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Abstract

Purpose: The importance of electronic word of mouth has been proven in consumer-dominated communication. It is also one of the most effective ways to influence consumers when it comes to the purchase decision process. What is more, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are widely used in business research even though it has criticized. This study aims to explain the relationship between Hofstede's dimensions and two flip-side of electronic word of mouth (opinion leadership orientation and opinion seeking orientation at the individual level.

Method: This study will include two main steps which included (1) initial research and (2) official research. In details, qualitative and quantitative research methods would be used in the initial research. A deep interview with few samples was carried out to check the validity of the scales. Then, the initial survey was carried to confirm the reliability of the scale. In official research, quantitative research was used to identify the relationship between variables.

Findings: This study is suggested that there is a positive relationship between opinion leadership orientation. Still, opinion seeking orientation is found to have a positive association with uncertainty avoidance and negative relationship with power distance.

Value: Theoretically, this study confirmed that Hofstede's dimensions could be measured at the individual level as well as find out the relationship between cultural values and two flip-side of electronic word of mouth. Practically, this study is to assist the firm in their viral marketing, especially in seeding strategies and behaviour of the characteristic of recipients

Key words EWOM, Hofstede

Further information



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OF TURKU**

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**THE IMPACTS OF CULTURAL VALUES ON ELECTRONIC WORD OF
MOUTH: OPINION LEADERSHIP AND OPINION SEEKING**

Master's Thesis
in International Business

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ABBREVIATION

EWOM, eWOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
WOM	Word of Mouth
OL	Opinion Leadership
OS	Opinion Seeking
CVSCALE	Individual Cultural Values Scale
CO	Collectivism
MA	Masculinity
UN	Uncertainty Avoidance
PD	Power Distance
EFA	Explanatory Factor Analysis
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test
AIC	Akaike information criterion

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the field of marketing communication, one of the most common and formal ways is that marketers and advertisers do are trying to convince consumers to buy or getting involved in their products or services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004). This way of communication is applied in many activities from sales promotions, brand awareness, to public relations and so on. It is defined as “one to many” communication or marketers-dominated communication (Goldsmith, 2006) when the power is given in the hand of marketers.

However, as a matter of fact, the power of consumers is gradually increasing over time. Consumers tend to talk with others to seek for advice and custom-tailored information (Wirtz & Chew 2002), and hence, social or consumer-dominated communication is more powerful than communication from marketers in the purchase decision. What is more, with the advantages of internet technologies these days, consumers are given more opportunities and freedom to interact with completely strangers regarding their experiences in consumptions of products or service. Therefore, the traditional word-of-mouth is shifted to the electronic platform such as online discussion forum, blogs, reviews or social group networks sites (B.D. Weinberg, L. Davis, 2005). This new form of WOM is called electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) which is more or less affects the way of consumer communicating with others because of notable reasons. First, it gives consumers more opportunities to widen their preferences about the service or products. Second, it is more convenience even though the perceived information varies from people. Besides some noticeable benefits, it also causes issues to some extent. Because eWOM is beyond the national boundaries, different cultures might apply to the consumers’ perception of information. Moreover, although we stated that this is the consumer-dominated communication, there are still marketers who could use some tactics to affect the way of consumer communication.

Culture has been studied along with the development of society. There are many dimensions in light of culture has been discussed among researchers, however, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are widely accepted. By using data from IBM during the late 1960s and early 1970, Geert Hofstede codified culture along four dimensions individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). Continuing the work in this area, Hofstede and Bond (1988) were introduced long-term/short-term orientation as the fifth dimension on their work. Further to his research, Hofstede et al. (2010a) also refined the dimension by adding the sixth one called indulgence-restraint. Compared to others, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions were used

widely in academic research especially in management and organization (Triandis, 1988; Tsui et al., 2007), even though they were criticized (e.g. McSweeney, 2002). For instance, regarding relevancy, many researchers think that the survey was not an appropriate instrument especially variables measured being a sensitive and subjective value (Schwartz 1999). In light of cultural homogeneity, Hofstede's work was also criticized when assuming domestic population homogenous even most national being groups of ethnic units (Nasif et al., 1991). Still, Hofstede's work also did not count the essence of community and the variations of community influences (Smith, 1998). What is more, McSweeney (2000) also indicated that the nation is not the boundaries for culture due to cultural emergence. Regardless of those points, D. Lo, D. Waters, Christensen (2017) also admitted that Hofstede's cultural dimension paved the new way for cross-cultural analyses. They also indicated that the work of Hofstede was dominant when it comes to the cultural theory used in management research. However, Minkov and Hofstede (2011) admitted that those dimensions were constructed as national level, and laid under by variables that related across nations, not across individuals or organizations. Yoo et al., (2011) think differently when he admitted that those dimensions could be measured at the individual level. For that reason, Yoo et al., (2011) also suggested CVSCALE (Individual Cultural Values Scale) to measure those dimensions based on previous experiences from other researchers. Schumann et al., (2012) were also in the same mind when they confirmed it enough condition for cross-cultural measurement in their 11-country study.

It is not exaggerated to say that WOM has impacts on many aspects of marketing and consumer studies. It affects consumer satisfaction process (Morgeson, Sharma, and Hult 2015), projections of customer lifetime value (Kumar and Pansari, 2016) or new product adoption (Lopez and Sicilia, 2013). Previous studies also indicate that culture does play an important role in consumer behaviour as well as the way of doing marketing. For instance, Ozdipciner, Li and Uysal (2012) have admitted that there are differences in travelling decision in terms of demographics, preferences and attitudes. Another example should be taken into account is the research of Christodoulides, Michaelidou and Argyriou (2012) on "Cross-national differences in eWOM influence". They showed that while more attention would be paid by Chinese to recent eWOM, UK consumers would focus on negative information. It can be easy to see that there is a connection between WOM or to be more precise eWOM, and culture.

As a matter of fact, it is safe to say that opinion-leadership and opinion-seeking are two sides that comprise WOM (Feick, Price, & Higie, 1986; Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996; Shoham & Ruvio, 2008), or to be more precise eWOM (Lee, Choi & Kim, 2018). Opinion Leadership is regarded to the person who use their opinion to influence others (e.g consumer behaviours) while opinion seeking is referred to the person who looks for advice related to their own issues. Previous studies also indicated that they have

a more likely impact on purchase behaviour through WOM and many implications on advertising and marketing (Weimann, Tustin, Vuuren & Joubert, 2007).

Although, Dawar, Parker, and Price (1996) argued that there is no relation between cultural dimension and opinion leaders in the context of cross-cultural, previous research of WOM in term of cross-cultural does suggest that there are differences in complaints and communication behaviour in accordance with individual's cultural values and national context (Lam, Lee, and Mizerski 2009). Based on these findings, Lin and Kalwani (2017) also outline how national culture does relate to eWOM signalling and screening. They suggest that there are considerable differences existing between two market Japan and America despite cultural convergence over the period of eight-year. The main focus on the research is based on Hofstede dimensions (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede, and Minkov 2010) which are individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence/ restraint. Another research should be taken into account when it comes to the subject is cultural orientation model of electronic word-of-mouth communication: a comparative study of US and Korea social media users (Lee, Choi and Kim, 2018). The main focus of research does suggest the fact that there are differences and similarities between the two countries in influential cultural dimensions. It also suggests that vertical aspects of individualism and collectivism significantly affect opinion-leadership and opinion-seeking orientation for both American and Korean.

However, even though both above studies do contribute a great deal to the effectiveness of cultural values on eWOM, each has its own limitations. For instance, Lin and Kalwani (2017) have admitted that the research is mainly based on the Hofstede indices even though cultural values could better explain in the individual level. Besides, Lee, Choi and Kim (2018) just focused on one dimension which is individualism/collectivism. All above, it is clear to see that there are still different ideas on whether cultural value affects opinion leadership and opinion seeking through eWOM at the individual level. Therefore, there is an opportunity for the writer to exploit deeply about the phenomenon regarding the impact of cultural values on eWOM, especially on opinion leadership and opinion seeking at the individual level.

1.2 The purpose of the study

In academic contribute, the writer does hope that it would reconfirm the importance of cultural values in marketing communication generally and in eWOM in particular. In practical sides, the writer hopes that it will help marketers and advertisers consider cultural values as the main force to avoid mistakes in communication as well as optimize them to have successful marketing plans. For this reason, the purpose of this study would be focused to answer the main questions which are:

How do Hofstede's cultural dimensions explain opinion leadership?

How do Hofstede's cultural dimensions explain opinion seeking?

As discussed earlier, many cultural values have been discussed a great deal among researchers. However, for the sake of this study, the writer would like to focus on Hofstede's cultural dimensions, especially four major dimensions which have been criticized among researchers, namely individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity/femininity. By all that mean, the writer would like to explore the correlation between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and opinion leadership/seeking orientation in order to answer the main question. Therefore, the first sub-question of this study is

How are Hofstede's cultural dimensions (individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity/femininity) and opinion leadership/seeking correlated?

Having a clear purpose of this study, in order to address how cultural values correlated with opinion leadership/seeking, the writer would deeply study the phenomenon.

Still, this study would be used two scale measurements to examine the relationship between cultural values and opinion leadership/seeking. One is CVSCALE: measurement culture values at the individual level (Yoo et al., 2011) and another is Opinion leadership and Opinion seeking (Flynn et al., 1996). The next section is concerned about the structure of this study

1.3 The structure of the study

In order to give an overview of the study, the purpose of this section is giving the reader brief information about the structure of the study.

Section 1: Introduction – this section will provide brief information related to the research background and interest of the writer about the topic. Besides, the purpose and research question would be introduced in this section

Section 2: EWOM, Opinion leadership, Opinion Seeking – in this section, the writer would discuss the definition of EWOM, opinion leadership, opinion seeking as well as the evolution of them and their characteristics

Section 3: Hofstede's cultural dimension – this section will give the overview of dimension which is focused on this study, namely individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertain avoidance, masculinity/femininity. Still, the hypothesis will be introduced in this section

Section 4: Methodology – under this section, research design would be introduced together with questionnaire design. Still, evaluation of measurement scale, data collection, data analysis methods are also presented

Section 5: Data analysis – this section will give the result as well as the initial data analysis from the writer's perspectives

Section 6: Findings – key findings of this study will be presented in this section from the theoretical and practical sides. Still, the implication, limitation and future direction of research will be discussed in this section.

2 ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH, OPINION LEADERSHIP AND OPINION SEEKING ORIENTATION

2.1 Word-of-mouth

Since we know about marketing history, traditional WOM does play an important role to drive consumers' buying decision (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988). It is also considered as a significant source of information for people to seek others' ideas on various products. Therefore, it has got a great deal of attention of researchers and practitioners for decades. As soon, WOM is defined as "oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product, or service" (Arndt 1967, p. 3). The thing that makes WOM different from other marketing communication is the fact that there are non-commercial factors involved (e.g. Arndt 1967, Wirtz & Chew 2002, Kozinets et al. 2010). This is just purely the sharing information between two or many people about specific product or service, and hence, consumers tend to be assured that information perceived is tailor-made for their needs without other hidden purposes.

What is more, WOM is seen as personal communication when consumers get in touch with the range of people from friends, family to colleagues, acquaintances (Ryu and Feick, 2007). Therefore, there are some similarities between two individuals when it comes to the attitude toward a brand, product or service (Godes & Mayzlin, 2009). Not to mention the fact that this face-to-face interaction could receive high credibility, and as a result, it often has a strong influence on product judgments.

At present, the importance of word-of-mouth has been more and more recognized and still under research. Marketers these days try to be more proactive in influencing and managing word-of-mouth (e.g. Wirtz & Chew 2002, Ryu & Feick 2007, Godes & Mayzlin 2009, Kozinets et al. 2010). Moreover, WOM marketing now is also one of the effective tools beside traditional marketing efforts to help marketers engage consumers to their brand, product, and service. Because it could shape commercial information in a relevant form to approach different community members (Kozinets et al. 2010).

Two factors that could lead the consumer to engage in WOM are the costs and benefits of exchange (Frenzen and Nakamoto 1993; Gatignon and Robertson 1986). For instance, Consumers could use WOM as a remedy to reduce the post-purchase disappointment by sharing their experiences about the product or just simply to help them choose the better products or services (Ryu & Feick, 2007). Certainly, there is a cost involved when doing so. Consumers spent time communicating or recommending their point of view for others

(Ryu & Feick, 2007). In general, the reason for people spreading WOM is either expectation of gaining something or simply the satisfaction of providing information (Wirtz & Chew 2002).

Furthermore, Dichter (1966) defined four motives for WOM which are product-involvement, self-involvement, other-involvement and message-involvement. However, his work lacked detailed information about the development of typology (Hennig-thurau & P.Gwinner & Walsh & D.Gremler, 2004). Until 1993, Miniard adjusted Dichter's work, renamed those motives and introduced a new one – dissonance reduction which is a reason for articulating negative WOM communication only (Hennig-thurau & P.Gwinner & Walsh & D.Gremler, 2004). Sundaram et al. (1998) continued Dichter and Miniard's work by introducing four motives explaining positive WOM (i.e., altruism, product involvement, self-enhancement, and helping the company) and four ones explaining negative WOM (i.e., altruism, anxiety reduction, vengeance, and advice seeking).

2.2 Electronic (Online)-word-of-mouth

Due to the advent of the internet's global nature, consumers or to be exact the users nowadays could communicate and exchange their point of view about the product or service regardless of their location. Especially, with the blooming of social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter), WOM these days could define as electronic word-of-mouth with the significant fast speed compared to the ancient. To put it in other words, eWOM is merely an extended version of WOM in online space.

