preferences have proposed ad-hoc cultural measures such as indigenous community (Fourie & Santana-Gellego, 2013), cultural vicinity (Gil-Pareja et al., 2007), or assigning a numeric value to citizenship cross-culturally (Reisinger & Crotts, 2010). This is arguably a reductionist approach to the multi-dimensional nature of culture as a construct (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Hofstede et al. (1980) defined culture as complex, comprised of individuals' attitudes, values, preferences, and behaviors (Warner & Joynt, 2002). Many scholars have recommended more comprehensive measures, including the World Value Survey (Inglehart, 2004), Berry's model of acculturation (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008), and Hofstede's index (Hofstede et al., 2010), which originated from Hofstede's (1980) five-dimensional measure of culture.

As with any theoretical framework, there are several critiques regarding Hofstede's cultural dimensions, as well as compelling counterarguments. Yoo et al. (2011) insisted that Hofstede's cultural dimensions could not add value to the literature without including the contradictions and subtleties that are often found within cultural groups. However, an emic approach assessing within-group variations to provide culture-rich information remains elusive (Ahn & Mckercher, 2018). Other scholars have challenged the current relevance of the dimensions (Yang, Liu, & Li, 2019) but Ng and Lim's (2019) work confirmed the validity of Hofstede's original cultural dimensions in assessing consumer behavior. Scholars have also critiqued Hofstede's oversimplification of cultural dimensions (McSweeney, 2009), particularly across national cultures (Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2012; Venaik & Brewer, 2016); others have argued that Hofstede's cultural dimensions are not applicable at the individual level, thereby excluding subculture variations (Eckhardt, 2002). In response to these weaknesses, Yoo et al. (2011) developed a 26-point cultural value scale (CVSCALE) that allows researchers to assess

9

Hofstede's cultural dimensions at the individual level "for a more general context while achieving satisfactory psychometric properties" (Yoo et al., 2011, p. 197). While there is great potential for this adaptation in hospitality and tourism research, of the 596 studies that cited Yoo et al.'s (2011) CVSCALE, only four have been published in hospitality journals (Crotts & Mazanec, 2018; Litvin, 2019; Mariani & Predvoditeleva, 2019; Manosuthi, Lee, & Han 2020), and ten in tourism journals (Alcantara-Pilar et al., 2017; Mazanec et al., 2015; Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2018; Sunny, Patrick, & Rob, 2019; Pezzuti et al., 2018; Šerić, 2018; Yu & Ngan, 2019; Wen, Hu, & Kim, 2018; Wu, Chen, & Cheng, 2019), with none assessing within-group variations in a solo travel context. Ahn and McKercher (2018) examined within-group variations of the CVSCALE using a sample of Korean tourists to assess the relationship between cultural values and international tourism but found no significant differences among respondents when Hofstede's scale was applied. As a direct effort to address the research gap, the present study applied the Yoo et al. (2011) CVSCALE to assess within-group differences among Bangladeshi solo female travelers and analyze the subsequent influence these differences may have on travel constraints.

3.2 *Sampling parameters and recruitment process*

We are fortunate to live in a time where social media is developing in a way that provides a source of empowerment for many. It is also a living laboratory of sorts, one that researchers can freely access. In a recent study, technology was revealed as a negotiating tool among Muslim female solo travelers (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). Technology was found to empower travelers due to its ability to provide a virtual space for people to interact and inform (Yu et al., 2014). An earlier study by Hashim et al. (2011) found that some women use virtual spaces as means to be heard. A baseline internet search revealed that Bangladeshi women use some of these technology tools including travel-support groups on social media platforms, travel blogs, and videography content including vlogs and online interviews. Using social media platform as an example, there are currently over 10 English-speaking travel groups on Facebook and Instagram featuring Bangladeshi women traveling solo and sharing their experiences. In a word press article, one traveler from desperatetraveller.com shared her experience of the stereotypical questions she was barraged with while traveling globally and the astonishment from travelers when they learnt of a female who travels alone from a Muslim majority country. These strategies are commonly used by women in restrictive societies to eliminate barriers. It is for these reasons that we are studying women who take advantage of online travel interest groups that focus on Muslim women from Bangladesh.

Data for this study were collected between September 2019 and December 2019 via social media sites using Qualtrics. Participants were recruited from women-only English-speaking Facebook and Instagram Bangladeshi travel groups. The focus on English-language groups was deliberate for several reasons: English is commonly taught as the primary second language in Bangladesh (Din & Akhlaq, 2019); fluency in the English language is linked to occupational and social upward mobility among Asian travelers (Gao 2012); and this form of stratification enabled us to target Bangladeshi women with the means to travel solo. Targeting English-speaking travel groups also was beneficial because English was a language shared among the researchers: One researcher is also Bangladeshi and therefore could interpret the cultural uses and subtleties unique to Bangladeshi English. The three groups targeted were *Solo Women Travelers of Bangladesh*, *Desperate Travellers*, and *Lady Travelers Bangladesh*. The administrators for these groups were contacted via Facebook and Instagram direct messaging to request permission to

distribute the survey link on the travel groups' profile pages. To encourage participation and recognize the value of participants' time and reflection, the researchers provided incentives to both the group administrator/s and the target sample. Group administrators were offered payment to source and distribute gift card vouchers. Participants were offered gift vouchers valued at USD 5–10 that could be redeemed at local Bangladeshi retail and service stores. Of the three solo travel groups contacted, only one group *Desperate Travellers* (DT) agreed to distribute the survey. DT has approximately 5,318 members and provides users with a wide range of outbound travel attractions, food, and lodging for Bangladeshi female travelers. Since some of the members of DT were mere subscribers, not avid travelers, they were subsequently filtered out of the sample population, leaving 307 useable responses. To capture the contextual nature of the findings, go beyond item-scale reliability, and introduce an interpretivist qualitative component to the study, one of the DT administrators, who is also a frequent Bangladeshi solo traveler, was engaged in the data analysis. Collecting a second wave of data from all participants was not feasible due to funding constraints. Instead, the researcher sent a follow up email to the DT administrator with a request to assist with the interpretation of the findings from the first research question, "what are the travel constraints of solo female travelers from Bangladesh?". In the email, the respondents were asked to share what they thought could be the reasons behind the results based on their experiences and observations as experts in this area. This process added considerably to the richness and interpretation of the data, reduced the potential for cultural bias and enabled researchers to maintain objectivity. According to Xiao (1997), applying complementary open-ended ended questions to questionnaire survey enables researchers to capture a more holistic comprehension of the research problem.

3.3 *Measurement of constructs*

The survey consisted of four parts, with the foundation adopted from Yoo et al.'s (2011) CVSCALE, an improved version of Hofstede's (1980) individual cultural dimensions scale. Next, an exhaustive list of travel barriers developed by Chen and Wu (2009) as adapted from Crawford and Godbey (1987) and Chick and Dong's (2003) HCM were also included. The final section of the survey captured demographic information about participants, including age, income, education, marital status, frequency of travel, and living arrangements. Current solo travel intention and the likelihood to continue future solo travel were also incorporated in the survey (see Appendix I). All items except demographic variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Of the 408 responses collected, 307 were useable. The excluded responses were due to participants failing attention check questions or did not currently reside in Bangladesh. Reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, and correlational analyses were undertaken using SPSS, Amos Version 26.

## 4. RESULTS

4.1 *Descriptive stats*

Table 1 presents the correlation coefficients of the summative measures and their corresponding means and standard deviations. Data were also successfully checked for normality, skewness, kurtosis, and outliers.

**Table 1**
Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients.

| Measure | B_P | B_R | B_T | B_F | C_P | C_C | C_A | C_L | C_M | C_S | F_S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B_P | 1 | .13 | .09 | .18 | .30 | .00 | .02 | .00 | .14 | .00 | .01 |
| B_R | .36** | 1 | .08 | .07 | .07 | .01 | .00 | .01 | .05 | .05 | .02 |
| B_T | .30** | .29** | 1 | .08 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .01 | .07 | .02 |
| B_F | .42** | .26** | .28* | 1 | .08 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .03 | .04 | .01 |
| C_P | .55** | .27** | .07 | .28** | 1 | .02 | .00 | .03 | .26 | .00 | .00 |
| C_C | .02 | .08 | -.07 | .04 | .15** | 1 | .14 | .04 | .04 | .00 | .01 |
| C_A | -.15** | .07 | .03 | .00 | -.02 | .38** | 1 | .19 | .01 | .00 | .01 |
| C_L | .04 | .11 | .03 | .05 | .17** | .21** | .44** | 1 | .02 | .01 | .00 |
| C_M | .37** | .22** | .12* | .18** | .51** | .21** | .08 | .14* | 1 | .01 | .00 |
| C_solo | -.03 | -.23** | -.26** | -.19** | .07 | .02 | -.02 | .09 | .12* | 1 | .26 |
| F_solo | -.11 | -.15* | -.14* | -.12* | -.01 | .08 | -.09 | -.04 | .01 | .51** | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Means | 2.08 | 2.78 | 3.00 | 2.66 | 2.21 | 3.61 | 4.02 | 3.71 | 2.62 | 3.38 | 4.02 |
| SD | .67 | .84 | .80 | .86 | .77 | .56 | .41 | .44 | .73 | .96 | .76 |

Note: Values above the diagonal are squared correlations and values below the diagonal are correlations; **p<.01, *p<.05; B_P – personal barrier, B_R – perceived risk barrier, B_T – time barrier, B_F – family barrier, C_P – power-distance, C_C – individualism-collectivism, C_A – uncertainty-avoidance, C_L – long-term vs. short-term, C_M – masculinity-femininity, C_Solo – Current solo travel intention, F_Solo – future solo travel intention.

