

Magic  
of Minds

# Developing consumer insight in closed societies



*Celebrating a decade of insight based consultancy in the MENA region*

# Marketing Task: Making an inroad in Iran

- **Background**
- **As part of a regional roll-out plan, a company seeks to make inroads in Iran, a country where it has no prior presence.**
- **Research Objective: A comprehensive understanding of not only the category but also the CONSUMER**

Some information areas from the client brief

- ▲ How is their relationship with elders, teachers, bosses etc...how would they want it to be...
- ▲ Do they like their present society...why?...why not?...How would you feel living in a society that has less rules
- ▲ How would you define your **life if religion was not present** in your life...what difference would it make...why...

Daily lifestyle and routine.



Attitude towards family, religion, health and nutrition.



Self identity, values, aspiration and goals, role models and symbols of success.



Exploring dimensions of cultural understanding based on outlook of society.



Media habits and attitudes towards shopping.



## Why standard research approach was not enough?

- Need to go **beyond category**, unlike traditional researches
  - A wide ranging and holistic understanding, capturing various aspects of Consumer required



- Eliciting information of a **personal and sensitive nature** is in itself a challenge
- In a **closed society** like Iran the task is Herculean

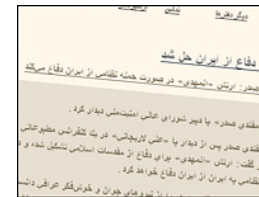
## So, what did we do?

We layered the standard research practices like Focus Groups and In-depths with additional tools at each stage, to help us get a more indepth look at the consumer



# Going beyond the standard: Methodology

- Secondary research on the internet revealed numerous blogs and a desire to express oneself in an anonymous manner



• Thus was born the idea of **SELF COMPLETION DIARY** to allow the respondent to express themselves without any inhibitions



This fact proved to be a powerful tool in a CLOSED society like Iran  
 The methodology emboldened respondents to let us delve deeper into their lives without the fear of other respondents approval.  
 Infact some of them dug into their personal photographs collection to give us the sneak peek and thereby making our data far richer & evocative.  
 AND this, was despite fears of religious/ moral police

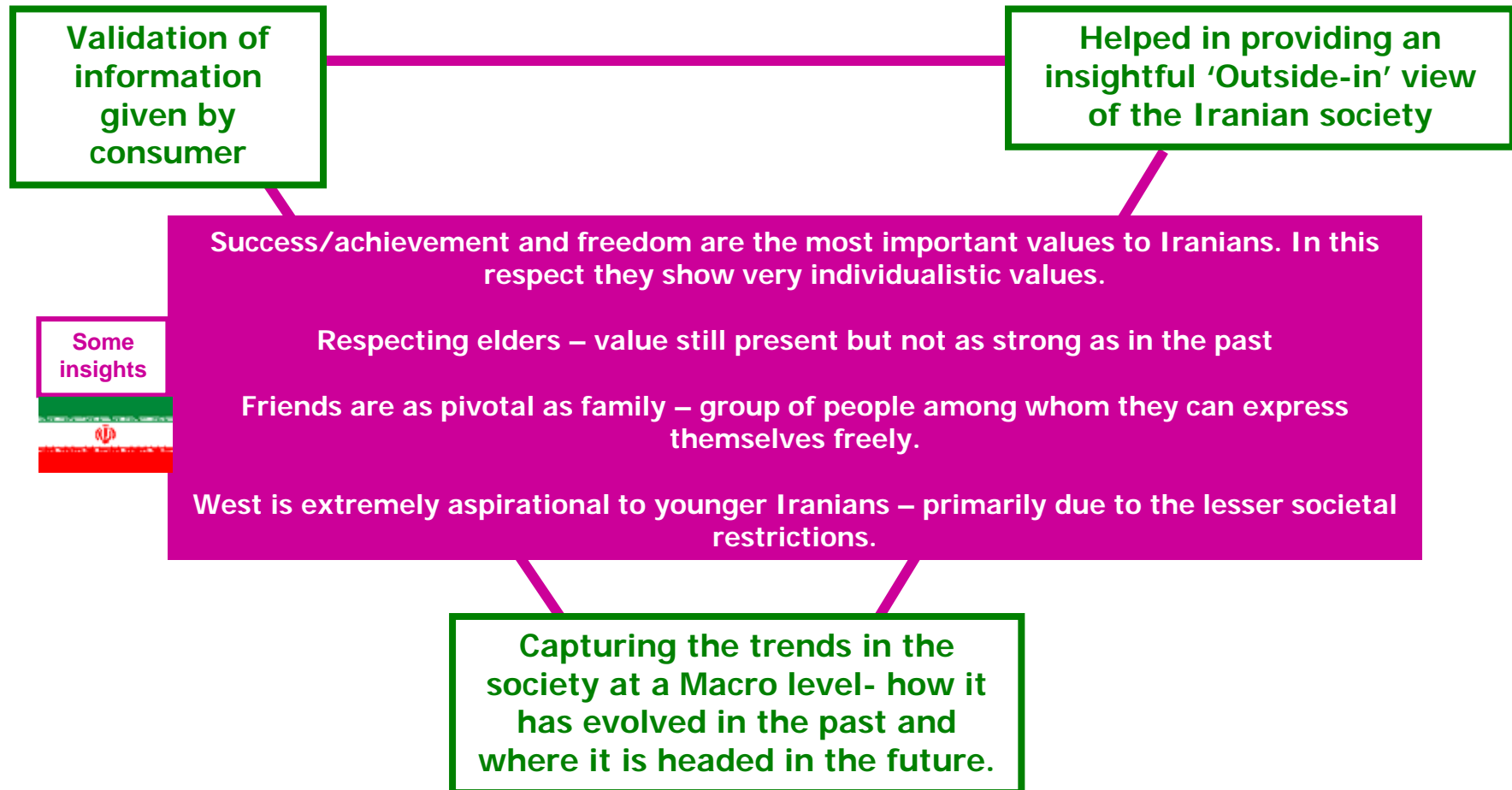


*I don't like behaving as the way my parents want me to. I am me and not my father or my mother. I have a totally different character and I may like or dislike things against the interest of my parents.*