However, due to the complexity that communication takes place in the virtual environment, consumers who actually engage in eWOM do perform differently compared to those in the real world (Park et al., 2011). For that reason, the definition of the phenomena is still vague and hard to define or phrase. Fortunately, there are many attempts to explain the phenomena recently and one of them is suggested by Hennig-Thurau (2004) who defined it as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via Internet" (p.39). However, the fact remains that it's possible the communicator in this kind is not the consumer at all (Breazeale, 2009), and hence, it might affect the non-commercial factor of the phenomena.

The definition of Hennig-Thurau (2004) was criticized by Xun and Reynolds (2010) because it defined eWOM as a static conceptualization but did not give enough value to the dynamic information exchange process that eWOM has. Besides, in this dynamic nature, opinion passing actually is a specific characteristic of eWOM communication (Shu-Chuan and Yoojung, 2011) and this phenomenon also links to many aspects, for instance, viral marketing, Internet communication, user-generated content, word-of-mouth, stealth

marketing, electronic word-of-mouth advertising or electronic referral marketing (Vilpponen et al. 2006). For that point of view, the main characteristics defined eWOM should be reviewed in this study.

Thanks to the analysis of previous researches regarding WOM and eWOM, eWOM actually is defined in a different manner compared to traditional WOM. The most publication, previous researchers refer eWOM is an extended form of WOM (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004, Goldsmith & Horowitz 2006, Xun and Reynolds 2010, Vilpponen et al., 2006, Strutton et al., 2011; Yeh & Choi, 2011). They also stated that eWOM is seen as the more modernized version of its offline counterpart, just because it does provide consumers with many ways to communicate through electronic forms.

It is easy to recognize that with the involvement of the Internet, the distinctiveness of eWOM and WOM is justified (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006; Cheong & Morrison, 2008). Therefore, anonymity, the extensive reach of messages and the permanence of discussion are considered as three factors distinguished eWOM and WOM (e.g. Vilpponen et al. 2006, Cheung et al. 2009; Yeh & Choi, 2011). Moreover, in traditional WOM, the information exchange is mainly through face-to-face communication such as family, friends, and colleagues (Xun & Reynolds, 2010), but in the eWOM, it could be anyone. It could be an opinion leader or famous bloggers.

Both eWOM or traditional WOM are seen as an interactive way to communicate about the related consumption topics. However, the eWOM somehow is not as spontaneous as traditional WOM (Breazeale 2009) because people in this conversation could keep up with their own rhythm to reply or answer. Fortunately, with the support of the Internet, eWOM is becoming more and more spontaneous over time. As same as traditional WOM, it seems like eWOM is gradually evolving (e.g. Kozinets et al. 2010). Also, consumers have a tendency to seek and give information or opinions online in much the similar way what they do offline (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006), it is, however, easier for them to pass opinions to others through online platforms, networks or forums which are difficult for them to do in offline (e.g. Phelps et al., 2004; Porter & Golan 2006; Cheong & Morrison 2008; Chu & Kim, 2011).

In different platforms, consumers could behave differently. It makes eWOM different from traditional WOM, the peer-to-peer conversations. Taylor et al. (2011) interestingly claim that even though eWOM happening in the internet era and they actually have their own distinct characteristics, it seems that they collaborate with each other somehow. "The eWOM activities frequently may be initiated through traditional face-to-face (or phone-to-phone exchanges)."

More to the point, eWOM almost provides consumers with all aspects of product and service (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Compared to traditional WOM, the cost of searching for information decreased through eWOM, and as a result, consumers nowadays could evaluate product and service easier than ever. All the same, sellers have to bear the price

decrease pressure (Okazaki, 2009). The power is now given to consumers, which leads to the fact that companies need to change themselves to adapt and accept to win (Breazeale, 2009). While the traditional WOM is not seen as decision variables that companies concern (Park et al., 2007), eWOM is suggested as a method that should be included in the firm's marketing strategies. Also, in Steffes and Burgee (2009) research, they tried to examine the value of eWOM and WOM and how these could influence the decision-making process. The findings are quite interesting that the recipients seem valued information from eWOM forum more than exchanging information face-to-face in the same context (Steffes & Burgee 2009).

2.3 The opinion leadership

Opinion leadership and opinion seeking orientation are the two sides of eWOM communication in case of giving and receiving information among individual level (Lee, Choi & Kim, 2018). As a matter of fact, Opinion leader is defined as a person who influences other people behaviour, especially, purchase intention (King & Summers, 1970; Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman, 1996, p. 138). Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955) also defined opinion leaders in their two-flow theory. They suggested that the impact of mass media first reach the opinion leaders, then the information would be transmitted to others. Rogers (1983) also exposed his idea about opinion leaders. According to his thoughts, Opinion leaders were defined as individuals who could make impacts on thoughts, attitudes, or behaviour of consumers, causing them to behave in a defined way at a certain frequency. Moreover, consumers could also use opinion leaders' information to reduce their decision-making risks (Leal, Hor-Meyll, & Pessoa, 2014). Still, Cho, Hwang and Lee (2012) have the same mind when defining opinion leaders, through experimentation and evaluation, as agents for consumers' risk reduction. In fact, in comparison with opinion seekers, opinion leaders have more knowledge as well as more experience in a specific category of product/service, to say nothing of having greater participation in it, and presenting more explanatory and innovative behaviour (Lyons & Henderson, 2005). Therefore, Eck, Jager & Leeflang (2011) enhanced the significant role of opinion leaders as the informative source of the given category of product/service, as well as their innovative behaviour and the power to affect others.

Regarding their characteristics, opinion leaders are indicated to the person who is heavily using mass media (Rogers, 1983; Summers, 1970), socially active (Baumgarten, 1975; Venkatraman, 1989), self-regarding and self-conscious (Baumgarten, 1975; Summers, 1970). They usually act unlike other people and self-reliant (Chan & Misra, 1990). What is more, in diffusion studies, some characteristics, which included innovative behaviour, vast social connections, and a high degree of civic involvement and media consumption,

are also defined (Keller & Berry, 2003; Rogers, 2003; Vishwanath & Barnett, 2011). Based on these original and characteristics, Cabezudo et al., (2013) developed their definition of digital opinion leaders. According to them, they are using online space, for instance, blogs, forums, social networks or social media to affect others in a cooperative way. There are three main ways they could affect opinion seekers which are offering a model to replicate, using word-of-mouth advertising, or giving advice for purchase and use (Merwe & Heerden, 2009). Therefore, digital opinion leaders usually play a significant role in word-of-mouth advertising, offering information and creating the content of use to others, as well as attract a great deal of attention from internet users (Meng, Wei & Zhu, 2011). Karlsen (2015) suggested his own thoughts on the subject. He indicated in communication flow on the Internet, opinion leaders play as nodes in the network. They are transmitters who pass information to and also manipulate not-so-aggressive and not-so-center members of the network (Karlsen, 2015; Keller & Berry, 2003).

With the blooming of the Internet, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Instagram contribute a great part to the success of e-commerce. It does help the company to find suitable opinion leaders to promote product/service, also help them to change the way people react in the fastest manner. Due to the fact that opinion leaders are the one who holds the source of information and easier to expose to mass media (Weimann, 1994), they could immediately influence within their circles such as friends, neighbours, co-workers, or to be broader, they could affect their followers by using social media (Hsu, Lin, & Chiang, 2013; Tsang & Zhou, 2005; Watts, 2007). As Li & Du (2011) indicated that opinion leaders usually socially connect with higher status, education, or social prestige, and hence, they easily have the capacity to impact their followers as well as being the reputable resource of insight information. What is more, to foster the trust of consumer and/or follower, opinion leaders usually attach their personal experiment to the product/service (Thomson, 2006) as well as providing newest information because they often learn about the product/service (Bloch, 1986)

Many studies regarding motives behind for opinion leaders to spread the word-of-mouth on the Internet. For instance, Hennig-Thurau et al (2004) indicated that social benefits, economic incentives and self-enhancement are considered the main reason to share the voice. What is more, Jiang (2018) discussed deeply about the motives behind influencers/opinion leaders when they spread their word-of-mouth. She categorized into money, selling, image, love, helping motives. Her study indicated that in contrast to the prediction, money motives, selling an image one tends to increase the resistance of consumers toward the product/service while sharing, love, helping motives would minimize the resistance of consumer as well as increase the persuasion.

Regarding the role of opinion leaders in innovation and product diffusion, Van Eck, Jager, Leeflang (2011) specified the difference between informational and normative influence (Deutsch and Gerard, 1955). The former refers to likelihood of accepting the information

from others as evidence of reality (Van Eck, Jager and Leeftang, 2011), to be clearer that opinion leaders often give advice regarding the purpose of, the search for or the use of product/service (Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman, 1994). The later, in contrast, is a tendency to follow others expectation (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975; Van Eck, Jager and Leeftang, 2011). Therefore, opinion leaders would deploy social pressure and support to the influence decision-making process of consumers (Glock and Nicosia, 1964; Van Eck, Jager and Leeftang, 2011). Van Eck et al. (2011) also indicated that information influence has a great impact on the adoption speed of the product and the speed of information sharing due to the fact that the capacity of opinion leaders to judge the product influences the speed of information and product diffusion. In addition, he confirmed that opinion leaders' innovative behaviour and their lower sensitive to normative influence have affected more the percentage of adoption. Another point worth taking is that Van Eck et al. (2011) indicated that the impact of opinion leaders on the speed of product and information diffusion would lessen when the use of mass media is less intensive because consumers becoming aware of the product in a later moment.

All above, there is no doubt opinion leaders play a key role in spreading word-of-mouth. They are not only the person who has the great impact on the speed of sharing information and adoption of product/service but also the one who could influence on the popularity of online applications (Van Eck et al., 2011). Therefore, using opinion leaders in a marketing campaign in order to let them spread their word-of-mouth is a promising method that marketing managers and advertisers should consider. However, the characteristics of opinion leaders should be taken into an equation to maximize the impact. As matter of fact, Van Eck et al. (2011) suggested that marketers should consider opinion leaders wisely based on their characteristics (e.g innovative behaviour, better-product-judgement, less-sensitive-to-normative-influence) besides their relations (e.g followers). The next part, the writer will deeply study about another flip-side of WOM/eWOM which is opinion seeking orientation (opinion seekers) to make the phenomenon clearer.

2.4 The opinion seeking

Compared to opinion leaders, opinion seeking orientation has had less attention among researchers (Shoham & Ruvio, 2008; Vigar-Ellis, Pitt &Caruana, 2015). However, it is by nature the essential counterpart of opinion leadership, or to be more precise, opinion seeking is seen as co-phenomenon of opinion leadership (Flynn et al., 1996).

Opinion seeking is defined as the occurrence when an individual look for advice from others in order to make a purchase decision (Flynn et al., 1996). Also, Feick, Price and Higie (1986, p.302) suggested the definition of opinion seekers, who are "individuals that

sought information or opinions from interpersonal sources in order to find out about and evaluate products, services, current affairs, or other areas of interest”.

There are many researchers who suggested opinion seekers usually appearing at the end of the two-step communication model. For that reason, they are the target of information senders at the latest stage of new product diffusion (Flynn et al., 1996; Shoham & Ruvio, 2008). Beatty and Smith (1987) conceptualized opinion seeking as a part of external information search, which leads to the fact that they have a tendency to appreciate word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and relatives more than information provided by commercial sources (Assael, 1992).

Regarding characteristic of opinion seeking or opinion seekers, there are also many lively discussions in different categories. For instance, Flynn and Goldsmith (1999) confirmed that there was no correlation between subjective knowledge about wine and opinion seeking. Likewise, Bertrandias and Goldsmith (2006) suggested that there is a negative relation between opinion seeking and consumers' need for uniqueness, but a positive one with social comparison. Still, it is important to note that innovativeness and opinion seeking are inversely regarded in a study of a representative sample in an OECD nation. As a matter of fact, Flynn et al. (1996) also had the same idea when they expected that these two should be unrelated. The logic behind suggested by them was that opinion seeker doesn't tend to be interested in the product/service and hence not be very knowledgeable and innovative.

The examination of opinion seeking is essential in order to deeply understand it. Indeed, opinion is seen as a subset of product information (Flynn et al., 1996). Consumers often seek information or opinions from others to make their purchase decisions more convincing and more need-satisfying (Punj and Staelin, 1983). What is more, they also seek information to minimize the risk as well as guarantee for their decision making, especially from their circle of friends and relatives (Dichter, 1966 called them “listeners”; Assael (1987); Flynn et al., 1996). In fact, there were many researches digging in the subject of information seeking from friends and relatives related to the product category as a component of external information search (Beatty and Smith, 1987; Bennett and Mandell, 1969; Newman, 1977; Punj and Staelin, 1983; Flynn et al., 1996). Another interesting point is that the stimulation factor that makes opinion seekers acquiring the value and belief on opinion leaders is their desire to be a member of the social group (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Flynn et al., 1996). The reason behind is that the seekers want to put themselves in such a social group (Flynn et al., 1996).

To put it in the nutshell, even though the opinion seeking orientation or opinion seekers has less attention among researchers to their counterpart, but no one could deny the importance of it. Indeed, opinion leader could not be recognized without the existence of opinion seeking, and hence, it should be implied as specific domain due to the fact that opinion seeking and opinion leaders are related constructed (Flynn et al., 1996). In the

next part, the writer will discuss how culture affects two flip-side parties of eWOM/WOM through Hofstede's dimensions

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, the writer did introduce the definition of WOM and its evolution EWOM and the importance of this communication when the power is given to consumers. While WOM is referred to person-to-person communication that provides the tailor-made information for receivers, EWOM is extended this to widen boundaries through the online platforms (i.e. social media, forum...). Regarding their characteristics, the information is just transferred through family members, colleagues or from friends to friends in WOM. To be more precise, information is just moved around in a small trusted circle. This characteristic makes WOM more reliable than other sources. Regarding the motives, there are many lively discussions among researchers, however, the main motive is just the satisfaction of sharing information.