## 4.2 *Profile of respondents*

On average, participants took approximately three solo trips per year. Participants' ages ranged from 19–29 (54.8%), 30–39 (42.1%), and above 40 years (8.6%). Over one-third (35%) had a master's degree, 44% had a bachelor's degree, 8% had an associate's degree, and fewer identified as high school graduates (6%). Converting total household income to US currency, most participants earned less than $20,000 per year (38%), 20% earned $20,000 to $39,000 per year, and 10% earned $40,000 to $59,000 per year. With respect to relationship status, a little more than half were single (56%), and fewer were married (35%), divorced (7%), or separated (1%). Also, 36% had recently undergone a divorce or serious breakup. Most of the participants did not have children (72%), still lived with other family members (79%), and currently had a job or ran a business (77%).

## 4.3 *Assessment of measurement model*

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to determine the adequacy of the cultural dimensions' measurement model in AMOS Version 26. The CFA resulted in elimination of two items from the collectivism-individualism dimension: "Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group" and "Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer;" two items from the uncertainty-avoidance dimension: "It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do" and "Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me;" and two items from long-term vs. short-term orientation: "I am persistent in spite of opposition" and "I value personal steadiness and stability." Multiple fit indices indicated that the revised measurement fit the data well ($\chi 2$ (131) = 291.8, p<.001, CFI: .95; TLI: .93, IFI: .96, NFI: .90, RMSEA: .05).

Both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) of the constructs were used to measure the latent variable's internal consistency. The results indicated that both measures exceeded the minimum requirements. Convergent validity suggests that items representing a latent factor should share a high proportion of variance (Hair et al., 2010). Convergent validity was tested and considered to represent adequate convergent validity (see Table 2). Discriminant validity is the "extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs" and is determined by comparing the squared pair-wise correlations between constructs and the AVE for each construct (Hair et al., 2010, p. 687). As shown in Table 2, each construct's square root of AVE was between (.66 and .72) and was greater than their correlations with the other constructs. As such, discriminant validity was achieved, showing that each construct was statistically different from the other.

**Table 2**
Confirmatory factor analysis results for Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

| Measure | Mean | Path coefficient | Reliability coefficient | AVE | CR | SR of AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Power-distance* | | | .87 | .52 | .84 | .72 |
| People in higher positions should make decisions without consulting people in lower positions. | 2.39 | .64 | | | | |
| People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently. | 2.39 | .65 | | | | |
| People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions. | 1.92 | .80 | | | | |
| People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions. | 2.17 | .73 | | | | |
| People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions. | 2.16 | .73 | | | | |
| *Collectivism-individualism* | | | .75 | .53 | .82 | .73 |
| Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group. | 3.48 | .52 | | | | |
| Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties. | 3.57 | .74 | | | | |
| Group welfare is more important than individual rewards. | 3.88 | .87 | | | | |
| Group success is more important than individual success. | 3.79 | .75 | | | | |
| *Uncertainty-avoidance* | | | .70 | .50 | .73 | .69 |
| It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures. | 4.01 | .66 | | | | |
| Standardized work procedures are helpful. | 3.98 | .78 | | | | |
| Instructions for operations are important. | 4.12 | .65 | | | | |

13

| Measure | Mean | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Long term vs. short term* | | | .70 | .80 | .71 | .66 |
| I carefully manage my money. | 3.74 | .76 | | | | |
| I give up today's fun for success in the future. | 3.25 | .68 | | | | |
| I work hard for success in the future. | 4.02 | .69 | | | | |
| I plan for the long-term. | 3.25 | .71 | | | | |
| *Masculine-feminine* | | | .79 | .51 | .79 | .71 |
| It is more important for men to have a professional career than it is for women. | 2.32 | .80 | | | | |
| Men usually solve problems with logical analysis; women usually solve problems with intuition. | 2.58 | .68 | | | | |
| Solving difficult problems usually requires an active, forcible approach, which is typical of men. | 2.48 | .80 | | | | |
| There are some jobs that a man can always do better than a woman. | 3.09 | .53 | | | | |

*Note:* $\chi2$ (187) = 360.53, p<.001); CFI: .95; TLI: .93, IFI: .96, NFI: .90, RMSEA: .05

To generate the factors underlying travel constraints from a Bangladeshi solo female travel context, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a varimax rotation was used. Factors with eigenvalues above 1 were chosen. After multiple iterations, six items were removed that cross loaded or were below the .50 factor loading as proposed by Nunally (1978). The final EFA results suggested a four-factor solution with 11 items explaining 70.9% of the total variance. These factors were aligned with Crawford and Godbey's (1987) three-dimension HCM, to show that the intrapersonal travel domain is constrained by both personal and risk perception factors. The Bartlett's test of sphericity 1120.41 (*df* = 55, *p* <.001) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .80, indicating good predictive power for the dimensions (Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha of the travel barrier constructs ranged from .64 to .83. According to Nunally and Bernstein (1994), Cronbach's alpha tends to underestimate internal consistency; therefore, composite reliability (CR) values were also calculated. The CR values ranged from .60 to .81, which are acceptable in exploratory research (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994) (See Table 3).

**Table 3**
Exploratory factor analysis results for travel constraints.

| Measure | Mean | Path coefficient | Eigen-value | % of variance | Reliability coefficient | CR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Personal constraint* | | | 4.13 | 37.55 | .83 | .81 |
| I do not travel due to physical activity. | 2.18 | .76 | | | | |
| I do not travel due to age problems. | 1.83 | .72 | | | | |
| I do not travel because of my foreign language skill in communication. | 2.13 | .65 | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I do not travel due to fear of feeling uneasy from home. | 2.05 | .62 | | | | |
| I do not travel because of my significant other. | 2.22 | .61 | | | | |
| *Risk constraint* | | | 1.40 | 12.78 | .79 | .74 |
| I do not travel because of the perceived risk. | 2.65 | .89 | | | | |
| I do not travel because of perceived safety about destination. | 2.91 | .63 | | | | |
| *Family constraints* | | | 1.20 | 10.95 | .75 | .70 |
| I do not travel due to lack of family support. | 2.68 | .79 | | | | |
| I do not travel due to family commitments. | 2.64 | .68 | | | | |
| *Time constraints* | | | 1.07 | 9.72 | .64 | .60 |
| I do not travel due to lack of time. | 3.10 | .70 | | | | |
| I do not travel because of time commitments. | 2.91 | .61 | | | | |

The conceptual model as shown in Fig. 3 was estimated through SPSS Amos version 26 using Maximum Likelihood (ML). Table 4 shows the results from the standardized paths linking Bangladeshi women travel constraints to Hofstede's five cultural dimensions and current and future solo female travel intention.

