# Chapter 9 Culture and Sub-cultures in Food and Drink

## **Multiple Choice Questions**

1. Which of these is a sub-culture?
2. gender
3. hair colour
4. shoe size
5. roads
6. Which of these is a cultural theorist?
7. Abraham Maslow
8. Geert Hofstede
9. Elton Mayo
10. Smith John
11. What is a sub-culture?
12. a cultural group within a larger culture
13. a religious culture
14. a larger culture made up of smaller ones
15. a group whose members have different beliefs
16. Why are the elderly targeted by businesses?
17. they don’t know better
18. they are easy to persuade
19. they are a wealthy demographic
20. they are employed
21. Why are youth targeted by businesses?
22. they convince their parents to buy products
23. they are forming their own brand loyalties
24. they have pocket money to spend
25. they are the wealthiest in the society
26. Which of these dietary laws or rules do Jewish people follow?
27. Halal
28. Kosher
29. Vegan
30. cannibalism

**Revision questions**

1. To what extent is the core social values of society the most important characteristic when explaining culture and the importance of the characteristics when marketing. Use examples within the food and drinks industry to back up your answer.
2. Using examples, explain how and why religion may cause companies to alter their food and drink products at a local or larger scale.
3. Using examples, explain what cultural norms are and how they affect consumer behaviour, with reference to the food and drink sector.

**Answers**

### Multiple choice questions

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. B
6. B

### Revision questions

1. *To what extent is the core social values of society the most important characteristic when explaining culture and the importance of the characteristics when marketing. Use examples within the food and drinks industry to back up your answer.*

One of the characteristics that influences culture is core social values. These are the aspects that shape and change the behaviour and practices of culture. To some extent this is the most important characteristic in explaining culture since studies carried out by Triandis identified that one of the main ways cultures may be distinguished is how some countries will have a stronger emphasis on collectivism or individualism. With Mooij and Hofstede adding to this research by identifying countries that fit into these two types of categories, we are able to gauge an understanding of how the food and drink industry can market their products based on whether the market they are in is more individualistic or collective, enabling a clear marketing strategy to be devised to target a particular culture.

However, this theory has been criticised for generalising a whole population to behaving in a particular way, therefore the extent to which the food and drinks industry should market their products based solely on the core values of a country should be minimal.

Other characteristic arguably should be taken into consideration, such as myths and rituals. As seen in Coca Cola’s marketing with the iconic Santa image, this characteristic of culture arguably would be more important due to the impact it had on consumers.

Another example of how this characteristic is more influential than core social values is McDonald’s and their use of the ‘golden arches’ using this to symbolise their brand image helping to gain brand recognition.

In evaluation, other characteristics are arguably also important aspects of culture, such as socially shared, as without this brands would find it harder to gain recognition though social integration. Therefore, in balance, although core social values are a key characteristic, it can be deterred that it’s not the most important one and other characteristics are equally important when explaining culture.

1. *Using examples, explain how and why religion may cause companies to alter their food and drink products at a local or larger scale.*

Religion is a sub-culture that changes how people act and go about their daily life, however it also alters their dietary requirements. Religions such as Judaism and Islam have specific religious food laws whereas some others are restricted to vegetarianism.

Companies may change what products they sell in certain parts of the country due to regional differences in religion. For example, Subway have changed their menus in some outlets as the local population can’t eat certain foods due to their religious dietary requirements. Muslim people follow Halal food requirements, stating that they can’t consume bacon and pork products, therefore Subway outlets in predominantly Muslim areas have removed these products to appease the local population. By doing this not only will they provide themselves with more business, but they will also create a lot of positive PR which could furthermore increase sales.

An example of religion causing companies to change their food products on a larger scale can be seen with McDonalds in some countries. For example, India is a heavily vegetarian country due to predominantly Hindu beliefs. They have therefore changed many menu items from those you would see in the UK to cater for their vegetarian customers. An example of this is the McPaneer Royale which a is a Chicken Royale burger but made with paneer cheese instead.

To conclude, religion causes companies to change their approach to sales and marketing as it means that certain areas have different dietary requirements to others. Companies alter their food and drink products to make the most of these different areas and to maximise sales.

1. *Using examples, explain what cultural norms are and how they affect consumer behaviour, with reference to the food and drink sector.*

Cultural norms are the agreed-upon expectations and rules that a culture uses to guide the behaviour of its members in any given situation. Although every culture has norms that it will abide to, the specific norms vary widely from culture to culture. Norms are formed by using the underpinning values, principles and beliefs that a culture holds. Norms can either be enacted or crescive – if they are enacted they are explicitly decided upon, whereas if they are crescive they are more subtly embedded in the culture. As opposed to enacted norms, crescive norms are not often formally written down, but are learned through experiences and interactions between one another.

There are three types of crescive norms. Firstly, customs are norms that serve to control the basic behaviour of people. They show individuals the right way to behave generally, but they do not show any moral significance. An example of a custom in relation to food and drink is that an empty plate can be an indicator that you enjoyed the meal in countries such as India or Japan, however in China it would be considered rude to finish all your food, as it implies your host did not provide enough food.

Mores are another form of a custom, however, unlike customs, they do contain moral significance. Mores usually include forbidden behaviours and taboos, and if an individual fails to conform to these mores they will be met with a sense of disapproval from the other members of the cultural group. An example of a more relating to food and drink would be that it is taboo to eat with your left hand in parts of the Middle East and India.

To conclude, it is important for marketers to understand why cultural norms are important when studying consumer behaviour, as these norms affect how people act and therefore what people want and need. A culture’s norms have an impact on what products are popular and which are not.