When it comes to the extended version, EWOM, the information is shifted in a larger circle. Strangers currently can share their opinions with other people without the restriction of national boundaries or time and space. Therefore, the intensive, the anonymity, the permanence of the message is considered as different as WOM. Regarding its characteristic, it is claimed to be more cost-efficient. People can have a more different view regarding the products and service they want to purchase. To say nothing of the fact that they could find any details of the products/service through EWOM. However, because of its larger circle, it has its own problem. While WOM, the information is transferred with the purpose of sharing information between family, friends and colleagues without commercial factors, EWOM could be affected by firms. It leads to the fact that the information is bias somehow, or to be more precise, the non-commercial factor of WOM would be also affected. Still, due to more information, people will feel overwhelmed when deciding. Regardless of earlier points, there is no surprise that EWOM is more effective than WOM in the nutshell for both consumers and firms. While consumers could have different ideas from the products and service, firms could use resources to impact consumers through viral marketing or sponsor.

What is more, in this chapter, the writer also discussed the definition of opinion leadership and opinion seeking orientation which is two flip-side of WOM and EWOM. While the former is related to the role of providing information, the latter is regarded as the role of receiving information. Opinion Leadership orientation is referred to as the action of impacting the thoughts, behaviour of others, and making them behave in a certain way. Related to the characteristics, people who have opinion leadership orientation usually

have knowledge regarding the subject. They are more self-reliant, self-conscious, innovative. For this point, they are usually important nodes in viral marketing, especially in WOM and EWOM. When it comes to opinion seeking orientation, it referred to the people who have uncertain knowledge about the subject. Compared to opinion leaders, they are less self-reliant, self-conscious and innovative. They usually sought information for their own interest. The reason behind is reducing the risks before making a decision. Even though there are little researchers focusing on opinion seeking orientation, opinion leadership is not recognized without the existence of it. To say nothing of the fact that they also play as subset information providers in the networks.

In this chapter, the writer discussed briefly the definition, characteristics of WOM, EWOM and opinion leadership/opinion seeking. Next chapter, the writer will discuss the cultural values and develop the hypotheses between two phenomena.

3 HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONS

As mentioned earlier, among other cultural values, Hofstede's dimensions have arisen as the most popular ones for several years. Yoo et al., (2011) also reasoned for that. First, Hofstede's cultural dimensions fully covered up the concept of culture by giving some similarities of different typologies of culture (Clark, 1990), to say nothing of the fact that they are also relevant to international business and consumer behaviour (Sorares et al., 2007). Second, those dimensions are well-constructed and empirically developed while others are still on the conceptual stage. Third, Hofstede's work is important in culture theory, especially in social science and cross-cultural studies (Chandy and Williams, 1994). What is more, among Hofstede's dimensions, Newburry (2016) appointed that four original dimensions (Individualism vs Collectivism, Masculinity vs Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance) have been widely used compared to others. Therefore, in the scope of this research, the writer will focus on these four original dimensions.

3.1 Individualism and Collectivism

Even though there are many controversial discussions regarding Hofstede's dimensions (Minkov et al., 2017), no one could ignore the importance of those in intercultural research. Hofstede (1980) first introduced his individualism and collectivism index by analyzing the work goals measured at the national subsidiaries of IBM Corporation around 1970. The definition of that index is developed over time and in his latest publication he mentioned them as below:

“Individualism on the one side versus its opposite, Collectivism, as a societal, not an individual characteristic, is the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups. On the individualist side, we find cultures in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find cultures in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty, and oppose other in groups” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 11).

In fact, compared to other dimensions, individualism-collectivism is received great deal attention among researchers, and since then has been regarded to different aspects of human behaviour (Singelis et al., 1995; Komarraju et al., 2007). To be precise, individualism-collectivism is regarded to the cultural group in which people shared same values, norms, and belief to consider what is right and appropriate when it comes to interpersonal relationships (Komarraju et al., 2007).

Hence, Triandis (2001) indicated that individualism is regarded to the person who does not depend on in-group, often concentrates on cost and benefits when evaluating relationship, usually shows uniqueness, emphasizes to fulfill personal demands over group demands, normally behave based on his/her own attitudes rather than feeling pressured by group norms. They tend to believe that there is no need to sacrifice their own interests in order to support and expect others need to look after themselves (Triandis, 1995). What is more, they usually appreciate their freedom and autonomy and look for self-enhancement, to say nothing of the fact that they often signify themselves through traits, achievements, personal goals, self-direction and hedonism (Triandis, 1995; Komarraju et al., 2007).

COLLECTIVIST	INDIVIDUALIST
Use of the word “I” is avoided.	Use of the word “I” is encouraged.
Interdependent self	Independent self
On personality tests, people score more introvert.	On personality tests, people score more extravert.
Showing sadness is encouraged, and happiness discouraged.	Showing happiness is encouraged, and sadness discouraged.
Slower walking speed	Faster walking speed
Consumption patterns show dependence on others.	Consumption patterns show self-supporting lifestyles.
Social network is primary source of information.	Media is primary source of information.
A smaller share of both private and public income is spent on health care.	A larger share of both private and public income is spent on health care.
People with disabilities are a shame on the family and should be kept out of sight.	People with disabilities should participate as much as possible in normal life.

Table 1: Key Differences Between Collectivist and Individualist (Hofstede et al., 2011; p.131)

Besides, as mentioned above, opinion leadership regards to the habit of giving others opinion about product service in order to influence their purchase behaviour. Normally,

opinion leaders characterized by knowledge and involvement regarding the specific category (Feick et al., 1986; Flynn et al., 1996). Moreover, Shoham & Ruvio (2008) suggested that tend to be self-center and self-confident. Still, Chan and Misra (1990) indicated that opinion leaders have the urge to feel differentiated from others and tend to act differently. Goldsmith et al. (2006; 2008) have the same thought when suggesting that opinion leadership positively correlated with the need for uniqueness in fashion items. Thus, the writer assumes that individualism has a positive association with opinion leadership orientation.

H1a: There is a positive relationship between individualism and opinion leadership orientation

On the other hand, collectivism regards to the person who put the importance on relationships, usually support others in-group, maintain his/her relationships even at high personal costs, often obey to norms, obligations, duties which are forced by family, friends and community members. Another worth point is that they usually show their identity through group membership, an interdependent self, group goals, and act conformably and securely. Still, they also deep concern about their appearance in front of others and avoid being humiliated or humiliating people, not to mention that they usually get much attention on others and willing to share their material and non-material possession within-group (Hui and Triandis, 1986; Komarraju et al., 2007). Therefore, the writer assumes that collectivism has a negative association with opinion leadership and vice versa with opinion seeking orientation.

H1b: There is a positive relationship between collectivism and opinion seeking orientation

3.2 Masculinity and Femininity

As regards to masculinity and femininity, there is less attention among researchers compared to others due to similarity with individualism and collectivism, however, there are still different in some other ways (Samaha, Beck and Palmatier, 2014). According to the latest issue, Hofstede (1998; 2011, p.12) defined masculinity and femininity as below:

“Masculinity versus its opposite, Femininity, again as a societal, not as an individual characteristic, refers to the distribution of values between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society, to which a range of solutions can be found. The IBM studies revealed that (a) women's values differ less among societies than men's values; (b) men's values from one country to another contain a dimension from very assertive and

competitive and maximally different from women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women's values on the other. The assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine'. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries, they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values. In masculine cultures, there is often a taboo around this dimension”.

As a matter of fact, people with high masculinity tend to prioritize the value regarding recognition, reward and advancement. They often focus on searching for opportunities for the competition that track people’s achievement (Hofstede, 2001). In contrast, people with dominant femininity orientation seems to foster harmony and solidarity in the group (Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Jaeger, 1986). To be more precise, masculinity represents the value which is “tough” while femininity captures it as “tender” (Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010). In femininity culture, reciprocity, mutuality and benevolence, or to be clearer relational values, are appreciated while in masculinity culture, assertiveness, competitiveness as well as aggressive are outweighed (Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010).

Regarding differences between individualism-collectivism and masculinity-femininity, Samaha et al. (2014) indicated that collectivists tend to support the enhancement of and dependence of the in-group against self-reliance, while femininity activist promotes compromise against competitiveness, without regard to group affiliation. What is more, Samaha et al. (2014) also mentioned that individualist cultures choose to support “merit-based” rules instead of “egalitarian-based” one for selecting the rewards, which means promoting self-reliance rather than group harmony. However, the reward is different based on masculinity-femininity level, for instance, in masculinity culture, they tend to choose a trophy to capture competitiveness value while in the femininity culture, it can be spa treatment which promotes nurturing value (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; Samaha et al., 2014).

FEMININE	MASCULINE
Average student is the norm; praise for weak students.	Best student is the norm; praise for excellent students.
Jealousy of those who try to excel.	Competition in class; trying to excel.
Failing in school is a minor incident.	Failing in school is a disaster.
Competitive sports are extracurricular.	Competitive sports are part of the curriculum.

Children are socialized to be nonaggressive.	Aggression by children is accepted.
Students underrate their own performance: ego-effacement.	Students overrate their own performance: ego-boosting.
Friendliness in teachers is appreciated.	Brilliance in teachers is admired.
Job choice is based on intrinsic interest.	Job choice is based on career opportunities.
Men and women partly study the same subjects.	Men and women study different subjects.
Women and men teach young children.	Women teach young children.
Women and men shop for food and cars.	Women shop for food, men for cars.
Couples share one car.	Couples need two cars.
More products for the home are sold.	More status products are sold.
More fiction is read (rapport talk).	More nonfiction is read (report talk).
The Internet is used for rapport building.	The Internet is used for fact gathering.

Table 2 Key Differences Between Feminine and Masculine (Hofstede et al., 2011; p.165)

Hofstede and Minkov (2010, p.161) indicated the focus of masculine culture by the sentence: “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.” Indeed, in a more masculine culture, when competitiveness and aggressiveness outweigh the reciprocity and mutual-ity, people hardly spend time to provide WOM, just because masculine cultures refer business relationship, not as the long-term, win-win situation (Steensma et al. 2000; Samaha et al., 2014). In contrast, in femininity culture, when the sharing and caring are concentrated, consumers with high femininity seem to respond to mutual benefits that received from the sellers, which means they often provide positive WOM (Samaha et al., 2014). Therefore, the writer comes up with below hypothesis:

H2a: There is a positive relationship between femininity and opinion leadership orientation

H2b: There is a positive relationship between masculinity and opinion seeking orientation

3.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

Cheung et al., (2005) argued that compared to other dimensions, the uncertainty avoidance dimension is the most widely-used among researchers when it comes to online consumer behaviour subject. It is not only just because its ease to represent the context of the online market, but also there are many researchers confirmed that characteristics such as perceived risk and trust are the most essential factors of individual regarding consumers' purchase behaviour (Cheung et al., 2005; Sabiote et al., 2011). In fact, in the latest issue of his work, Hofstede (2011, p.10) indicated uncertainty avoidance as:

“Uncertainty Avoidance is not the same as risk avoidance; it deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict behavioural codes, laws and rules, disapproval of deviant opinions, and a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'.

In short, uncertainty avoidance is regard to the extent that members of a specific culture feel unsecured by the ambiguous or unpredicted situation (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In high uncertainty culture, people have a feeling of scary to do something different (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In fact, people in a culture with high avoidance uncertainty often keep themselves away from predictability and ambiguity, vice versus the one with low avoidance uncertainty tend to accept the uncertainty willingly, take more risks, and appreciate the flexibility over the use of formal rules and explicit guidelines (Sahama, 2014).

It is noted that an individual with high uncertainty has a tendency to hold a lower perception of self-confident, they consequently feel themselves powerless toward outside impacts, while the one with low uncertainty avoidance often believe that they could control their own life (Hofstede, 2001). What is more, Hofstede (2001) also indicated that high uncertainty avoidance individual usually experiences more fear in response to a fear appeal than low uncertainty avoidance individual.

WEAK UNCERTAINTY AVOID- ANCE	STRONG UNCERTAINTY AVOID- ANCE
Fewer people feel unhappy.	More people feel unhappy.
People have fewer worries about health and money.	People have more worries about health and money.
People have more heart attacks.	People have fewer heart attacks.

There are many nurses but few doctors.	There are many doctors but few nurses.
Students are comfortable with open-ended learning situations and concerned with good discussions.	Students are comfortable in structured learning situations and concerned with the right answers.
Teachers may say, "I don't know."	Teachers are supposed to have all the answers.
Results are attributed to a person's own ability.	Results are attributed to circumstances or luck.
Teachers involve parents.	Teachers inform parents.
In shopping, the search is for convenience.	In shopping, the search is for purity and cleanliness.
Used cars, do-it-yourself home repairs	New cars, home repairs by experts
People more often claim ethical considerations in buying.	People read fewer books and newspapers.
There is fast acceptance of new features such as mobile phones, e-mail, and the Internet.	There is a hesitancy toward new products and technologies.
Risky investments	Conservative investments
Appeal of humor in advertising.	Appeal of expertise in advertising

Table 3: Key Differences Between Weak and Strong Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede et al., 2011; p.208)

In addition, in his latest work, Hofstede (2011) indicated that people living uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and usually motivated by inner nervous energy, but people in the opposite which is accepting uncertainty are open-minded to different opinion as well as try to have fewer regulation, not to mention that they follow empiricism, relativism which allow "different current to flow side by side" (Hofstede, 2011 p.11). Indeed, as mention above, opinion seekers are likely to search for information to minimize the risks regarding the decision-making process, while the opinion leaders are likely to experience new things. Therefore, the writer assumes that there is a positive correlation between opinion leadership and low uncertainty avoidance culture.