**Table 4**

Regression path results.

| Path | Coefficient | P |
|---|---|---|
| Power Distance→Personal Barrier | .47 | *** |
| Power Distance→Risk Barrier | .22 | *** |
| Power Distance→Time Barrier | .00 | .96 |
| Power Distance→Family Barrier | .27 | *** |
| Long-term→Personal Barrier | .01 | .89 |
| Long-term→Risk Barrier | .04 | .53 |
| Long-term→Time Barrier | .03 | .59 |
| Long-term→Family Barrier | -.01 | .88 |
| Masculine→Personal Barrier | .14 | * |
| Masculine→Risk Barrier | .10 | .14 |
| Masculine→Time Barrier | .14 | * |
| Masculine→Family Barrier | .04 | .53 |
| Collectivism→Personal Barrier | -.03 | .56 |
| Collectivism→Risk Barrier | -.00 | .98 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Collectivism→Time Barrier | -.10 | .12 |
| Collectivism→Family Barrier | -.01 | .82 |
| Uncertainty Avoidance→Personal Barrier | -.15 | * |
| Uncertainty Avoidance→Risk Barrier | .05 | .40 |
| Uncertainty Avoidance→Time Barrier | -.02 | .80 |
| Uncertainty Avoidance→Family Barrier | .01 | .84 |
| Personal Barrier→Current Solo | .16 | * |
| Family Barrier→Current Solo | -.15 | * |
| Risk Barrier→Current Solo | -.19 | ** |
| Time Barrier→Current Solo | -.21 | *** |
| Time Barrier→Future Solo | -.09 | .13 |
| Risk Barrier→Future Solo | -.10 | .12 |
| Personal Barrier→Future Solo | -.02 | .79 |
| Family Barrier→Future Solo | -.06 | .31 |

*Note: \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05*

## 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 *Travel constraints of Bangladeshi women*

The travel constraints identified by Bangladeshi solo female travelers were spread across the three dimensions of Crawford and Godbey's (1987) HCM to show that Bangladeshi women were constrained by a combination of intrapersonal (personal and perceived risk), interpersonal (family support) and structural (time) factors. Particularly, the findings suggested that Bangladeshi female solo travelers were constrained by personal barriers such as their inability to communicate effectively in a foreign language, fear or feeling uneasy from home, age and physical activity, and restrictions from their significant other. Although English is an alternative language in Bangladesh, 99% of the population speaks Bengali as their primary language (Din & Akhlag, 2019). Since there are cultural differences and norms in various travel destinations, language barriers can limit tourist interaction with the locals, as well as their ability to adhere to local customs and belief systems (Ramnani, 2012). When this finding was shared with the DT administrator, she verified that accents from different English-speaking nationalities created an obstacle to communicate. The findings showing constraints pertaining to fear or feeling of uneasiness from home could be due to participants' allegiance to family, who may have dissuaded them from traveling solo, particularly since up to 77% of respondents lived with their extended families. As noted by the DT administrator:

> Traveling solo is an alien concept in Bangladesh society that gives a sense of discomfort and takes a lot of courage to leave home alone for an unknown land, unseen culture, unheard language, and unmet people. But, that's the beauty of exploration, that one gets out of their comfort zone. Being a woman ten-folds the obstacles to get out of this comfort zone. Bangladesh has a large scale of middle-class families who hold conservative mindsets and a negative perception of women traveling alone. Solo travel itself is a taboo in the society and if the traveler is a woman and moreover, if it is for leisure purposes, the questions are raised and/or at least there would be frowns. Although things are changing nowadays, especially in

16

the big cities, people are getting accustomed with more females traveling solo, but still they have to face some uncomfortable questions such as, Who are you going with? Why are you alone? How would you be able to stay alone in a foreign land? What if something bad happens to you? Or even to some extent something more offensive which might sound like invading personal space.

These comments highlight Bangladeshi social values that were also perceived as travel constraints. This quote also highlights the resilience required of the female Bangladeshi solo traveler who not only had to navigate family members' conservative views to travel solo but also endure questions from others in society regarding why they choose to participate in this "forbidden" activity. Participants' limitations due to age and physical activity could have been related to their state of dependence on family for social or moral support. For example, most participants were single (56%) and between the ages of 19 and 29 (54.1%), which implies that their travel decisions were likely influenced by their parents. Married participant (36%) may have sought permission from their husbands to travel. As observed by the DT administrator:

> Travelers' age is a matter of fact in the case of solo travel…In Bangladesh, the trend of solo traveling for leisure is limited to the upper-middle class to higher-income class. In most cases they are self-dependent, well- educated, and in the service earning their own money. That is in the age range of 25–40 on average. The female students neither can afford nor can manage their parents to get permission to travel on their own. There is a growing number of women in service or in different professions who need to travel abroad, and they combine their work trip with a pleasure one. Also, marital status plays a role here, too. Usually, single/unmarried women are able to travel more conveniently than married ones…

> The obstacles not only come from the in-laws' family but also their defined responsibilities in maintaining conjugal life as a wife or mother…Good news is, the trend is slightly but positively changing in the younger generation. There are also some cases of older women traveling alone but only to meet their family or relatives abroad.

The study also found that perceived risk and safety were constraints to solo female travel. This is not surprising given women's limited access and reports of sexual harassment when using public transportation (*Daily Star*, 2018). However, women are fighting back, using social media to 'name and shame' their victims via social media sites. The documentation and visualization of violence against women in transportation and other environments have made it an irrefutable reality (Amar, 2011). While social media platforms can be used to bring awareness to these issues, practical security measures are needed to reduce these travel barriers. The DT administrator highlighted these risk and safety concerns:

> In Bangladesh, the sense of feeling insecure is even stronger as a woman. As it is a Muslim-majority country that has their own traditional way of conservative thinking, any Western outfit on a female body catches a lot of unwanted stares or teasing. And, this is more or less similar in the subcontinent. Hence, traveling alone even within the country is an issue of

risk as well as insecurity. Also, the perception of the society that a woman should always be accompanied with a male is a deeply rooted belief here. It is also seen that female travelers do not get hotel rooms if they are traveling alone. There are numerous cases that female travelers are harassed more with showers of queries in the immigration center while leaving the country for a solo vacation.

Participants' travel constraints were also due to family commitments and lack of family support. This finding can be explained by participants' allegiance to family and the bond they share as a collectivist society. Family opinions were embraced over self. As revealed in the study, most participants still lived with their extended families or were married. Therefore, their ability to travel was influenced by their own or spousal and extended family's opinions and needs. Consequently, if the family dissuaded intentions to travel solo, participants may have conceded to save face or to grant family wishes out of respect and adherence to this cultural norm. As explained by the DT administrator:

> In Bangladesh most of the families are joint families. Unlike Westerners, the children live with their parents no matter the age. Only females move to their in-laws' house after marriage. Especially, females are greatly dependent on their parents or guardians for most of their decisions—be it the choice of getting married, or who to get married to, or where she should get a job, or about her future plans. She always needs to be able to convince her family about her goals, which is quite relaxed for the boys. Solo travel in this context is considered a luxury as well as a progressive idea. Those women who can afford to go for solo travel with their family support are considered 'lucky' and sometimes 'progressive', if that does not mean 'spoilt'…

> to maintain commitments towards her family. Some cannot make it due to sick parents at home. Some wait for long time for the day when they are able to make enough savings after maintaining family responsibilities. The stories might be different, but the challenges are always there.

The findings also showed that participants experienced travel constraints pertaining to time. Our findings suggested that up to 77% of participants were currently employed or owned a business; therefore, they may not have had enough discretionary time to travel. As experienced by the DT administrator:

> The flexibility of making your own decisions and not to be dependent on others are there, but by that time, it is hard to balance professional, family, and personal life. For example, I, despite having an avid travel history, am not able to manage time for planning my solo travel for long because of demanding job responsibility, higher study stress, and certain family commitments to look after parents. It is very hard to effectively manage all and to find a window perfect for a getaway. We usually target long holidays during Eid and/or other national holidays and if lucky to manage further leave from work, we can make it as planned. But, in that case, planning way

ahead is also not always possible due to uncertainties whether she can really manage to get everything under control. Rest assured, nothing can stop a woman who loves to travel from exploring the world. All she needs is more supportive attitudes from her surroundings.

5.2 *The effect of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on travel constraints*

To determine the effect of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on travel constraints, regression paths were estimated through SPSS Amos version 26 using maximum likelihood (ML). The findings suggested that the individualism-collectivism and long-term vs. short-term dimensions did not significantly influence travel barriers. This could be because of the embedded Bengali Confucian orientation to close commitment to the 'member group' and, as revealed from the travel barriers, participants' tradition to focus on the present and not plan long-term due to family/work responsibilities (Hofstede, 2001). The lack of significance of individualism-collectivism on travel barriers could suggest an opposing effect, where travelers are motivated to travel because of their collectivist orientation and does not necessarily see this as a travel barrier. For example, preserving family connections is a traditional practice in Islamic tourism activities (Stephenson, 2014). In fact, visiting relatives and friends is often cited as a prominent activity for Muslim travelers during Eid-ul Fitr holiday (Lurking, 2014). In addition to trends amongst Muslim travelers, a parallel explanation could be the shifting preferences towards new experiences noticed among emergent contemporary Asian tourists (Yang et al., 2018). According to recent industry reports, up to 76% of Asian tourists have an interest in trying something new such as adventure tourism, cruise holidays or solo travel (TripAdvisor, 2016a, b). Together, these findings suggests that Bangladeshi solo women travelers could be looking forward to embracing their freedom to travel, given provisions are made to cater to their unique needs as Asian Muslim tourists' (Asbollah et al., 2013). Pertaining to long-term vs short-term orientation, Hofstede (2010) finds that societies with long-term orientation appears to be more restrained whereas short-term societies are described as indulgent. This is counter to the findings of the current study. The lack of significant result of long-term vs short-term orientation effect might be explained through the work of Florida (2002), who argues that people can simultaneously work hard out of passion, plan for the future and indulge in joyful moments in life (a mix of long-term and short-term orientation). The regression results confirmed a positive effect of power-distance on personal ($\beta = .47$, $p<.001$), family ($\beta = .27$, $p<.001$), and perceived risk ($\beta = .22$, $p<.001$) constraints. Power-distance requires acceptance that there is inequality in society and is reflected in the hierarchical order (Hofstede, 1980). In a travel context, this means that as power-distance increases, so do constraints related to personal, family, and perceived risk. As expected, societies with high power-distance tend to discourage new initiatives and risk-taking (Dutta & Islam, 2016). Interestingly, power-distance only affected intrapersonal and interpersonal barriers, which suggested that participants were resisting and that a shift in the societal way of thinking could evoke changes in solo female traveler behavior.