*We cannot devote everything for our children we have our own wishes too and we should think about our own growth & maturity*

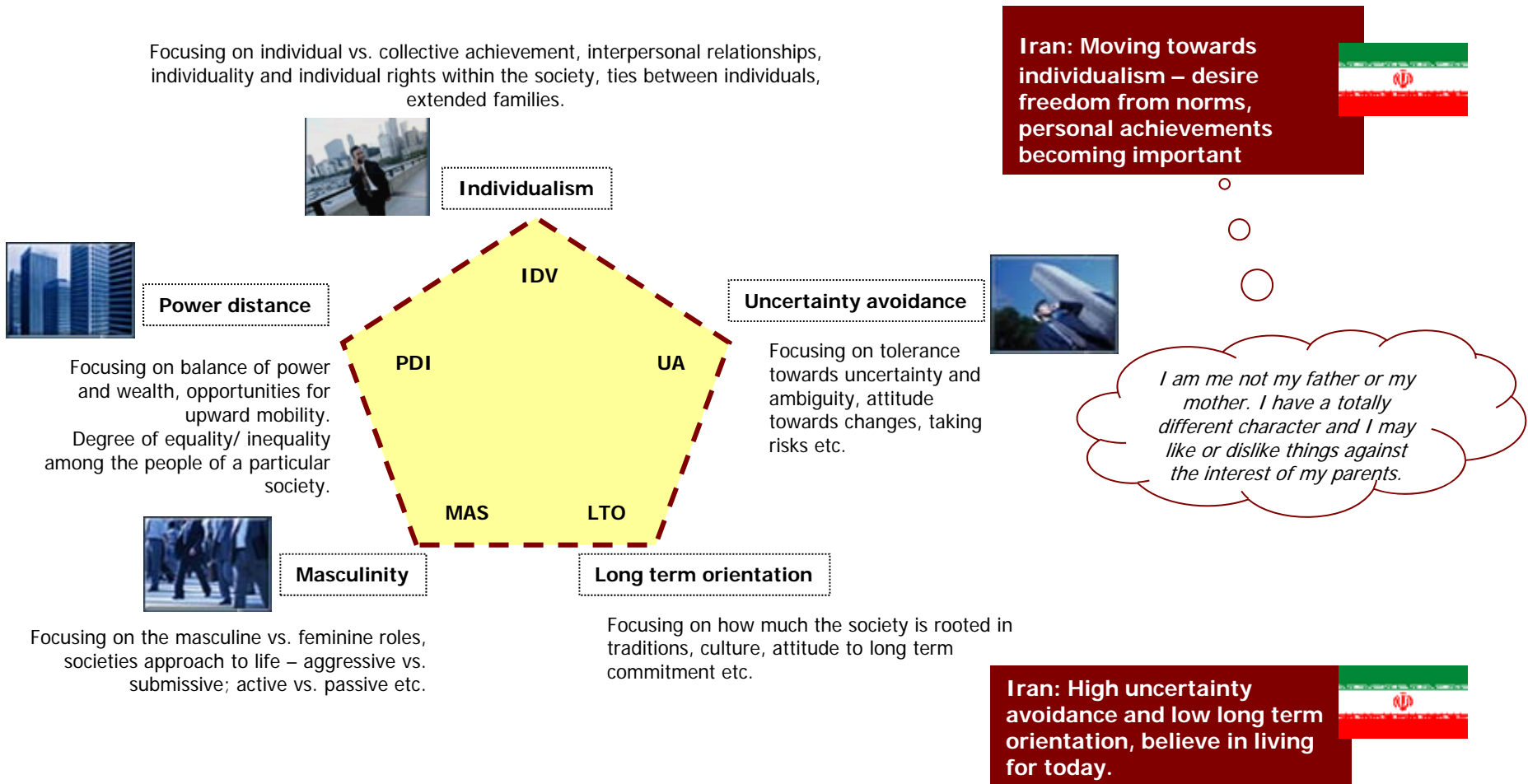


- Along with consumers, indepth interviews were conducted with **Sociologists**





- **The Geert Hofstede model was used to analyze the cultural aspects in Iran**



# Key Insight delivered to client



**We need to ensure that Brand X makes the consumer feel that**

They are 'different' in their own individual sense however they still belong to an elite group which shares some common goals & values like - *'its ok to be different', 'its ok to be ambitious', 'its ok to seek freedom/individuality'*

*Because...*

*What defines the Iranian consumer is 'I in the We', the feeling of belonging but in an exclusive group thus making them feel they are different*

*One of them is very lazy and does not walk this is why we have to take private cabs. But he is very honest and does not try to imitate others!*

*My friends are very different from one another.*

*The other one is very active and tries to look different that what he really is. He thinks whatever is different is better.*





**Challenge - needed to elicit insights into consumer values and aspirations, and that too in a closed society like Iran.**



**Going beyond standard tools helped in achieving the same:**

- **Photo-diaries - inspired from numerous blogs/websites where Iranians expressed themselves anonymously in a free and bold way.**
- **Sociologists - helped us provide a holistic view of the Iranian consumer and culture and its evolution.**
- **Geert Hofstede framework - helped us to analyze the vast amount of data collected and obtain relevant insights into the Iranian consumer.**