H3a: There is a negative relationship between uncertainty avoidance and opinion leadership orientation

H3b: There is a positive relationship between uncertainty avoidance and opinion seeking orientation

3.4 Power Distance

Another dimension from Hofstede that many intercultural researchers paid no less attention to is power distance. In his latest study, he indicated that:

“Power Distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less) but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society. All societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others.” (Hofstede, 2011, p.9)

As a matter of fact, the power distance represents the acceptance of inequalities between more and less powerful members of the group to a certain extent (Hofstede, 1991; Sahama et al., 2014). For instance, in high power distance cultures, differences in power and status, a position through prestige (e.g private room, VIP cards, skip the line) is drawn attention. The reason behind is simply that in those societies, people support inequalities through existing hierarchical and normative systems (Sahama et al., 2014). What is more, exclusive privileges and other symbolic behaviours are wanted and openly accepted among people, just because they will make them more powerful when appearing (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; Sahama et al., 2014). In contrast, privileges, status and symbol are unappreciated and avoided in societies with low power distance due to the fact that people are quite open-minded and accept differences in status (Sahama et al., 2014). Therefore, it leads to the fact that the notion that information is distributed unequally is supported, or to be more precise, the people with high power hold more information than the one with less power (Lam, Lee and Mizerski, 2009). What is more, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) also indicated that people tend to rely on, accept and follow on people with high status in the culture with high power distance, specifically in the decision-making process, while people from low power distance culture have the habit to rely on their own experiences. Moreover, innovation is positive correlation with low power distance culture (Yaveroglu and Donthu, 2002; Lam et al., 2009) while diffusion research indicated that there is a negative relation between diffusion rate and culture with high power distance (Van Everdingen and Waarts 2003; Yenyurt and Townsend 2003; Lam et al., 2009).

SMALL POWER DISTANCE	LARGE POWER DISTANCE
Inequalities among people should be minimized.	Inequalities among people are expected and desired.
Social relationships should be handled	Status should be balanced with restraint.

with care.	
Less powerful people and more powerful people should be interdependent.	Less powerful people should be dependent.
Less powerful people are emotionally comfortable with interdependence.	Less powerful people are emotionally polarized between dependence and counter dependence.
Parents treat children as equals.	Parents teach children obedience.
Children treat parents and older relatives as equals.	Respect for parents and older relatives is a basic and lifelong virtue.
Children play no role in old-age security of parents.	Children are a source of old-age security to parents.
Students treat teachers as equals.	Students give teachers respect, even outside class.
Teachers expect initiatives from students in class.	Teachers should take all initiatives in class.
Teachers are experts who transfer impersonal truths.	Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom.
Quality of learning depends on two-way communication and excellence of students.	Quality of learning depends on excellence of the teacher.
Less educated persons hold more authoritarian values than more educated persons.	More educated and less educated persons show equally authoritarian values.
Educational policy focuses on secondary schools.	Educational policy focuses on universities.
Patients treat doctors as equals and actively supply information.	Patients treat doctors as superiors; consultations are shorter and controlled by the doctor.

Table 4: Key Differences Between Small and Large Power Distance (Hofstede et al., 2011; p.72)

Another point is worth noting that Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) argued that WOM activities enhance the reputation of the sender and help them receive preferable treatment which is more important and appreciated in high power distance culture. Therefore, it leads to the consequence that people signal to others that they have relational resources, for instance, a customer tends to tell his/her friend about the special deal she or he might have

with the relational bonded salesperson to enhance her/his status. Or to be clearer, the appearance of relational bonds in high power distance culture would positively effect on WOM and increase its communication among others (Sahama et al., 2014). In addition, Lee et al. (2009) also indicated that people scored low in power distance tends to not express their ideas and views due to the fact that they consider everybody as equal. With all argument above, the writer assumes below hypothesis:

H4a: There is a positive relationship between power distance and opinion leadership orientation

H4b: There is a negative relationship between power distance and opinion seeking orientation

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, the writer discussed the definition of Hofstede's cultural values and how they relate to opinion leadership and opinion seeking. Following that those hypotheses below are developed:

H1a: There is a positive relationship between individualism and opinion leadership orientation

H1b: There is a positive relationship between collectivism and opinion seeking orientation

H2a: There is a positive relationship between femininity and opinion leadership orientation

H2b: There is a positive relationship between masculinity and opinion seeking orientation

H3a: There is a negative relationship between uncertainty avoidance and opinion leadership orientation

H3b: There is a positive relationship between uncertainty avoidance and opinion seeking orientation

H4a: There is a positive relationship between power distance and opinion leadership orientation

H4b: There is a negative relationship between power distance and opinion seeking orientation

Next chapter, the writer will introduce the approach method to test these hypotheses as well as the selection of samples and scale items measurements.

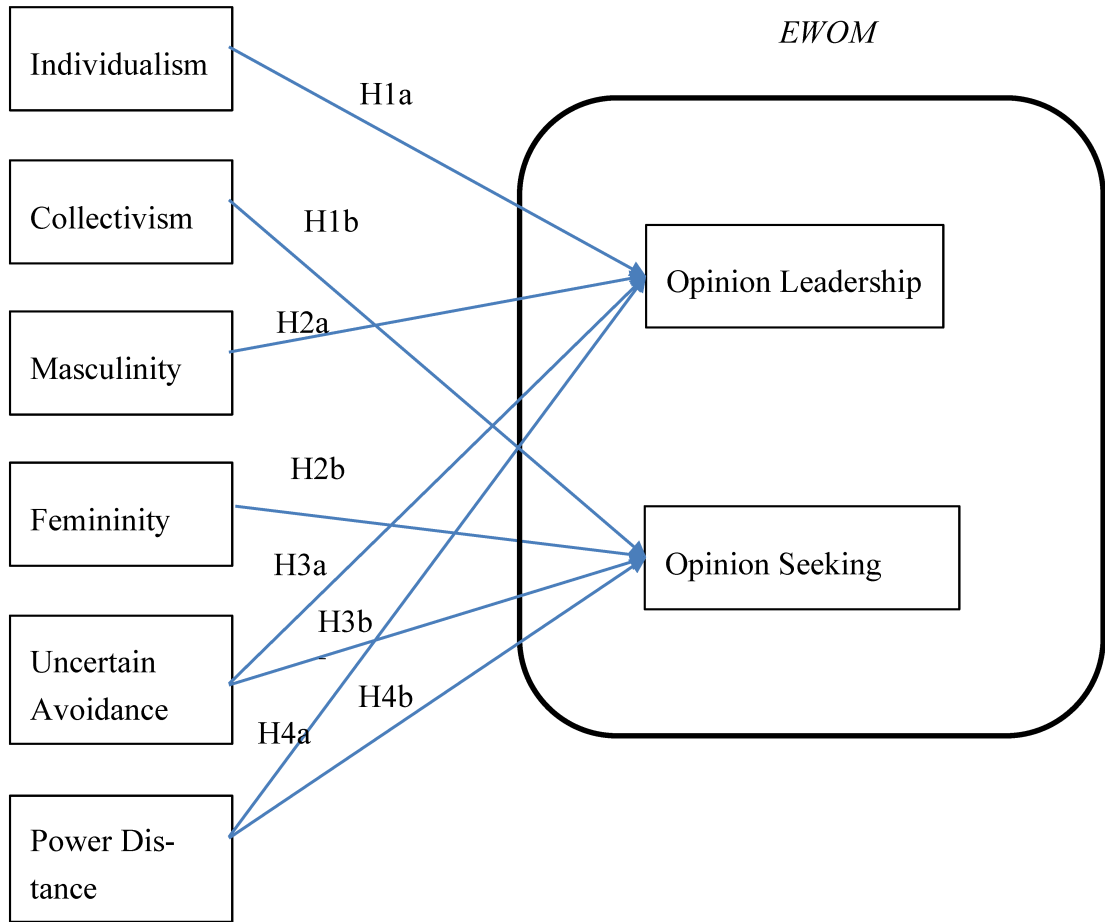


Figure 1: Hypothesized model of cultural values and Opinion Leadership/Opinion Seeking Orientation

4 METHODOLOGY

In the previous section, the writer already introduced the theoretical background as well as the hypotheses of this study. In this section, research design will be focused together with the evaluation of scale measurement and the suggested hypothesis.

4.1 Research design

Cooper et al., (2013, p.125) suggested that research design is a plan or a structure that the writer uses to obtain the so-called convinced answer to research questions. The plan is an overall outline from what the writer will do at the beginning of writing hypotheses and the operational implications to the final analysis of data. Basically, there are three types of research approaches (quantitative, qualitative and mix method) that researchers used commonly. However, Creswell (2014) suggested that qualitative and quantitative are not seen as a different category or opposite polar. Instead, he suggested that a study should tend to be more quantitative than qualitative or vice versa. This point pays the way for mix method arising when it resides in the middle combining both qualitative and quantitative approach.

4.1.1 Method Selection

The difference between qualitative research and quantitative research have been discussed lively among researchers. Generally, it was usually framed in light of using the word (qualitative) or using number (quantitative). Moreover, close-ended questions are usually used in quantitative research while open-ended questions are commonly used in qualitative. In broader point of view, the difference between them should consider the philosophical assumptions, the type of research strategies and the specific method that employed conducting these strategies (i.e. collecting data qualitatively through observing or collecting data quantitatively on instruments) (Creswell, 2014).

What is more, the qualitative approach is to deeply study and understand the meaning of the phenomenon. It helps to explore the insights as well as develop potential hypotheses for quantitative research. Meanwhile, a quantitative research approach is to test objective by examining the relationship among variables. These, in turn, can be measured by instruments, which means the numbered data could be analyzed using statistical procedures. Considering the research question, this study aims to explain the relationship between cultural dimensions and opinion leadership/opinion seeking orientation. Therefore, the quantitative research approach is selected as the main approach for this study. However,

the research is also focusing on an individual's characteristics and behavior, hence, qualitative research is also needed in scale development.

In sum, this study will include two main steps which included (1) initial research and (2) official research. In details, qualitative and quantitative research methods would be used in the initial research. A deep interview with few samples is carried out to make sure the sample understand fully the wording of scale measurement. Then, the initial survey is carried to confirm the validity and reliability of the scale. In official research, quantitative research is used to identify the relationship between variables. The research plan is shown in Figure 2.

4.1.2 Sample Selection

As Cooper et al., (2013) explained, choosing samples is necessary due to four reasons: (1) lowering your cost, (2) increasing accuracy of the results, (3) increasing the speed of data collection, and (4) availability of population elements. Moreover, the validity of samples relies on two factors which are accuracy and precision. Following that Cooper et al., (2013) suggested types of sampling as described in Figure 3.

In the purpose of this study, the non-probability and unrestricted convenience way of taking the sample will be chosen due to its advantages (saving time and costs).

In light of the sample size, there are different opinions regarding the issue, however, Harris et al., (1985) indicated that in multiple regression analysis the size will be formulated as $n \geq 104 + m$ (with m are the numbers of dependent and independent variables), or $n \geq 50 + m$ if $m < 5$.

In case use of explanatory factor analysis (EFA), Harris et al., (1998) also suggested that the minimum sample size should be no less than 50, better is 100 and the proportion of the participants versus observed variables should be 5/1 which means 5 participants needed for 1 observed variable.

In this study, there are 8 variables (which included 2 dependent variables and 6 independent variables) therefore, this study needs at least 112 participants for multiple regression. What is more, the write will be using 20 observed variables from CVSCALE (Yoo et al., 2011) and 12 observed variables from OL and OS scale (Flynn et al., 1996) which means in EFA, this study needs no less 160 participants. Therefore, the minimum sample size for this study is at least 160 participants.

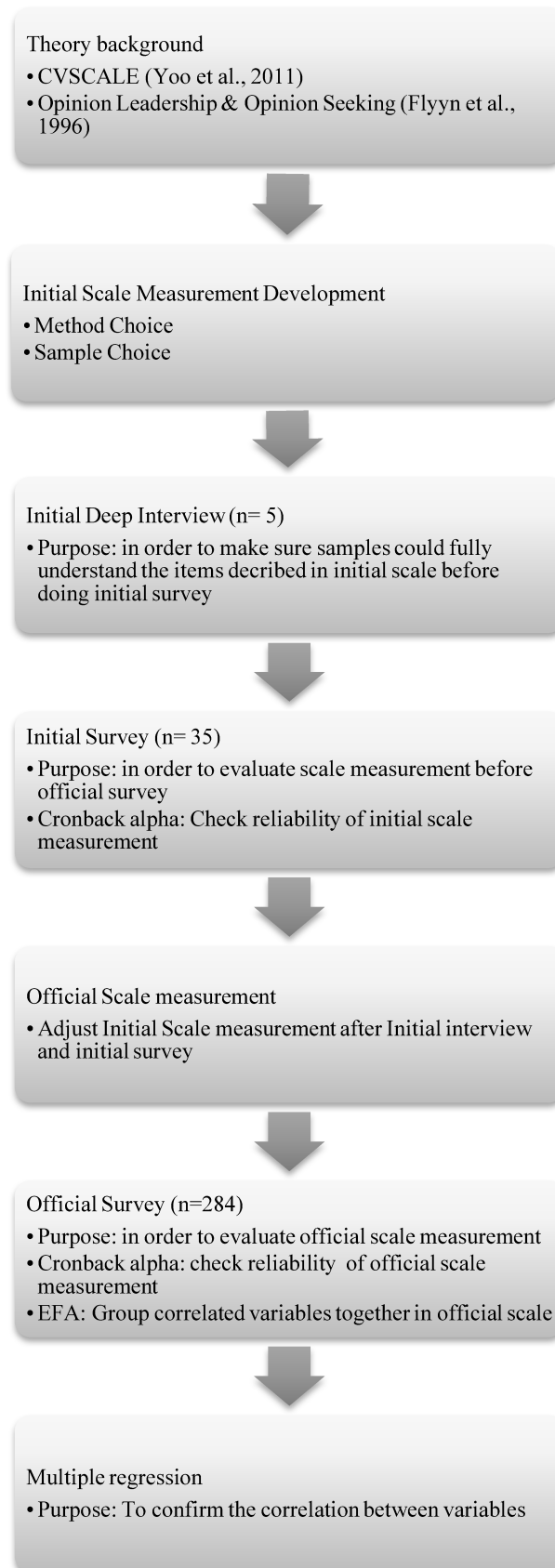


Figure 2: Suggested Methodology for Hypothesis

Element Selection	Representation Basis	
	Probability	Nonprobability
Unrestricted	Simple random	Convenience
Restricted	Complex random	Purposive
	Systematic	Judgment
	Cluster	Quota
	Stratified	Snowball
	Double	

Figures 3 Types of sample selection (Cooper et al., 2013)

4.2 Initial Scale Development

The initial scale will be developed based on Opinion Leadership (OL) and Opinion Seeking (OS) (Flynn et al., 1996) and CVSCALE (Yoo et al., 2011). Still, Linkert rating scale is also used in this study with 5 levels (1: totally disagree to 5: totally agree).