The study also found that masculinity had a positive effect on personal constraints ($\beta = .14$, $p<.05$) and time constraints ($\beta = .14$, $p<.05$). This cultural dimension promotes division of roles and responsibilities (e.g., gender roles) based on tradition. The findings suggest that the demarcation of gender roles increase in concert with personal and time barriers. Furthermore, these societies encourage an insatiable appetite for material prosperity (Dutta & Islam, 2016), normalizing the habit of 'busyness' in which people do not generally see the need for leisure travel. Notably, 70% of participants in this study were highly independent worked or owned a

19

business. The results indicate that if such an identity is maintained, it would further increase time and personal travel barriers.

The findings also showed that uncertainty-avoidance had a negative effect on personal constraints (β = -.15, *p<.05*). Bangladesh is ranked highly on uncertainty-avoidance (Hofstede, 2001), which is "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations" (Hofstede, 1980). This finding seems contradictory to the support for solo travel: as uncertainty-avoidance increased, personal travel barriers decreased. A plausible explanation is perhaps a perceived disconnect between a system that maintains obdurate codes of belief and the gender inequality of social norms and status.

5.3 *The effect of travel constraints on travel intentions*

Interestingly, all travel constraints identified in the study significantly influenced present solo travel intentions but not future solo travel intentions. The mean of future intention to travel solo (*M*=4.02) was much higher than such behavior at present (*M*=3.38). This finding underscored the fact that Bangladeshi women were enjoying their solo travel endeavors, learning from them, and are likely to increase such travel in the future. Supplementing the open-ended responses from the DT administrator, the study found that perceived risk constraints decrease current travel intention of Bangladeshi solo women travelers. This finding is supported by Valek and Almuhrzhi (2021), who indicated that generally Muslim women who travel solo experience safety concerns and risk of Islamophobia. Borrowing Valentine (1989) concept of the 'geography of women's fear', Wilson and Little (2008) found that European women perceived access to specific tourist locations as restricted because of local attitudes toward solo female tourists. Likewise, Jordan and Gibson's (2005) qualitative study on challenges Western women experience while on holiday, reveals feelings of self-conspicuousness, vulnerability and fear of harassment as derived from the male sexualized gaze. In the same way, these experiences are exacerbated for Muslim women who come from patriarchal societies where women are less valued than men (Goldschmidt, 2004). For example, up to 94% of Bangladeshi women who use public transportation also reported experiencing physical and verbal abuse along with other forms of sexual harassment (Daily Star, 2018). These experiences could further decrease their involvement in tourism activities and lower their visit intention to tourist destinations, especially if shared by several women who travel solo.

The current study also found an inverse relationship of time and family constraints on current travel intention. These findings are in line with earlier literature which suggests that Asians are unwilling to take time off work for leisure holidays due to cultural and structural barriers (Keating & Kriz, 2008). Time- and family-related constraints were found to be based on demands from participants' daily jobs or student roles, as well as deep ties and dependency on family for moral and financial support that may have decreased time to travel for leisure. The literature suggests that many solo female travelers are typically financially dependent on family and may need to seek approval from them before traveling (Tavakoli & Mura, 2017). This is also reflected in the current study sample where up to 79% of participants indicated that they still lived with other family members, while 77% currently had a job or ran a business.

Interestingly, 'personal barriers' was the only variable to positively influence current solo travel intention. A possible explanation could be due to the 'controllable' nature of this constraint. This supports Wilson and Little's (2008) finding that women traveling solo can maneuver personal experiences to strategize their use of public spaces and restrict movements to certain areas. Respondents appear to take personal constraints as a challenge and negotiate and

mitigate them in the process of traveling solo, allowing them a path of resistance, freedom, and empowerment. Sayira et al. (2021) understood women's empowerment through tourism from two perspectives: one that provide opportunities for financial independence, while the other acknowledges women's negotiation for independence, despite experiencing barriers pertaining to traditional gender roles. Through solo travel, female travelers can transcend the system and societal roles that influence and control their lives—empowering them in the process (Brown & Osman, 2017; Seow & Brown, 2018; Wilson & Little, 2008). Overall, the study also found that as constraints related to perceived risk, family, and time increased, current intention to travel solo decreased. These findings are consistent with Yang's (2020) study of solo and non-solo travelers, where safety, cost and social constraints were identified as barriers to solo travel participation.

## 6. IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

### 6.1 *Implications*

Several theoretical, practical, and methodological implications emerged from this work. Applying all five of Hofstede's cultural dimensions at the individual level in the context of solo women travelers can increase understanding of Muslim women travel behavior from eastern destinations. This is important because extant tourism literature has predominantly remained Western-centric (Wijesinghe, 2017), disregarding cultural differences from eastern societies. This can lead to misconceptions that could further jeopardize potential cross-border alliances pertaining to specific travel needs and service offerings (Phen & Yuquan, 2002). For example, if tour operators know the specific cultural values that are embraced by Muslim women, they can train their staff about cross-cultural communications that would enable them to treat Muslim tourists with respect (Timothy & Iverson, 2006).

The study results highlight that the traveling needs of Muslim solo female travelers are unique and may not align with the patterns of other travelers. Also, the current study's findings dispel myths that Muslim women from collectivist and short-term cultural orientation have restricted travel intentions but instead highlight that Muslim inspired consumption is at the core of Muslim solo women travelers' identities (Tan et al., 2018). These unique findings of the study are especially useful for tourism planners to offer services that are important to Muslim solo women travelers. Some of these services include providing halal food, facilities for daily ablutions and Muslim-friendly activities and amenities (HalalTrip, 2017, Yang et al., 2017).

Arguing for a gender equity portrayal in tourism, Chhabra et al. (2011) propose that "it then becomes the social responsibility of the advertisers either to promote equity or portray realistic and representative image of the depicted population" (p.126). Since women make up more than half the population in Bangladesh, the work can begin with these agencies normalizing the perception of solo female travel by promoting images of women in travel.

Furthermore, the progression of literature on HCM previously abandoned the integration of the multi-dimensional effect of culture (e.g., as presented in this study using Hofstede's cultural dimensions), which is critical to social sustainability preservation (Chick & Dong, 2003; Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). The current study adds to the existing literature by connecting HCM to Hofstede's dimensions. Such knowledge will increase our understanding of how specific cross-cultural practices affect Muslim women's travel constraints and subsequent behavior. Widening our understanding of the multi-dimensional effect of culture, enables the inclusion of the local, social and religious context in tourism development plans (Shunnaq et al.,

2008) that are specific to Eastern Muslim communities. Accordingly, deep rooted cultural values that informs tourist preferences, perceptions and behaviors can be included in tourism development plans (Yang et al., 2018). The inclusion of these contexts is important because they provide a targeted approach to mitigate issues affecting the quality of life for local residents and provide opportunities to increase their involvement in tourism activities. Alternatively, applying a uni-dimensional lens of national culture to evaluate tourist behavior may not be fruitful to understanding socio-cultural impacts, since this can result in misunderstanding of the differences in a particular group at the individual level (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). Consequently, this could deter opportunities to build a sustainable competitive advantage in marketing and promotion efforts towards Muslim women solo travelers (Pheng & Yuquan, 2002).