4.2.1 Opinion Leadership Scale

Flynn et al., (1996) suggested 6 final items to measure Opinion Leadership Orientation. In this study, the writer will adjust the product/service of the original scale. Therefore, the observed items are presented in the table below:

Items	Description
OL1*	My opinion on product/service seems not to count with other people
OL2*	When they choose product/service other people do not turn to me for advice
OL3*	Other people [rarely] come to me for advice about choosing product/service
OL4	People that I know choose product/service based on what I told them
OL5	I often persuade other people to buy product/service that I like
OL6	I often influence people's opinions about product/service

It is noticeable that the scale has the negative wording items with the mark (*)

Table 5: Opinion Leadership Orientation Scaling Items (Flynn et al., 1996)

4.2.2 *Opinion Seeking Scale*

Still, Flynn et al., (1996) also introduced 6 final items for opinion seeking measurement. As same as opinion leadership, the writer will adjust the original scale to decided service/product choice of this study. Therefore, the observed items are shown in below table.

Items	Description
OS1	When I consider buying product/service, I ask others for advices
OS2*	I don't need to talk to others before I buy product/service
OS3*	I rarely ask other people what product/service to buy
OS4	I like to get others' opinions before I buy product/service
OS5	I feel comfortable buying product/service when I have gotten other people's opinions on it
OS6*	When choosing product/service, other people's opinions are not important to me

It is noticeable that the scale has the negative wording items with the mark (*)

Table 6: *Opinion Seeking Orientation Scaling Items (Flynn et al., 1996)*

4.2.3 *Collectivism and Individualism Scale*

In light of Hofstede's dimensions, even though there are still many arguments over whether those values could be measured at individual level, there are also researchers confirmed that they could be. For instance, Yoo (2017) himself proved that there is significant correlation between two countries (USA & Korea) with 33 variables x 5 dimensions of individual cultural dimensions. What is more, many academic researchers also used the scale for their research such as buying decision (Sarma, 2014), consumer emotion and complaints (Baker et al., 2013), consumer expectation (Nath et al., 2014; Reid, 2011), consumer satisfaction (Kurger, 2011). Therefore, Yoo's CVSCALE is also used in this study

For individual vs collectivism, Yoo et al., (2011) CVSCALE suggested 6 observed variables as below:

Items	Description
CO1	Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group.
CO2	Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties.
CO3	Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.

CO4	Group success is more important than individual success.
CO5	Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group.
CO6	Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.

Table 7: Collectivism Scaling Items (Yoo et al., 2011)

4.2.4 Masculinity and femininity Scale

Still, Yoo et al. (2011), also introduced four observable items. Those are presented as below table

Items	Description
MA1	It is more important for men to have a professional career than it is for women.
MA2	Men usually solve problems with logical analysis; women usually solve problems with intuition
MA3	Solving difficult problems usually requires an active, forcible approach, which is typical of men.
MA4	There are some jobs that a man can always do better than a woman.

Table 8: Masculinity Scaling Items (Yoo et al., 2011)

4.2.5 Uncertainty avoidance Scale

There are five observable items which were introduced in Yoo et al., (2011) CVSCALE regarding uncertainty avoidance. They are shown in the table below

Items	Description
UN1	It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do.
UN2	It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures.
UN3	Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me.
UN4	Standardized work procedures are helpful.
UN5	Instructions for operations are important.

Table 9: Uncertainty Avoidance Scaling Items (Yoo et al., 2011)

4.2.6 Power Distance Scale

Last, Yoo et al., (2011) introduced five observable items to scale power distance orientation in individual level. Those are shown in below table.

Items	Description
PD1	People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.
PD2	People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently.
PD3	People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.
PD4	People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions.
PD5	People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.

Table 10 Power Distance Scaling Item (Yoo et al., 2011)

4.3 Validity and Reliability of Scale Measurement

4.3.1 Initial Interview

The questionnaire was translated in accordance with the back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980). After that, the direct interview of five random Vietnamese students who are studying at the University of Turku, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and the Metropolia University of Applied Science were carried with the initial scale. Five of them agreed that they fully understood the wording of the questionnaire, however, one of them suggested that the writer should specify “the product that valuable for people to consult others opinion before buying” to help samples understand the subject more clearly.

Therefore, the initial adjusted scale was introduced with the new product choice (Appendix 1). The writer decides to choose technology products (such as mobiles, laptops...) as the scale’s product choice due to the fact that the need more related knowledge when consulting someone. Still, they are also expensive, so people usually think carefully before deciding to buy.

4.3.2 Initial Survey

The initial survey was carried out through an online survey on Webropol. There were 50 samples were collected at the time. Among the participants, there were 26% male and 74% female. Age ranging from 18 to 25 accounted for 56%, while age ranging from 26 to 35 and over 35 accounted for 40% and 4% respectively. In terms of frequency of using social media, 12% admitted that they used social media below 2 times a day, 60% confirmed that they used from 2 to 5 times a day while 28% said that they used almost every hour.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) is used regularly to check the reliability of the scale's consistency. Following that, George and Mallery (2003) suggested that if the Cronbach alpha: $> .9$ – Excellent, $>.8$ – Good, $> .7$ – Acceptable, $> .6$ – Questionable, $> .5$ – Poor, and $< .5$ – Unacceptable. However, the Cronbach does not indicate the item which does not belong to the scale, therefore, the inter-item correlation is also worth taking into the equation. Still, according to Briggs and Cheek (1986), the inter-item correlation ranging from $.2$ to $.4$ is acceptable. The result is shown below after analysis using RStudio

Reliability if an item is dropped (n=50)		
Items	Raw alpha	Average inter-item correlation
<i>Opinion Leadership Scale (OL): $\alpha = .86$; average $r = .52$</i>		
OL1-	.83	.49
OL2-	.86	.55
OL3-	.84	.52
OL4	.83	.50
OL5	.87	.57
OL6	.82	.48
<i>Opinion Seeking Scale (OS): $\alpha = .87$; average $r = .53$</i>		
OS1	.85	.53
OS2-	.87	.57
OS3-	.83	.50
OS4	.85	.53
OS5	.84	.52
OS6-	.86	.56
<i>Collectivism and Individualism Scale (CO): $\alpha = .77$; average $r = .35$</i>		
CO1	.76	.39
CO2	.75	.37
CO3	.75	.37
CO4	.71	.34

CO5	.71	.33
CO6	.70	.32
<i>Masculinity and femininity Scale (MA): $\alpha = .65$; average $r = .32$</i>		
MA1	.54	.28
MA2	.51	.27
MA3	.57	.30
MA4	.69	.43
<i>Uncertainty Avoidance (UN): $\alpha = .87$; average $r = .57$</i>		
UN1	.84	.58
UN2	.82	.53
UN3	.84	.57
UN4	.85	.59
UN5	.86	.60
<i>Power Distance (PD): $\alpha = .78$; average $r = .42$</i>		
PD1	.72	.39
PD2	.84	.58
PD3	.68	.36
PD4	.70	.37
PD5	.71	.38

Table 11: Cronbach's alpha results of Initial Scale

All the scales above meet the requirement of good Cronbach's alpha index except for MA-scale and PD-scale. The result shows that if we drop the item MA4 the α will be increased from .65 to .69. The same can be said for PD2, the α will increase from .78 to .84 if we drop it.

However, as mentioned earlier, the inter-item correlation is also counted when it comes to scaling reliability. The average inter-item correlation of MA-scale (.32) and of PD-scale (.42) are acceptable (in the range .2 to .4). What is more, the sample is around 50 which is smaller than the sample requirement. Therefore, the writer decided to keep those items (MA4; PD2) for larger samples in the official scale.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, the writer introduced the research plan as well as explained how to select the method for this study. Moreover, the sample choice is also discussed under this chapter. Initial scale is also developed based on Yoo et al., (2011) CVSCALE and Flynn et

al., (1996) OL and OS Scale. Generally, OL Scale has 6 instruments with 3 having negative wording. OS Scale has 6 items with 3 having negative wording. In term of CVSCALE, CO Scale has 6 items, MA Scale has 4 items, UN Scale has 5 items, PD Scale has 5 items. Generally, there are 20 measurement items in cultural value scale. All the scales were checked the validity and reliability through initial interview and initial survey. The result showed that all the scales have the qualified Cronbach alpha, except for MA Scale. However, as explained, the inter-item correlation of MA Scale is still acceptable. Therefore, the writer decided to keep all the instruments for the official study. In next chapter, the writer will discuss the results of the official study as well as confirm the hypotheses.

5 RESULT

In this chapter, the results of the official survey are presented. The writer first presents the result of Cronbach's alpha analysis, then principal component analysis was used to identify the items which do not belong to the scale. Finally, the multiple regression analysis is introduced in order to confirm the correlation between dependent variables and independent one.

5.1 Sample Statistics

The survey was carried in both online-based and paper-based. The samples are students of Ton Duc Thang University and International University – Vietnam National University. There were 284 participants joining the survey (89 participants in online-based, 195 participants in paper-based). Moreover, 23.6% male and 76.4% female participate in the survey.

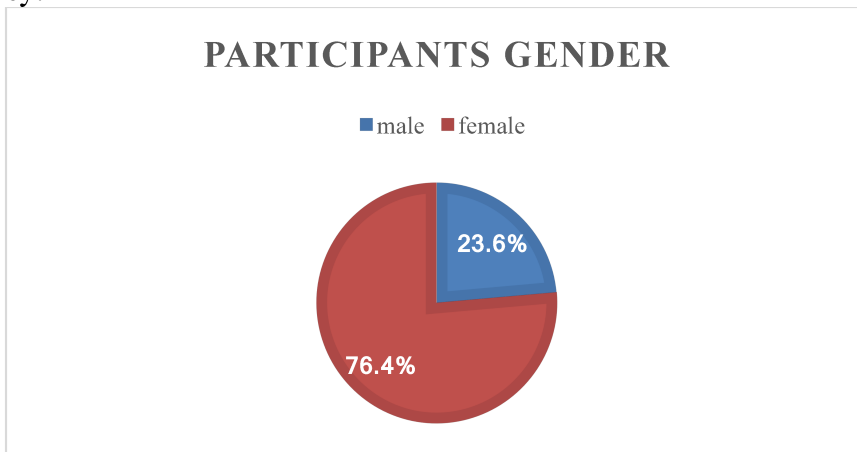


Figure 4: Participants Gender

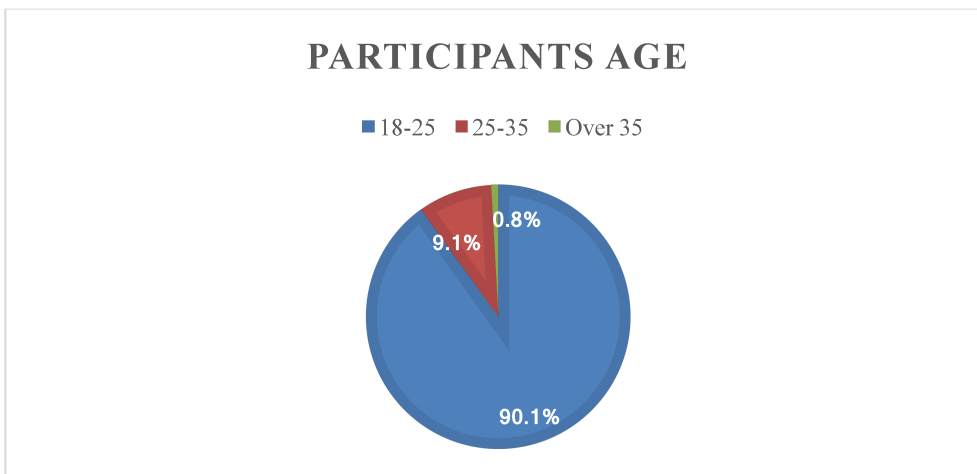


Figure 5: Participants Age

Regarding participant's age range, there were 90.1% participants from 18 to 25, 9.1% participants from 25-35, and 0.8% over 35.

In light of frequency of using social media, 6% admitted they used below 2 times a day, 60.6% confirmed they used from 2 to 5 times a day, and 33.4% used almost every hour.