While a handful of studies have been conducted on gender, women and travel constraints (Yang et al., 2017; Yang & Tavakoli, 2016), travel constraints specific to Muslim women travelers has largely been unexplored (Tavakoli & Mura, 2021). To the researchers' knowledge, the present study is the first to unmask the cultural contradictions and complexities for Bangladeshi solo female travelers who were representative of a developing and Muslim-majority destination. Previous tourism development literature in Bangladesh has focused on macro-economic issues pertaining to developing the physical environment and infrastructure (Al-Masud, 2015, Roy & Roy, 2015), poverty alleviation through entrepreneurial activities (Islam & Carlsen, 2012) and more recently, issues pertaining to gender equality (Anjum, 2020). However, these studies have overlooked the role of Bangladeshi women as active participants in the tourism development plan. A review of literature on Muslim women and tourism discovered that Muslim women has predominantly been conceptualized as disempowered hosts (Feldbauer & Jeffrey, 2021) and not as active participants in the tourism experience. Furthermore, the behavior of Muslim women outside of Middle East, Asia and Africa regions has rarely been explored (Feldbauer & Jeffrey, 2021). Therefore, the present studied filled a gap in literature by highlight the untapped potential of Bangladeshi solo women travelers as active participants in tourism. The findings can help to dismiss limiting beliefs perpetuated by political debates and media that rely on the manufactured image of Muslim women as passive, denied a public presence, submissive, and enslaved within a repressive religion (Dabashi, 2012). Particularly, a new link between Hofstede's five cultural dimensions, HCM, and current and future travel intentions was established to assess within-group differences. By highlighting specific cultural value orientations that impact travel constraints and behavior, policy makers can further design infrastructures, policies, and targeted tourism products which will motivate women to travel more and can lead to women empowerment.

Methodologically, the study goes beyond item-scale reliability typical to survey method designs to introduce an interpretivist qualitative component between the researchers and a tour professional in the analysis of data. This process enhances the quality of the study since it provides rich data interpretation, introduces a source of methodological triangulation, and reduces the potential for cultural bias.

6.2 *Conclusion*

This study used Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the hierarchical constraints model (HCM) to learn more about travel constraints and the current and future behaviors of Bangladeshi solo female travelers. This study identified four barriers to current solo female travel: personal, risk, time, and family but found that these did not influence plans for future solo travel. Respondents also indicated that future solo travel intentions were much higher than

22

current travel. As such, the good news is that this travel market is highly optimistic and looking to mitigate barriers for solo travel.

While we acknowledge recent government initiatives as exemplified in the 'women-only' bus service in Dhaka, Bangladesh as a possible best practice (Rahman, 2010), resources should be extended to improve overall public transportation systems globally in order to alleviate the harassment currently experienced by women. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Bangladeshi female travelers to adjust their expectations regarding wanderlust. The long-term impact of COVID-19 on budget travel factors, including airlines, lodging, and attractions, could greatly impact the future of travel for solo female travelers from countries like Bangladesh. On the home front, the job sector will be highly volatile as well.

6.3 *Limitations and future studies*

The limitations of the study are important to address in order to guide future lines of research. The relatively low sample size of the online population (which was more representative of the actual Bangladeshi solo female traveler) means that the analysis was limited to multiple regression analysis as opposed to structural equation modeling. Sample size is crucial to SEM application; previous studies indicate that low sample size has a significant impact on reliability of parameter estimates, model fit, and statistical power (Nunkoo et al., 2017). Nunally (1978) recommends that sample sizes between 300 to 400 are appropriate when conducting multiple regression analyses. While we do not expect many differences in the results, the use of SEM would require a larger sample size and shift the research design from exploratory to confirmatory. Accordingly, the quantitative results from the regression analyses, coupled with an interpretivist qualitative component with the solo travel administrator, result in extremely rich and illuminating findings. Additionally, although the focus on English-language groups was deliberate for stratifying Bangladeshi women who had the means to travel solo (Gao, 2012), it is important to recognize potential language bias in spite of the bilingual researchers and DT administrator. Lastly, a fairly recent addition, indulgence-restraint, was not utilized in this study, due to the present study adapting Yoo et al.'s (2011) version of Hofstede's five dimensions that were proposed to assess cultural orientation at the individual level.

For future studies, it is critical to explore a variety of ways to collect data, including the use of MTurk or other online survey mechanisms that can filter and hone the sample, access additional online travel communities, and employ a broad range of qualitative methods to promote grass root tourism development for women that will enhance their mobility rights and gender equality. Future studies could target women in the 30–40 age group who are most representative of the workforce in Bangladesh (Solotaroff et al., 2019) and vulnerable women groups (e.g., divorced, widowed, disabled) who would benefit greatly from tourism opportunities that can enhance their independence to travel safely for leisure purposes to enjoy local and international tourism activities. Particularly, future research could be extended to women without access to the internet and social media to reach women who are presumably from less educated or privileged background, scholars could include a more robust sample to be analyzed using structural equation modeling and apply this to other countries. Although an increase in sample size would allow for greater generalization of the findings, future studies should consider using an interpretive, qualitative research component as well from a larger sample of participants. This would provide a deeper understanding of solo travel experiences and further amplify the voices of female travelers from Muslim-majority countries. In that the nature of constraints are dependent upon, or moderated because of, the destination participants travel to, future studies

23

should clarify the number of respondents who travel domestically or internationally. Future studies could also explore the changing gender roles of women in Muslim-majority societies and their implications for female solo travel. Moving forward, studies can include the recent expansion of Hofstede's dimensions into analyses, and/or the role of acculturation orientations (Berry, 2005) to gain a deeper understanding of solo travel behavior.

**REFERENCES**

24

Ahn, M. J., & McKercher, B. (2018). Hofstede's cultural indices revisited: the relationship between cultural values and international tourism. *Tourism Culture & Communication*, *18*(4), 241-250.

Aitchison, C., Hopkins, P. E., & Kwan, M. P. (2007). *Geographies of Muslim identities: Diaspora, gender and belonging*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Alarcón, D. M., & Cole, S. (2019). No sustainability for tourism without gender equality. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(7), 903-919.

Alcántara-Pilar, J. M., del Barrio-García, S., Crespo-Almendros, E., & Porcu, L. (2017). Toward an understanding of online information processing in e-tourism: does national culture matter?. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *34*(8), 1128-1142.

Almani, A. S., Abro, A., & Mugheri, R. A. (2012). Study of the Effects of Working Mothers on the Development of Children in Pakistan. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *2*(11), 164-171.

Al-Masud, T. M. M. (2015). Tourism marketing in Bangladesh: What, why and how. *Asian Business Review*, *5*(1), 13-19.

Amar, P. (2011). Turning the gendered politics of the security state inside out? Charging the police with sexual harassment in Egypt. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *13*(3), 299-328.

Anjum, I. (2020). Tourism and Gender Equity in Bangladesh. In *Tourism Policy and Planning in Bangladesh* (pp. 237-256). Springer, Singapore.

Arshad, Z., Khanum, A., Ali, A., & Saeed, T. (2008). The economic contribution of Pakistani women through their unpaid labour. *Society for Alternative Media and Research and Health Bridge: Islamabad, Pakistan*.

Asaduzzaman, M., Kabir, R. A., & Radović-Marković, M. (2015). Gender inequality in Bangladesh. *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, 3-4, 54-64.

Asbollah, A. Z. B., Lade, C., & Michael, E. (2013). The tourist's gaze: From the perspective of a Muslim woman. *Tourism Analysis*, *18*(6), 677-690.

Battour, M., Ismail, M. N., & Battor, M. (2011). The impact of destination attributes on Muslim tourist's choice. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *13*(6), 527-540.

Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *29*(6), 697-712.

Brown, L., & Osman, H. (2017). The female tourist experience in Egypt as an Islamic destination. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *63*, 12-22.

Bui, H. T., Wilkins, H. C., & Lee, Y. S. (2013). The 'imagined West' of young independent travellers from Asia. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *16*(2), 130-148.

Chang, T. C. (2015). The Asian wave and critical tourism scholarship. *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*, 11(1), 83-101.

Chhabra, D., Andereck, K., Yamanoi, K., & Plunkett, D. (2011). Gender equity and social marketing: An analysis of tourism advertisements. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *28*(2), 111-128.

Chen, H. J., Chen, P. J., & Okumus, F. (2013). The relationship between travel constraints and destination image: A case study of Brunei. *Tourism Management*, *35*, 198-208.

Chick, G., & Dong, E. (2003). Possibility of refining the hierarchical model of leisure constraints through cross-cultural research. In Proceedings of the 2003 Northeastern recreation research symposium (pp. 338-344). Newtown Square, PA: US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northeastern Research Station.

Chick, G., Hsu, Y. C., Yeh, C. K., & Hsieh, C. M. (2015). Informant-provided leisure constraints in six Taiwanese cities. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 47, 501–512.

Chowdhury, N. (2016). Implementing women's. *Globalization, Religion and Gender: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts*, 203.

Cornwall, A. (2016). Women's empowerment: What works?. *Journal of International Development*, *28*(3), 342-359.

Crawford, D. W., Jackson, E. L., & Godbey, G. (1991). A hierarchical model of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences, 13,* 309-320.

Crawford, D. W., & Godbey, G. (1987). Reconceptualizing barriers to family leisure. *Leisure Sciences*, *9*(2), 119-127.

Crotts, J. C., & Mazanec, J. A. (2018). Acculturation of migrant populations: An exploratory study across multiple generations. *Tourism Culture & Communication*, *18*(4), 227-239.

Dabashi, H. (2012). *The Arab Spring: Delayed defiance and the end of postcolonialism*. New York: Zed Books.

Daily Star. (2018, March 07). Public Transport: 94% of Women Harassed. Retrieved from https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/public-transport-94pc-women-harassed-1544506.

Desparatetraveller (2016, September 24). Global child o'mine. Retrieved from desperatetravellers.wordpress.com .

Din, K. U., & Akhlaq, M. W. (2019). Influence of English Language in Political Awareness of South Asian Societies: A Comparative Study of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. *South Asian Studies*, *34*(1), 213.

Dong, E., & Chick, G. (2012). Leisure constraints in six Chinese cities. *Leisure Sciences*, *34*(5), 417-435.

Doran, A. (2016). Empowerment and women in adventure tourism: A negotiated journey. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, *20*(1), 57-80.

Dutta, B., & Islam, K. M. (2016). Role of Culture in Decision Making Approach in Bangladesh: An Analysis from the Four Cultural Dimensions of Hofstede. *Bangladesh e-journal of Sociology*, *13*(2).

Eger, C., Munar, A. M., & Hsu, C. (2021). Gender and tourism sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2021.1963975

Esquivel, V. (2016). Power and the sustainable development goals: A feminist analysis. *Gender & Development*, *24*(1), 9-23.

Fan, X. L., & Zheng, X. M. (2007). Wen hua yi hua dui ri ben dan shen ji sheng zu nv xing lv you xing wei de ying xiang [The impact of cultural alienation on the travel behaviour of Japanese single women]. *Hua Qiao Da Xue Xue Bao*, *3*, 45-49.

Falk, J. H., Ballantyne, R., Packer, J., & Benckendorff, P. (2012). Travel and learning: A neglected tourism research area. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *39*(2), 908-927.

Feldbauer, I. G., & Jeffrey, H. L. (2021). Disempowered Hosts? A Literature Review of Muslim Women and Tourism. *Women in Tourism in Asian Muslim Countries*, 13.

Ferguson, L., & Alarcon, D. M. (2015). Gender and sustainable tourism: reflections on theory and practice. *Journal of sustainable Tourism*, *23*(3), 401-416.

Florida, R. (2002). *The Rise of the Creative Class and how it is transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York, NY. Basic Books.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *18*(1), 39-50.

Fourie, J., & Santana-Gallego, M. (2013). Ethnic reunion and cultural affinity. *Tourism*

*Management*, *36*, 411-420.

Fredman, P., & Heberlein, T.A. (2005). Visits to the Swedish mountains: Constraints and motivations. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 5*(3), 177-192.

Gao, S. (2012). The biggest English corner in China: How the town of Yangshuo has become famous for educational tourism and English-language learning. *English Today*, 28(3), 34–39.

Gil-Pareja, S., Llorca-Vivero, R., & Martínez-Serrano, J. A. (2007). The impact of embassies and consulates on tourism. *Tourism Management*, *28*(2), 355-360.

Gocio, D., & Kulkarni, K. G. (2016). Women's empowerment and economic development: the cases of Bangladesh and Kenya. *International Journal of Education Economics and Development*, *7*(3-4), 113-132.

Godbey, G., Crawford, D. W., & Shen, X. S. (2010). Assessing hierarchical leisure constraints theory after two decades. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *42*(1), 111-134.

Goldschmidt, A. (2004). *Modern Egypt: The formation of a nation-state*. Routledge.

Guo, Y. (2014). Chinese women and travel: historical and contemporary experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *46*, 179-181.

Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Babin, B. J., & Black, W. C. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective* (Vol. 7). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

HalalTrip (2017). *Muslim Millennial Travel Report 2017.* Retrieved from: https://www.halaltrip.com/halaltravel/muslim-millennial-travel-report//

Han, H., Al-Ansi, A., Olya, H. G., & Kim, W. (2019). Exploring halal-friendly destination attributes in South Korea: Perceptions and behaviors of Muslim travelers toward a non-Muslim destination. *Tourism Management*, *71*, 151-164.

Hashim, R. S., Jaafar, Z., Ho-Abdullah, I., & Yusof, N. M., (2011). Computer mediated communication and gendered presentation of selves, *International Journal of Soft Computing*, *6*(5), 143-151.

Hassan, R. (2007). On being religious: Patterns of religious commitment in Muslim societies. The Muslim World, 97(3), 437–478.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's Consequences (Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, CA).

Hofstede, G. (1994). The business of international business is culture. *International Business Review*, *3*(1), 1-14.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind: intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*. McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. Sage publications.

Hossain, M. Z., Khan, M. O. A., & Ahmed, J. U. (2016). Determinants of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh including its consequences for origin households and urban amenities. *Research & Reviews: Journal of Statistics*, *5*(2), 47-61.

Hung, K., & Petrick, J. F. (2010). Developing a measurement scale for constraints to cruising. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *37*(1), 206-228.

Inglehart, R. (Ed.). (2004). *Human beliefs and values: A cross-cultural sourcebook based on the 1999-2002 values surveys*. Siglo XXI.

Islam, F., & Carlsen, J. (2012). Tourism in rural Bangladesh: Unlocking opportunities for poverty alleviation?. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *37*(1), 37-45.

Jackson, E. L., & Rucks, V. C. (1995). Negotiation of leisure constraints by junior high and

high-school students: An exploratory study. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *27*(1) 1, 85-105.

Jiménez-Esquinas, G. (2017). "This is not only about culture": on tourism, gender stereotypes and other affective fluxes. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *25*(3), 311-326.

Jordan, F., & Gibson, H. (2005). "We're not stupid... But we'll not stay home either": Experiences of solo women travelers. *Tourism Review International*, *9*(2), 195-211.

Kabeer, N. (2017). Economic pathways to women's empowerment and active citizenship: What does the evidence from Bangladesh tell us? *The Journal of Development Studies*, *53*(5), 649-663.

Keating, B., & Kriz, A. (2008). Outbound Tourism from China: Literature review and research Agenda. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 15*(1), 32–41.

Kensbock, S., Bailey, J., Jennings, G., & Patiar, A. (2015). Sexual harassment of women working as room attendants within 5-star hotels. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *22*(1), 36-50.

Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Gibson, H. J. (2018). Understanding women's accommodation experiences on girlfriend getaways: a pragmatic action research approach. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *21*(2), 191-209.

Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Prayag, G. (2018). Understanding Asian and Western women on girlfriend getaways: The relationship between motivation and accommodation performance. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *27*(2), 239-259.

Khoo-Lattimore, C., Yang, E. C. L., & Je, J. S. (2019). Assessing gender representation in knowledge production: a critical analysis of UNWTO's planned events. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 27(7), 920-938.

Kim, M. J., Lee, C. K., & Chung, N. (2013). Investigating the role of trust and gender in online tourism shopping in South Korea. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *37*(3), 377-401.

King, B., Pizam, A., & Milman, A. (1993). Social impacts of tourism: Host perceptions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *20*(4), 650-665.

Kotikula, A., & Raza, W. A. (2020). Housing ownership Gender differences in Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Land Use Policy*, 104983.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2009). Marketing Management (13th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lai, C., Li, X. R., & Harrill, R. (2013). Chinese outbound tourists' perceived constraints to visiting the United States. *Tourism Management*, *37*, 136-146.

Lai, V. (2016). *Shaping the future of travel – The polarization of Asian travellers.* Retrieved from http://thefuturescompany.com/shaping-future-travel/

Li, M., Wen, T., & Leung, A. (2011). An Exploratory Study of the Travel Motivation of Chinese Female Outbound Tourists. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, *7*(4): 411-424.

Li, M. (2014). Cross-cultural tourist research: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *38*(1), 40-77.

Litvin, S. W. (2019). Hofstede, cultural differences, and TripAdvisor hotel reviews. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *21*(5), 712-717.

Litvin, S. W., & Kar, G. H. (2004). Individualism/collectivism as a moderating factor to the self-image congruity concept. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *10*(1), 23-32.

Lucking, M. (2014). Making 'Arab' one's own. Muslim pilgrimage experiences in Central Java Indonesia. *Internationales Asien Forum, 45*(1–2), 129–152.

Manrai, L. A., & Manrai, A. (2011). Hofstede's cultural dimensions and tourist behaviors: A review and conceptual framework. *Journal of Economics, Finance & Administrative Science*, *16*(31), 23.

Manosuthi, N., Lee, J. S., & Han, H. (2020). Impact of distance on the arrivals, behaviours and attitudes of international tourists in Hong Kong: A longitudinal approach. *Tourism Management*, *78*, 103963.