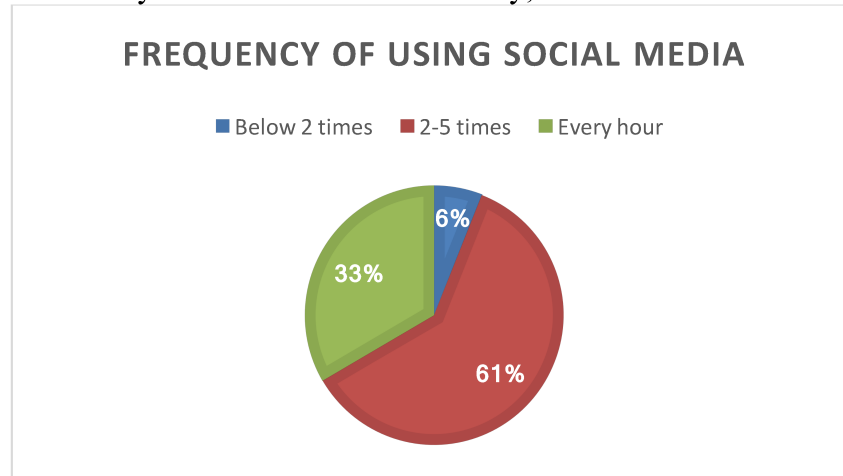


Figure 6: Frequency of using social media

5.2 Cronbach's alpha Analysis

As mentioned above, Cronbach's alpha is used to measure the reliability, especially the internal consistency of items in the scale. Typically, Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1. Still, the closer to 1.0 the value is the greater internal consistency of the variables in the scale.

There are many lively discussions over which is the cutoff point for the Cronbach's alpha value. One of the most cited sources is the work of Nunnally (1978) which indicated that the value should be .70 or above. However, this norm is misleading (Lance, Butts, Michels, 2006). What is more, Nunnally (1967) suggested that the value as .50 is appropriate for exploratory research. Hair et al., (2010) also had the same idea when suggesting that even though the value of .70 is agreed generally, the value as low as .60 is also acceptable for exploratory research. For that reason, the cutoff point of this research is .70 and the inter-item correlation should be from .2 to .4, however, the writer also considers other research regarding the scale before removing items. Below is the analysis of Cronbach's alpha with n=284

Reliability if an item is dropped (n=284)		
Items	Raw alpha	Average inter-item correlation
<i>Opinion Leadership Scale (OL): $\alpha = .7$; average $r = .28$</i>		
OL1-	.65	.28
OL2-	.65	.28

OL3-	.63	.26
OL4	.69	.31
OL5	.67	.28
OL6	.65	.27
<i>Opinion Seeking Scale (OS): $\alpha = .72$; average $r = .30$</i>		
OS1	.69	.31
OS2-	.69	.31
OS3-	.64	.28
OS4	.67	.28
OS5	.69	.31
OS6-	.68	.31
<i>Collectivism and Individualism Scale (CO): $\alpha = .71$; average $r = .29$</i>		
CO1	.67	.29
CO2	.67	.30
CO3	.65	.28
CO4	.64	.27
CO5	.70	.33
CO6	.67	.30
<i>Masculinity and femininity Scale (MA): $\alpha = .58$; average $r = .26$</i>		
MA1	.48	.24
MA2	.36	.16
MA3	.46	.24
MA4	.68	.41
<i>Uncertainty Avoidance (UN): $\alpha = .74$; average $r = .36$</i>		
UN1	.71	.38
UN2	.68	.36
UN3	.69	.33
UN4	.69	.36
UN5	.71	.38
<i>Power Distance (PD): $\alpha = .72$; average $r = .34$</i>		
PD1	.66	.33
PD2	.71	.38
PD3	.66	.33
PD4	.68	.35
PD5	.64	.31

Table 12: Cronbach's alpha results of Official Scale

As above, OL-scale has 6 items, the $\alpha = .70$ which meets the agreed value of Cronbach's alpha. The same can be said for OS-scale, it has 6 items, the $\alpha = .72$. Therefore, all of the items of Flynn et al., (1996) are kept for EFA analysis

Regarding those cultural items of Yoo et al., (2011), almost scales were meet the α value requirements, for instance, CO-scale ($\alpha = .71$); UN-scale ($\alpha = .74$); PD-scale ($\alpha = .72$). However, the MA-scale has the $\alpha = .58$ which does not meet the requirement. As above, the item MA4 is the reason. If the item is dropped, the α will increase from .58 to .68. For that reason, the MA4 is removed from the scale.

Even though the MA4 is deleted, the $\alpha = .68$ is still not acceptable due to the fact that the requirement needs to be .7 if the research is in the stage of the application. However, when the writer looks at the previous research using the same scales. There are still some research which had the $.60 < \alpha < .70$ (as table 9). Therefore, the writer accepts MA-scale with 3 items with the $\alpha = .68$.

<i>Sources</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>MA-scale</i>
Budin and Wafa (2013)	Malaysia (workers)	219	.64
Doubell (2011)	South Africa (professional females)	301	.69
Goh et al. (2014)	Singapore (nurses)	868	.61
Gunkel et al. (2014)	China, Columbia, Germany, India Italy, Russia, Spain, Turkey, and USA (students)	2067	.63
Krüger (2011)	USA & China (students)	313	.67
Pfajfar (2012)	Slovenia (sellers & buyers)	206	.66

Table 13: Masculine's Cronbach's alpha of previous research

In summary, CO-scale has 6 items; MA-scale has 3 items; UN-scale has 5 items; PD-scale has 5 items. All of these items will be kept for EFA analysis.

5.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is the most common statistical methods to reduce data to a smaller set of variables in the purpose of exploring the theoretical structure of the phenomenon. Typically, there are two kinds of method for driving factors which are principal component factor analysis and common factor analysis.

What is more, the former is used to drive the minimum number of factors and explain the maximum portion of the variance in the original variable, while the latter is used in the

case of the researchers not knowing the nature of the factor to be extracted and the common error variance. For this reason, in this study, the writer will use principal component factor analysis with VARIMAX rotation.

Before running principal component factor analysis, the writer will run Bartlett’s test and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test first to check if there is a redundancy between variables that can be summarized with some factors. Normally, Kaiser (1977) suggested that the value should be in the range from 0.5 to 1. The closer to 1 the value is the better it is. Regarding Bartlett’s test, the p-value should be less than .05.

<i>Set of variables</i>	<i>KMO</i>	<i>Barlett’s test p-value</i>
OL and OS scale	.72	< .001
CO, MA, UN and PD scale	.74	< .001

Table 14: Results of KMO and Bartlett’s test

According to Kaiser’s requirement, for the scale has below 30 variables in the principal component analysis, the eigenvalue should be greater than 1 and the average communality after extraction should be greater than .7 or when samples exceed 250 the average communality should be greater than .6. In this study, the eigenvalues of all scales are satisfied, but the average communality is just around .40 (OS and OL scale) and .50 (CO, MA, UN and PD-scale). However, Field (2012) suggested that we should also consider the scree plot before deciding the number of factors for principal component analysis.

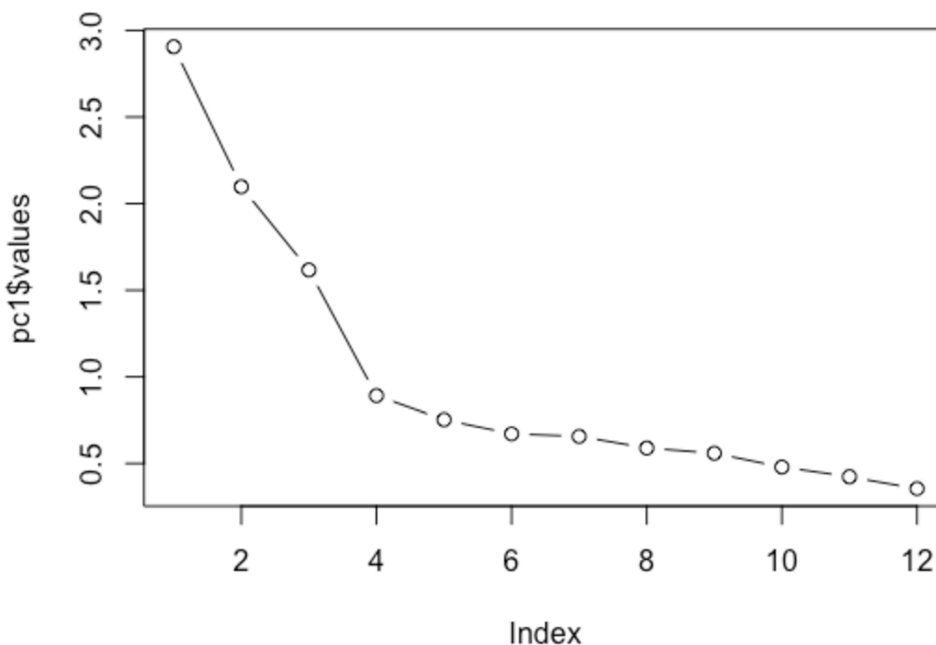


Figure 7: Scree plot of Opinion Leadership and Opinion Seeking Scale

As the scree plot of OS and OL scale (Figure 8) showing that we could choose either 2 or 3 factors for OL and OS scale, but we all know Flynn et al., (1996) suggested that those variables extracting to 2 factors. The same can be said for CO, MA, UN and PD-scale. The scree plot shows that we possibly choose either 4 or 5 factors (Figure 9), but Yoo et al., (2011), suggested that those variables composed of 4 factors. Therefore, the writer chose 2 factors for OS&OL scale and 4 factors for CO, MA, UN, and PD scale and accept exploratory component analysis for those set of variables.

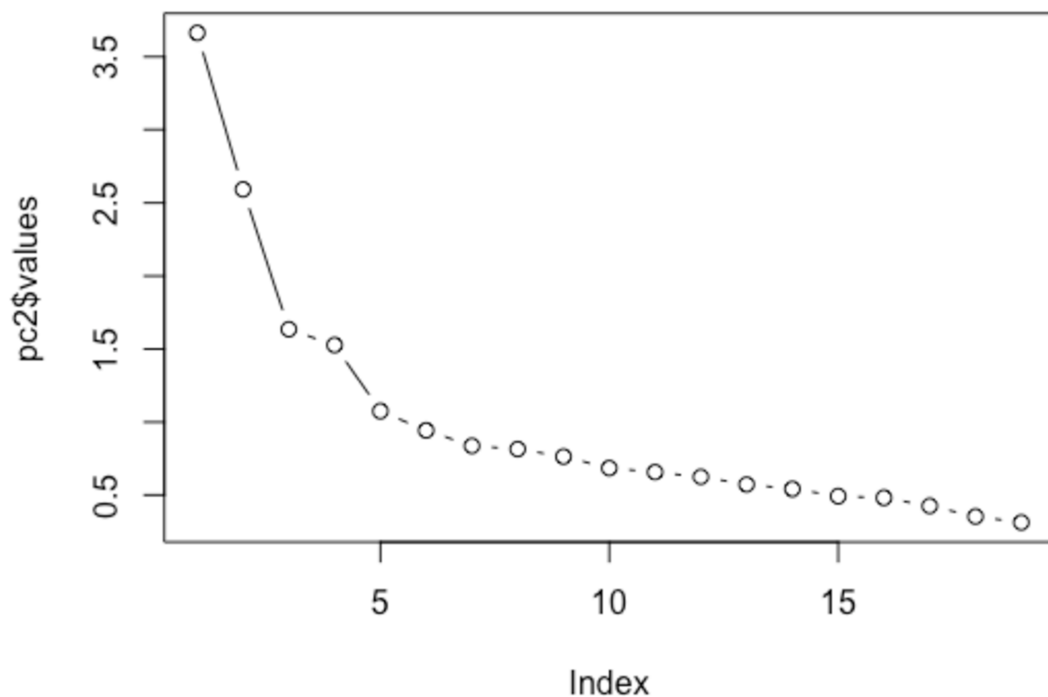


Figure 8: Scree plot of Cultural Values

After using Factor Exploratory Analysis, specifically principal component analysis, with varimax rotation and 2 factors for OS&OL-Scale. The table 11 below shows the result of factor loading and some key statistics.

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factors</i>	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
OL1-	.65	
OL2-	.70	
OL3-	.73	
OL4	.51	

OL5	.51	
OL6	.63	
OS1		.63
OS2-		.50
OS3-		.67
OS4		.68
OS5		.62
OS6-		.62
Eigenvalues	2.45	2.37
Proportion Var	.20	.20
Cumulative Var	.20	.40
Cronbach alpha	.72	.7

Table 15: Factor Loadings and Key Statistics of OS&OL Scale

The table 11 shows that with 2 factors, the cronbach alpha for OL and OL scale are respectively .72 and .7. The Cumulative variance is .40 for 2 factors. The eigenvalues are also reported which are 2.45 for factor 1 (OL) and 2.37 for factor 2 (OS).

Components Analysis

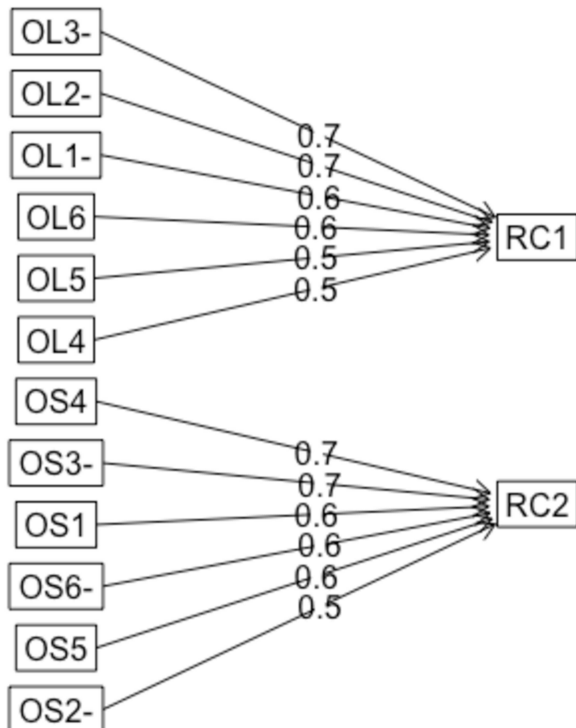


Figure 9: Principal Component Analysis Opinion Leadership/Opinion Seeking Results

Still, regarding factor loading, OS-Scale ranges from .50 to .68, item OS4 is the highest while OS2- is the lowest. Still, OL-Scale ranges from .51 to .73, item OL3- is the highest when item OL4 and OL5 are the lowest ones.