March, R. (2000). The Japanese travel life cycle. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *9*(1-2), 185-200.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*(2), 224.

Mariani, M., & Predvoditeleva, M. (2019). How do online reviewers' cultural traits and perceived experience influence hotel online ratings?. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. (80), 1-12.

Masika, R., & Bailur, S. (2015). Negotiating women's agency through ICTs: A comparative study of Uganda and India. *Gender, Technology and Development*, *19*(1), 43-69.

Mazanec, J. A., Crotts, J. C., Gursoy, D., & Lu, L. (2015). Homogeneity versus heterogeneity of cultural values: An item-response theoretical approach applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions in a single nation. *Tourism Management*, *48*, 299-304.

McClinchey, K. A. (2015). Lifestyle mobilities: intersections of travel, leisure and migration. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 438-440.

McSweeney, B. (2009). Dynamic diversity: Variety and variation within countries. *Organization Studies*, *30*, 933-957.

Money, R. B., & Crotts, J. C. (2003). The effect of uncertainty avoidance on information search, planning, and purchases of international travel vacations. *Tourism Management*, *24*(2), 191-202.

Muñoz-Leiva, F., Mayo-Muñoz, X., & De la Hoz-Correa, A. (2018). Adoption of homesharing platforms: a cross-cultural study. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*. 1(3), 220-239.

Nassani, A. A., Aldakhil, A. M., Abro, M. M. Q., Islam, T., & Zaman, K. (2019). The impact of tourism and finance on women empowerment. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, *41*(2), 234-254.

Nationsonline.org (2018) Bangladesh. Retrieved from https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/bangladesh.htm.

Ng, S. I., & Lim, X. J. (2019). Are Hofstede's and Schwartz's values frameworks equally predictive across contexts?. *Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios*, *21*(1), 33-47.

Nikjoo, A., Markwell, K., Nikbin, M., & Hernández-Lara, A. B. (2021). The flag-bearers of change in a patriarchal Muslim society: Narratives of Iranian solo female travelers on Instagram. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *38*, 100817.

Nikjoo, A., Zaman, M., Salehi, S., & Hernandez-Lara, A. B. (2022). The contribution of all-women tours to well-being in middle-aged Muslim women. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(7).

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric Theory: 2d Ed*. McGraw-Hill.

Nunnally, J., & Bernstein, L. (1994). Psychometric Theory. New York: MacGrow-Hill Higher.

Nunkoo, R., Ramkissoon, H., & Gursoy, D. (2013). Use of structural equation modeling in tourism research: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Travel Research*, *52*(6), 759-771.

Nunkoo, R., Smith, S. L., & Ramkissoon, H. (2013). Residents' attitudes to tourism: A longitudinal study of 140 articles from 1984 to 2010. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *21*(1), 5-25.

Nye Jr, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. Public affairs.

Okazaki, S., & Hirose, M. (2009). Does gender affect media choice in travel information search? On the use of mobile Internet. *Tourism Management*, *30*(6), 794-804.

Othman, N. (2006). Muslim women and the challenge of Islamic fundamentalism/extremism: An overview of Southeast Asian Muslim women's struggle for human rights and gender equality. In *Women's Studies International Forum*, 29(4), 339-353.

Parveen, S. (2007). Gender awareness of rural women in Bangladesh. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *9*(1), 253-269.

Pezzuti, T., Pierce, M. E., & Leonhardt, J. M. (2018). Does language homophily affect migrant consumers' service usage intentions?. *Journal of Services Marketing*. 32 (4) 581-591.

Pheng, S. L., & Yuquan, S. (2002). An exploratory study of Hofstede's cross-cultural dimensions in construction projects. *Management Decision, 40*(1), 7–16.

Prebensen, N. K. (2006). Segmenting the group tourist heading for warmer weather: A Norwegian example. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *19*(4), 27-40.

Prebensen, N. K., Larsen, S., & Abelsen, B. (2003). I'm not a typical tourist: German tourists' self-perception, activities, and motivations. *Journal of Travel Research*, *41*(4), 416-420.

Qiu Zhang, H., Fan, D. X., Tse, T. S., & King, B. (2017). Creating a scale for assessing socially sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *25*(1), 61-78.

Rahman, M. S. U. (2010). Bus service for Women only in Dhaka city: An investigation. *Journal of Bangladesh Institute of Planners ISSN*, *2075*, 9363.

Ramnani, A. (2012). *The role of language in shaping the international cultural tourism experience of student-travelers* (Master's Theses). San Jose State University, CA, USA. Retrieved from scholarworks.sjsu.edu.

Ratthinan, S. P., & Selamat, N. H. (2019). Negotiating travel constraints via technology: A study of malay muslim women through a hierarchical constraint model perspective. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, *9*(2), 55.

Refworld (2014, January 21). World report 2014 – Bangladesh. Retrieved from https://www.refworld.org/docid/52dfde02b.html.

Reisinger, Y., & Crotts, J. C. (2010). Applying Hofstede's national culture measures in tourism research: Illuminating issues of divergence and convergence. *Journal of Travel Research*, *49*(2), 153-164.

Reisinger, Y., & Mavondo, F. (2005). Travel anxiety and intentions to travel internationally: Implications of travel risk perception. *Journal of Travel Research*, *43*(3), 212-225.

Roy, S. C., & Roy, M. (2015). Tourism in Bangladesh: Present status and future prospects. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, *1*(8), 53-61.

Samdahl, D. M., & Jekubovich, N. J. (1997). A critique of leisure constraints: Comparative analyses and understandings. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *29*(4), 430-452.

Sahay, S. (1998). Women and empowerment: Approaches and strategies. Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi.

Sayira, T., Andrews, H., & Ayesha, Q. U. A. (2021). Are Women Empowered Producers of Tourism in Pakistan?. In *Women in Tourism in Asian Muslim Countries* (pp. 81-96). Springer, Singapore.

Schwartz, S. J., & Zamboanga, B. L. (2008). Testing Berry's model of acculturation: A confirmatory latent class approach. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *14*(4), 275.

30

Seow, D., & Brown, L. (2018). The solo female Asian tourist. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *21*(10), 1187-1206.

Šerić, M. (2018). A cross-cultural study on perceived quality in upscale hotels in Italy and Croatia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 1(4), 340-66.

Shakeela, A., & Cooper, C. (2009). Human resource issues in a small island setting the case of the Maldivian tourism industry. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *34*(1), 67-78.

Shinew, K. J., Floyd, M. F., & Parry, D. (2004). Understanding the relationship between race and leisure activities and constraints: Exploring an alternative framework. *Leisure Sciences*, *26*(2), 181-199.

Shunnaq, M., Schwab, W. A., & Reid, M. F. (2008). Community development using a sustainable tourism strategy: A case study of the Jordan River valley touristway. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 10(1), 1–14.

Solotaroff, J. L., Kotikula, A., Lonnberg, T., Ali, S., & Jahan, F. (2019). *Voices to Choices: Bangladesh's Journey in Women's Economic Empowerment*. World Bank Publications.

Stephenson, M. L. (2014). Deciphering 'Islamic hospitality': Developments, challenges and opportunities. *Tourism Management*, 40, 155–164

Sunny, S., Patrick, L., & Rob, L. (2019). Impact of cultural values on technology acceptance and technology readiness. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *77*, 89-96.

Tan, E., Abu Bakar, B., Lim, T., & Nair, S. (2018). Hijababes travel: Insights from Asian female Muslim millennial travelers. CAUTHE 2018: Get Smart: Paradoxes and Possibilities in Tourism, *Hospitality and Events Education and Research*, 653.

Taras, V., Steel, P., & Kirkman, B. (2012). Improving national cultural indices using a longitudinal meta-analysis of Hofstede's dimensions. *Journal of World Business*, *47*, 329-341.

Tavakoli, R., & Mura, P. (2017). Iranian women traveling: Exploring an unknown universe. In *Women and travel* (pp. 109–124). Oakville, ON: Apple Academic Press.

Tavakoli, R., & Mura, P. (2021). Muslim Women Travellers' Constraints: A critical review. *Women in tourism in Asian Muslim countries*, 25, 31-39.

Thompson, M., Ellis, R. J., & Wildavsky, A. (1990). eds, Cultural Theory, Boulder CO.

Timothy, D., & Iverson, T. (2006). Tourism and Islam: Considerations of culture and duty. In D. Timothy & T. Iverson (Eds.), Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys (pp. 186–205). London: Routledge.

Tran, L., & Walter, P. (2014). Ecotourism, gender and development in northern Vietnam. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *44*, 116-130.

Triandis, H. (1995). Individualism and collectivism. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

TripAdvisor. (2016a). *New insights on today's Asian travelers*. Retrieved from: https://www.tripadvisor.com/TripAdvisorInsights/n2680/new-insights-todays-asian-tourists.

TripAdvisor. (2016b). *TripBarometer: Travel trends 2016*. Retrieved from: https://d2bxpc4ajzxry0.cloudfront.net/TripAdvisorInsights/sites/default/files/downloads/2670/globalreport_us_dec2015.pdf.

Tsai, C. T. L. (2006). The influence of Confucianism on women's leisure in Taiwan. *Leisure Studies*, *25*(4), 469-476.

Tseng, P. F., & Li, C. J. (2004). Bon voyage: The restless insecurity encroaching female backpackers. *Journal of Hospitality and Home Economics*, *1*(2), 127-142.

United Nations Chronicle (2015). Cities will play an important role in Achieving the SDGs.

Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/goal-11-cities-will-play-important-role-achieving-sdgs.

Valek, N. S., & Almuhrzi, H. (Eds.). (2021). *Women in Tourism in Asian Muslim Countries*. Springer Nature

Venaik, S., & Brewer, P. (2016). National culture dimensions: The perpetuation of cultural ignorance. *Management Learning*, *47*(5), 563-589.

Walker, G. J., Jackson, E. L., & Deng, J. (2007). Culture and leisure constraints: A comparison of Canadian and Mainland Chinese university students. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *39*(4), 567-590.

Warner, M., & Joynt, P. (2002). *Introduction: Cross-cultural perspectives. Managing across cultures: Issues and perspective.* London: Thomson

Wen, J., Hu, Y., & Kim, H. J. (2018). Impact of individual cultural values on hotel guests' positive emotions and positive eWOM intention. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. 30(3), 1769-1787

Wijesinghe, S. N. R., Mura, P., & Bouchon, F. (2017). Tourism knowledge and neocolonialism – A systematic critical review of the literature. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1–17.

Wilson, E. C. (2004). A 'journey of her own'. The impact of constraints on women's solo travel. (Doctoral Thesis). Retrieved from http://epubs.scu.edu.au/tourism_pubs/26/.

Wilson, E., & Little, D. E. (2008). The solo female travel experience: Exploring the 'geography of women's fear'. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *11*(2), 167-186.

World Bank (2020, April 13). The World Bank in Bangladesh. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview.

Wu, H. C., Chen, X., & Cheng, C. C. (2019). Relationships between experiential cultural distance, experiential relationship quality and experiential future intentions: the case of Mainland Chinese tourists. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 1-24.

Xu, W., & Liu, M. (2018). The meanings of female solo travel: a perspective of autoethnography. *Tourism Tribune*, *33*(3), 23-38.

Yang, E. C. L. (2020). What motivates and hinders people from travelling alone? A study of solo and non-solo travellers. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-14.

Yang, E.C. L., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2017). A narrative review of Asian female travellers: Looking into the future through the past. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *20*(10), 1008-1027.

Yang, E. C. L., Lee, J. S. H., & Khoo-Lattimore, C. (2018). Asian cultures and contemporary tourism: Locating Asia, cultural differences and trends. In *Asian cultures and Contemporary Tourism* (pp. 1-17). Springer, Singapore.

Yang, E. C. L., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2018). Power and empowerment: How Asian solo female travellers perceive and negotiate risks. *Tourism Management*, *68*, 32-45.

Yang, E. C. L., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2018). Constructing space and self through risk taking: A case of Asian solo female travelers. *Journal of Travel Research*, *57*(2), 260-272.

Yang, Y., Liu, H., & Li, X. (2019). The world is flatter? Examining the relationship between cultural distance and international tourist flows. *Journal of Travel Research*, *58*(2), 224-240.

Ying, T., Khairil, W. A., & Jamil, B. (2017). Generation Y Malaysian women's perception towards solo travel. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism*, *6*(2),

45-54.

Yoo, B., Donthu, N., & Lenartowicz, T. (2011). Measur-ing Hofstede's five dimensions of cultural values at the individual level: Development and validation of CVS-CALE. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 23, 193–210.

Yount, K. M., James-Hawkins, L., Cheong, Y. F., & Naved, R. T. (2018). Men's perpetration of partner violence in Bangladesh: Community gender norms and violence in childhood. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *19*(1), 117.

Yu, G., Carlsson, C., & Zou, D. (2014). Exploring the influence of user-generated content factors on the behavioral intentions of travel consumers, In *Proceedings of the 25th Australasian Conference on Information Systems*, 8th - 10th December, Auckland, New Zealand.

Yu, C. E., & Ngan, H. F. B. (2019). The power of head tilts: Gender and cultural differences of perceived human vs human-like robot smile in service. *Tourism Review*, 74(3):428-442.

Yusof, M. F., & Muhammad, M. Z. (2013). Introducing Shariah compliant hotels as a new tourism product: The case of Malaysia. Entrepreneurship vision 2020: Innovation, development sustainability, and economic growth. The 20th International Business Information Management Conference (IBIMA) (pp. 1142–1146).Kuala Lumpur: International Business Information Management Association.

Zamani-Farahani, H., & Henderson, J. C. (2010). Islamic tourism and managing tourism development in Islamic societies: the cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *12*(1), 79-89.

Zhang, Y., & Hitchcock, M. J. (2017). The Chinese female tourist gaze: A netnography of young women's blogs on Macao. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *20*(3), 315-330.

**Appendix I**

**SOLO FEMALE TRAVEL SURVEY INSTRUMENT –**

Dear solo female traveler, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study on your travel motivations and barriers. Your answers will be processed anonymously and confidentially. Survey takes approximately 8 to 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance!

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the barriers you experience to travel

|  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I do not travel because of the perceived risk | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because of the perceived safety about destination | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because I worry about healthcare resource at destination | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because of my foreign language skill in communication | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because of product failing | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because of time commitments | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I do not travel due to lack of time | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Select strongly disagree if you are still reading | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel due to lack of family support | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel due to family commitments | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel due to financial considerations | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel due to personal reasons | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel due to fear of feeling uneasy from home | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel due to physical ability | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel due to age problems | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because of my significant other | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I do not travel because of social stigma associated with it | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because solo travel is not viewed positively in the society | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do not travel because of my religion or religious commitments | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Group welfare is more important than individual rewards. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Group success is more important than individual success. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Standardized work procedures are helpful. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Instructions for operations are important. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Disagree or Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I carefully manage my money. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am persistent in spite of opposition. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I value personal steadiness and stability | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

|  | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I plan for long-term | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I give up today's fun for success in the future | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I work hard for success in the future | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

|  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It is more important for men to have a professional career than it is for women | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Men usually solve problems with logical analysis; women usually solve problems with intuition | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Solving difficult problems usually requires an active, forcible approach, which is typical of men | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| There are some jobs that a man can always do better than a woman | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

In which country do you currently reside?

| ▼ |
|---|

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

○ Less than high school degree  (1)

○ High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)  (2)

○ Some college but no degree  (3)

○ Associate degree in college (2-year)  (4)

○ Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)  (5)

○ Master's degree  (6)

○ Doctoral degree  (7)

○ Professional degree (JD, MD)  (8)

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

☐ White  (1)

☐ Black or African American  (2)

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native  (3)

☐ SouthAsian or Indian  (8)

☐     Asian  (4)

☐     Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander  (5)

☐     Other  (6) _____

---

What is your sex?

○ Male  (1)

○ Female  (2)

Are you now married, widowed, divorced, separated or never married?

○ Married  (1)

○ Widowed  (2)

○ Divorced  (3)

○ Separated  (4)

○ Single  (5)

Total household income?

○ Less than $20,000  (1)

○ $20,000 to $39,999  (2)

○ $40,000 to $59,999  (3)

○ $60,000 to $79,999  (4)

○ $80,000 to $99,999  (5)

○ $100,000  to $119,999  (6)

○ $120,000 to $ 139,999  (8)

○ $140,000 to $159,999  (9)

○ $160, 000 and above  (11)

○ Other (in currency)  (7) _____

Do you have children?

○ Yes  (1)

○ No  (3)

What is your age?

_____

How many solo trips do you take per year?

_____

How much do you spend on average per solo trip?

_____

How many days on average do you stay per solo trip?

_____

Do you live with your family?

○ Yes  (1)

○ No  (3)

Are you working or have a job or run a business?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (3)

Have you undergone a divorce or serious break-up in the past?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (3)

---

Please use the following scale to answer the question below, 1 = to a small extent, 5 = to a great extent

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| To what extent do you consider yourself to be a solo traveler? () | |

---

Please use the following scale to answer the question below, 1 = to a small extent, 5 = to a great extent

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| How likely will you continue to travel solo in the future? () | |

Contact info to receive Gift card: (phone, social media or email address)

_____