The same procedure was applied for all cultural values scale. For that, 4 factors are identified in principal component analysis. The factor loading for each is shown as below

As table shows that the eigenvalues for each scale is greater than 1, in details 2.60 for factor 1 (UN), 2.48 for factor 2 (CO), 2.47 for factor 3 (PD), 1.87 for factor 4 (MA). Still, Cumulative Variance is .50 and the Cronbach alpha values for each are .74 (UN); .71(CO); .72 (PD); .68 (MA)

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factors</i>			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
CO1		.60		
CO2		.53		
CO3		.70		
CO4		.74		
CO5		.55		
CO6		.60		
MA1				.78
MA2				.87
MA3				.61
UN1	.59			
UN2	.71			
UN3	.76			
UN4	.70			
UN5	.64			
PD1			.69	
PD2			.59	
PD3			.72	
PD4			.64	
PD5			.75	
<i>Eigenvalues</i>	2.60	2.48	2.47	1.87
<i>Proportion Var</i>	.14	.13	.13	.10
<i>Cumulative Var</i>	.14	.27	.40	.50
<i>Cronbach alpha</i>	.74	.71	.72	.68

Table 16: Factor Loadings and Key Statistics of Cultural Values Scale

In summary, the writer quite accepted the results of principal component analysis for all the scales. For that, OS scale has 6 items, OL scale has 6 items. In terms of cultural value scale, UN scale has 5 items, CO scale has 6 items, PD scale has 5 items, MA has 3 items. In next section, the mean of each item will be calculated for regression analysis.

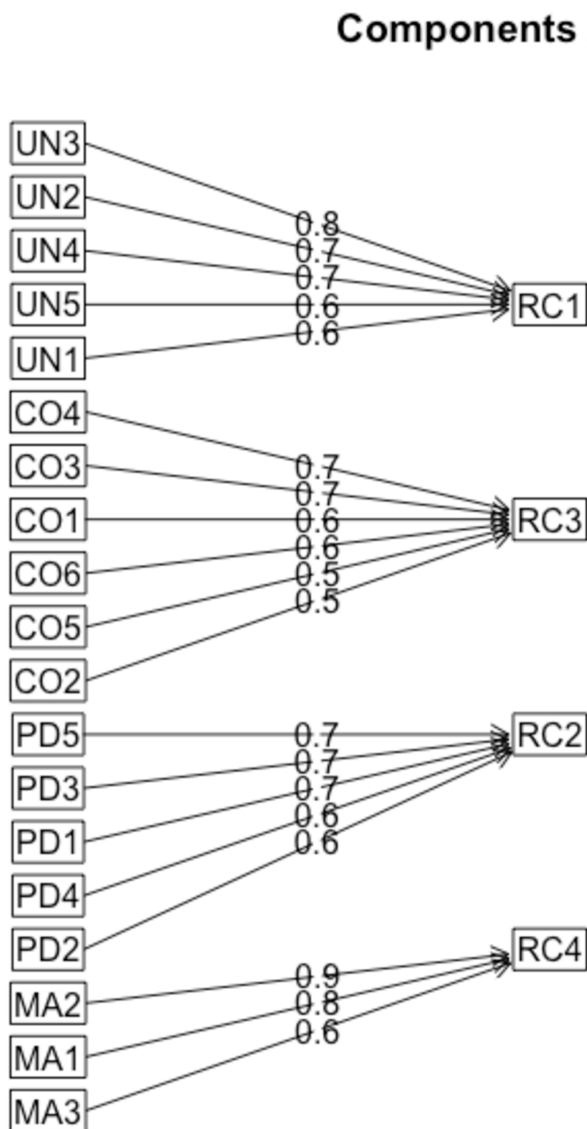


Figure 10: Principal Component Analysis of Cultural Values Results

Regarding factor loadings, UN-Scale ranges from .59 to .76, the highest one is item UN3 and the lowest is UN1. CO-Scale varies from .53 to .74, the highest one is item CO4 and the lowest is CO2. Still, PD-Scale varies from .59 to .75, the highest one is item PD2 and the lowest is PD5. Finally, MA-Scale ranges from .61 to .87, the highest one is item MA2 and the lowest is MA3

5.4 Regression Analysis

In this section, the writer will first check Pearson correlation between Opinion Leadership and cultural dimensions. Then, the models are suggested to best predict the opinion leadership and opinion seeking orientation will be suggested.

5.4.1 Pearson's correlation coefficient

Among correlation coefficients, Pearson's correlation coefficient is one of the most common statistic to identify the relationship between two interested variables. Because it is calculated based on covariance, it is also proved to be the best method to give the information about magnitude of the association, or correlation and the direction of the relationship.

Coefficient value can vary from -1 to +1, while the -1 indicates a perfect negative association, +1 shows a perfect positive association, 0 indicates no association of variables.

For this study, the median of each scale is calculated, then the coefficients are calculated separately on basic 2 factors at time. The table below shows the results.

	OL	CO	MA	UN	PD
OL		-.13*	-.06	-.05	.01
CO	-.13*		.22**	.36*	-.05
MA	-.06	.22**		.20**	.12*
UN	-.05	.36**	.20**		-.09
PD	.01	-0.05	.12*	-.09	
	OS	CO	MA	UN	PD
OS		.08	.03	.24**	-.23**
CO	.08		.22**	.36*	-.05
MA	.03	0.22**		.20**	.12*
UN	.24**	0.36**	.20**		-.09
PD	-.23**	-0.05	.12*	-.09	
*p-values < .05; **p-values < .01; n=284					

Table 17: Person's Coefficient Values

Pearson's correlation coefficient between Opinion Leadership and Opinion Seeking Orientation are shown as table. In details, the correlation between OL and CO is significant statistic (p-values < .05), therefore there is negative correlation between Collectivism and Opinion Leadership (-.13) which leads to the fact that there is positive correlation between

Individualism and Opinion Leadership. What is more, there are also correlation between OS and UN, PD which are significant in term of statistic (p-values < .01). Therefore, there are positive correlation between OS and UN (.24), negative correlation between OS and PD (-.23). Based on the Person's correlation coefficient, the results of this study are shown as table.

It is noticeable that there are some association between cultural values. For instance, there are positive correlation between collectivism and masculinity (.22), uncertainty avoidance (.36). Still, there are also the positive correlation between masculinity and uncertainty avoidance (.20), power distance (.12).

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Results</i>
<i>H1a: There is a positive relationship between individualism and opinion leadership orientation</i>	Supported
<i>H1b: There is a positive relationship between collectivism and opinion seeking orientation</i>	Not Supported
<i>H2a: There is a positive relationship between femininity and opinion leadership orientation</i>	Not Supported
<i>H2b: There is a positive relationship between masculinity and opinion seeking orientation</i>	Not Supported
<i>H3a: There is a negative relationship between uncertainty avoidance and opinion leadership orientation</i>	Not Supported
<i>H3b: There is a positive relationship between uncertainty avoidance and opinion seeking orientation</i>	Supported
<i>H4a: There is a positive relationship between power distance and opinion leadership orientation</i>	Not Supported
<i>H4b: There is a negative relationship between power distance and opinion seeking orientation</i>	Supported

Table 18: Hypothesis Testing Results

5.4.2 Predicting Model

To find the best model that fits the data set, the writer used Akaike information criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1979) which is an estimator of the likelihood of a model to predict/estimate the future values by regression. The use of AIC is to find the model has minimum value of AIC among all other models

	Df	Sum of Sq	RSS	AIC
Start: AIC=-166.58: OL ~ CO + MA + UN + PD				
-PD	1	.00302	152.51	-168.58
-UN	1	.00637	152.51	-168.57
-MA	1	.22718	152.73	-168.16
<none>			152.51	-166.58
-CO	1	1.98160	154.49	-164.91
Step: AIC=-168.58: OL ~ CO + MA + UN				
-UN	1	.00557	152.51	-170.57
-MA	1	.22438	152.73	-170.16
<none>			152.51	-168.58
-CO	1	1.99179	154.50	-166.89
+PD	1	.00302	152.51	-166.58
Step: AIC=-170.57: OL ~ CO + MA				
-MA	1	.21891	152.73	-172.16
<none>			152.51	-170.57
+UN	1	.00557	152.51	-168.58
+PD	1	.00222	152.51	-168.57
-CO	1	2.16138	154.68	-168.57
Step: AIC=-172.16: OL ~ CO				
<none>			152.73	-172.16
+MA	1	.21891	152.51	-170.57
+UN	1	.00024	152.73	-170.16
+PD	1	.00010	152.73	-170.16
-CO	1	2.59685	155.33	-169.37
Call: lm(formula = OL ~ CO, data = lm1) Coefficients: (Intercept) COmean 3.5726 -0.1316				

Table 19: Stepwise of predicting Opinion Leadership Orientation Model

As Rstudio suggested, the model is created by choosing the model which has the least AIC index. Therefore, the model best predicts Opinion Leadership orientation of given data through cultural values is:

$$OL = 3.5726 - 0.1316 x CO$$

The same procedure was carried with Opinion Seeking Orientation and cultural values.

	Df	Sum of Sq	RSS	AIC
Start: AIC=-197.92: OS ~ CO + MA + UN + PD				
-MA	1	.0242	136.60	-199.87
-CO	1	.0410	136.62	-199.83
<none>			136.58	-197.91
-PD	1	6.6174	143.19	-186.48
-UN	1	6.6930	143.27	-186.33
Step: AIC=-199.86: OS ~ CO + UN + PD				
-CO	1	.0322	136.63	-201.80
<none>			136.60	-199.87
+MA	1	.0242	136.58	-197.91
-PD	1	6.6422	143.24	-188.38
-UN	1	6.9676	143.57	-187.74
Step: AIC=-201.8: OS ~ UN + PD				
<none>			136.63	-201.80
+CO	1	0.0322	136.60	-199.87
+MA	1	0.0154	136.62	-199.83
-PD	1	6.6269	143.26	-190.35
-UN	1	7.6142	144.25	-188.40
Call: lm(formula = OSmean ~ UN + PD, data = lm2)				
Coefficients:				
(Intercept)	UN	PD		
3.1887	0.2467	-0.1823		

Table 20: Stepwise of predicting Opinion Seeking Orientation Model

The least AIC value suggested by Rstudio is -201.8. Therefore, the best model which best predicts opinion seeking orientation through cultural values is

$$OS = 3.1887 + 0.2467 x UN - 0.1823 x PD$$

Factor	Predictors	β	R^2
Opinion Leadership Orientation	Collectivism	-.13164*	1.3%
Opinion Seeking Orientation	Uncertainty Avoidance	.24669**	9.6%

	Power Distance	-.18229**	
<i>*p-values < .05; **p-values < .01; n=284</i>			

Table 21: Summary of model's key statistics

For Opinion Leadership Orientation, 1.3% of the variance was explained by collectivism with negative correlation ($p < .05$).

For Opinion Seeking Orientation, 9.6% of the variance was explained by uncertainty avoidance with positive correlation and power distance with negative correlation ($p < .01$)

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, the writer discussed some key statistics showing the validity and reliability of all the scales. Cronbach alpha of all the scales are qualified except for MA scale. However, as explained, the previous studies also showed that the α of MA scale ranging from .6 to .7. In term of principal component analysis, the result showed that all items are grouped as suggested with high factor loading. Also, in this chapter, the hypotheses also confirmed. It showed that there is positive correlation between opinion leadership orientation and individualism. What is more, it also indicated that there is positive relationship and negative relationship between opinion seeking orientation and uncertainty avoidance, power distance respectively.

In this chapter, the writer also used AIC method to choose the best fit model that predict opinion leadership orientation and opinion seeking orientation. In next chapter, the writer will discuss the results of hypotheses, the theoretical and practical implication, the limitation and some future directions of this study.

6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are many arguments among researchers regarding whether or not cultural values influence opinion leadership and opinion seeking orientation. Some of them suggested that there is no correlation between them (e.g Dawn et al., 1996) while others (e.g Lam et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018) think differently.

What is more, there are also many lively discussions whether Hofstede's dimensions could be constructed as individual or not. Hofstede et al., (2011) himself suggested that all those dimensions are constructed as national level, so as individual level, it should be constructed carefully. For this reason, Yoo et al (2011) recommended the CVSCALE to measure those dimensions. Even though there are still some arguments regarding the scale, many researchers used it in their study (e.g Sarma, 2014; Baker et al., 2013; Nath et al., 2014).

All above, first this study aims to exploit what are cultural values that affect two flip-sides of eWOM which are opinion leadership and opinion seeking orientation. It means whether there is any correlation between cultural values and opinion leadership orientation/opinion seeking orientation (two flip-side of eWOM). Second, this study also aims to confirm whether Hofstede's cultural dimensions could be constructed as individual level. Third, this study also suggests some implications for marketers to consider when deciding their marketing communication plans.

6.1 Main Findings and Discussion

As mentioned earlier, this study used opinion leadership and opinion seeking scale (Flynn et al., 1996) and cultural values scale CVSCALE (Yoo et al., 2011) to identify the correlation between them. The study findings reveal that there are some cultural values which actually correlated with opinion leadership/ opinion seeking orientation.

6.1.1 Individualism/Collectivism and opinion leadership/opinion seeking orientation

The individualism is found to have positive correlation with opinion leadership. This result supports the fact that people with individualism orientation tendency such as self-enhancement are likely to share information through eWOM and to become opinion leaders. The reason behind could be that they would like to gain more personal goals, achievements and recognition by doing so. What is more, as mentioned earlier, individualism people tends to think self-center and self-direction. They used to show their uniqueness

as well as do not hesitate to expose their ideas which is also explained the positive correlation between opinion leadership orientation and individualism.

Collectivism in this study is not found to have correlation with opinion seeking orientation with significant statistic. Perhaps, respondents in this study may not strongly believe in information provided in their networks. This point is contract to their pattern of consumption when they usually reply on their networks and information provided by their social circle. Perhaps this behavior happens because of samples are all students who have dependent state of mind when it comes to shopping decisions. What is more, as mentioned, people valued collectivism tend to be more introvert, hence, they usually focus more on their internal thought instead of searching outside. They usually valued their internal choice rather than listening other people or searching information outside.

What is more, it is found to have negative correlation with opinion leadership orientation because it is the flip coin of individualism. Perhaps, people valued collectivism are more unsecure to expose their ideas or identity compared to others. They may feel shy when express their ideas or to be more precise, they may scare to lose their face when the information they provided is not exactly or bias.

6.1.2 Masculinity/Femininity and Opinion Leadership/Opinion seeking orientation

This result of this study suggested that there is no correlation with significant statistic between Masculinity/Femininity and Opinion Leadership/Opinion Seeking. Perhaps, the characteristic of masculinity/femininity is not strong enough to courage people to share information through EWOM as well as seeking for information. The most acceptable reason behind could be that people valued masculinity usually have high ego. Perhaps, they valued their opinion on shopping decision higher than others and it explained why it does not have significant statistic when it comes the association between masculinity. To say nothing of lower product adoption rates of people valued masculinity, it might be also the other reason for the insignificant relationship. In term of Femininity, though sharing and caring is the core characteristic of people valued femininity, there is no significant relationship between femininity and opinion leadership orientation. The reason behind could that people valued femininity tend to respect other people ideas. They do not consider their idea is more important or more informative than others, hence, they might be hesitated when expressed their idea over product or service in their point of view.

However, it is interesting that Masculinity as positive correlation with Collectivism, Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance with significant statistic, respectively, .22**, .20**, .12* (**p-value < .01; *p-value < .05). It was also mentioned other research of Hofstede et al., (2011).

6.1.3 Uncertainty Avoidance and Opinion Leadership/Opinion seeking orientation

As mentioned, uncertainty avoidance is also one of the most concerned characteristics regarding consumers' behavior among researchers. Research suggested that people with high uncertainty avoidance is likely to avoid risks and uncertainty. They also have tendency to have a low self-confident. Therefore, they are not likely to try new things and it results people with high uncertainty avoidance usually have the low adoption rate.

The results of this study did suggest that there is positive correlation between uncertainty avoidance and opinion seeking orientation. It suggested that people with high uncertainty avoidance tends to search information regarding service/products to minimize the unwilling uncertainty. Moreover, this results also reflects their characteristics. For instance, people with high uncertainty avoidance usually search information for purity and cleanliness of the subjects or they usually gather information with the new technology or products. This result also supports the study of Lam et al., (2009). People with high uncertainty avoidance are often less aggressive and decide based on group consensus.

However, there is no negative correlation with significant statistic between uncertainty avoidance and opinion leadership orientation. The reason behind could be that people with low uncertainty avoidance want to maintain harmony within their circles, so that they do not spread their opinion over the products or service. Moreover, uncertainty-accepting kind of people are usually open-minded and willing to try new things. It reflects the societies with low uncertainty avoidance will have higher adoption rating. It might be the reason that they've never felt satisfied with the current products, and hence, they do not want to spread their opinions regarding those. Another reason could be that people with uncertainty-accepting tends to see everyone as equal. They therefore do not want to bias others opinion ideas. They might believe that products should be subject to own experiences rather than based on other experiences.

6.1.4 Power Distance and Opinion Leadership/Opinion Seeking orientation

Hofstede's power distance cultural dimension is related to the inequality between members among societies. It also suggested that people valued power distance with low status tend to follow people with high status, especially in decision making process (Minkov et al., 2010).

In this study, power distance is found to have negative impact on opinion seeking orientation. It leads to the fact that people scored high power distance tend to seek information deciding. It is because that people valued power distance usually respect others experiences. They do respect the position of everyone in societies and consider all opinions

worth taking. To say nothing of the fact that they usually believe that information is distributed equally in societies. So, every information could be there in the Internet for them to search. What is more, Paharia & Swaminathan (2019) suggested that people valued low power distance tend to refer the user-design products. It means they also think that the products or service should be designed subject to individual. Hence, the gathering information from other individuals who has the same characteristic is necessary.

However, there is no correlation with significant statistic between power distance and opinion leadership under this study. The reason could be that people valued high power distance usually believe that providing wrong information could harm them to lose their status in societies.

6.2 Implication

6.2.1 Theoretical Implication

Though Hofstede's cultural dimensions are admitted having impacts on eWOM, specifically on opinion leadership and opinion seeking as individual level, there is still researchers against the idea. One of their reasons is that Hofstede's dimensions are constructed as national level not as individual neither organization level. The current study is one of the determination of the fact that Yoo's scale, which is received many citations among researchers, is worked to measure Hofstede's dimension as individual level.

What is more, there is no research, as far as the writer concerned, that deeply studied the relationship between opinion leadership/opinion seeking orientation (two flipsides of eWOM) and cultural values at individual level. This is supported research of Lee et al., (2018) that there is impacts from individualism on opinion leadership orientation. Still, it also contributes that Power Distance and Uncertain Avoidance do have impacts on opinion seeking orientation.

Besides, two models of this study which are: $OL = 3.5726 - 0.1316 \times CO$ and $OS = 3.1887 + 0.2467 \times UN - 0.1823 \times PD$. allowed the writer to identify the psychological mechanisms by which cultural values (individualism, collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance) affect two flipsides of EWOM.

6.2.2 Practical Implication

As the more increasing emerge of e-commerce, more and more consumers currently make decision on purchasing based on web's information. This study aims to target marketers

who are interested in viral marketing through which they could invest more resources on EWOM to increase sales and brand recognition.

Currently, there is a fact that the power is more given to consumers. The way of marketer-dominated communication now is less effective than consumer-dominated one. Tang (2011) did suggest that online review has better effect than corporate press when it comes to influencing buyer's decision (except for new product launching). What is more, 65% of consumers admitted that they felt overwhelmed by too many advertisement, and almost 60% they felt that advertising is not related to them (Poster and Gohan, 2006).

For that reason, the urge to change from position of the information provider to coordinator of buyer-generated content on Internet, especially on social media is needed. There is no surprise then, when viral marketing has emerged as a hot phenomenon in which consumers spread the relevant marketing materials, sent by marketers, to stimulate and capitalize on eWOM behavior (Van der Lans et al. 2010). Still, regarding cost efficient, it is proved to be more effective than massmedia advertising (Hinz et al., 2011)

In light of viral marketing, Hinz et al., (2011) suggested that the content, the structure of social networks, the behavior of characteristic of recipients, and seeding strategies are four factors that affect deeply viral marketing. The study also mentioned that viral marketing also relies on cultural orientation of potential consumers which leads to the success of eWOM, for instance, quantitative versus qualitative reviews, developed versus less-developed countries, and popular and less popular product in a market. Therefore, this study will contribute to viral marketing strategies of firms at two significant factors which are the behavior of characteristic of recipients and seeding strategies.

First, regarding the behavior of characteristic, according to Hinz et al., (2011), there are three kinds of people: hubs represented to be the person who have a high number of well connection; fringes regarding the people who are poor connected; bridges who connect two parts of the networks. Because the hubs and bridges have more connection, they tend to receive and expose to many innovations through their social links. Meanwhile, fringes live in the isolated circle and tend to be unexposed to innovation. Therefore, the practice of identifying hubs/bridges or fringes based on their characteristics is important in viral marketing. Still, while the hubs/bridges are related to opinion leadership orientation, the fringes are likely associated with seeking orientation. For this point, the study will assist the marketer to identify clearly. For instance, hubs/bridges are likely to have more individualism characteristic than collectivism while fringes tend to have high uncertainty avoidance and low power distance characteristics. Moreover, this study also suggested that there is the correlation between collectivism and masculinity/uncertainty avoidance or the association between power distance characteristic and masculine. Such those findings also assist marketers to identify those three people in the networks better.

Second, regarding seeding strategies, Tang (2011) suggested that seeding the right one will increase up to eight times more referrals than seeding the wrong one. Still, among

researchers there are two kinds of strategies. While Goyal (2009) and Sundararajan (2006) supported the practice of targeting on low-degree members which are the fringes, Tang (2011) and Hanaki et al. (2007) refer to target the hubs/bridges which are high degree members. The choice of strategies replies on the characteristic of products as well as the market. For instance, if the number of adopting members increases with the probability of adopting products, the low-degree strategy proved to be more effective (Goyal, 2009). For this purpose, this study will also assist marketers with two models mentioned earlier to find the right strategies for the market.

Third, in details regarding low-degree strategy, when it comes to operating in the market that have people valued uncertainty avoidance (opinion seekers), managers should take negative comments toward products and service seriously. It is because negative comments have strong impacts on decision processing of consumers (Lam et al., 2009). It is suggested that information-processing (Howell 2006) strategies should be applied when there is a bad rumor toward brands. To be more precise, people with high uncertainty tend to reduce uncertainty at any cost. It means they will avoid purchasing the product. In this case, if the uncertainty is high, and the consequences of the crises are serious, manager should have immediate action regarding the cause of the crises to reduce the uncertainty at all cost. The simple act is blaming for the party which might not have capacity to react (Laufer, 2012). This will results resolving the uncertainty in the eyes of consumers. However, it does have side-effect when consumers do not believe and blame for firms, even not firms' faults. On the other hand, if the uncertainty is high, but the consequences of the crises are low. Consumers tend to wait for more information from firms. The optimal choices for managers could be using the third party to provide the related information. They could be independent agents or governmental agents (Laufer, 2012). What is more, trust is the core value of people with high uncertainty (opinion seeker), hence, managers should pay attention to make the message clear to them, especially the information regarding monetary transaction. For instance, instead of requiring too much their private information at the beginning, manager should make sure that the useful information available to them. By doing this, managers will reduce the major concern regarding privacy loss and the unclear uncertainty which are the center problem of decision process.

Fourth, in this study the writer found that people not valued power distance, they tend to seek information before purchase decision. As explained, they believe that information is distributed equally between people in societies, hence, information is always there for them to search. This finding could be also contributing to low-degree strategy when it comes to targeting the market with consumer who valued low power distance. Managers should pay attention to information provided by consumers and make sure all the messages are clear and informative. Moreover, Paharia & Swaminathan (2019) confirmed that people with low power distance tend to prefer the user – design products rather company – design products. The reason behind is that they experience the great feeling of

empowerment, and it does result in purchase decision. On the other hand, it is also suggested that people with high power distance prefer company – design products than user-design ones. Therefore, manager should communicate differently. For instance, the individual experiences of other users should be highlighted in the case of people with low power distance, while people with high power distance, the opinion of expertise is rather important. Moreover, Manager could consider the ad-targeting function of Facebook and Google Ads for approaching different target audiences to offer different products and alternative ads.

6.3 Limitation and Future Direction

6.3.1 Limitations

Even though a really careful procedure was applied for collecting data, there are also some limitations regarding this subject of the study. First, the non-probability and unrestricted convenience way is chosen for this study, in which students from two Vietnamese universities are mainly the sampling, therefore, there are some risks concerning under-representation or over-representation of particular groups within the sample. It means that the identical sampling for the whole study could lead to the fact that some hypothesis did not have significant statistics.

What is more, the writer found that there is unbalance proportion on participants gender and participants age. Regarding participants gender, it shows that more than 70% of samples are female. As known, masculinity characteristic is related to conservative point of view, for instance, “men are the subject, women are the objects”, and hence, the writer assumes that some of cultural values, for instance masculinity, may be affected by this unbalance proportion. As results, it leads to the fact that there is unexpected outcome when it comes to the association between opinion leadership/opinion seeking orientation and masculinity. This point is also in the research of Yeganeh et al., (2013), which appointed that conservatism is associated with higher levels of gender gap.

Moreover, because almost participants are Vietnamese students, they are defined as young and open-minded. Though, some variables are controlled, there are still some affected by cultural convergence and identical samples. One of the reason is the ease of getting access to the Internet, to say nothing of the spread of information (by international media). Therefore, people all over the world could compare their lives with others in different countries, from this point, people could learn the better points from other cultures. Hostede et al., (2011) appointed that there is an increase of individualism for countries that have become wealthier.

6.3.2 *Future Directions*

From the study's limitations, the urge for research regarding EWOM: opinion leadership/opinion seeking orientation and cultural values with variance of samples is needed, especially as individual level. What is more, the writer also found that there is strong association between cultural values, for example, there are strong correlation between collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity or the strong association between masculinity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. As assume, it also pays the way for future research when combining those cultural values and measure the effect of them on opinion leadership and opinion seeking orientation.

7 SUMMARY

This study aims to investigate the relationship between two flip-sides of electronic word of mouth, opinion leadership and opinion seeking orientation, and cultural values. To be more precise, the purpose of this study is finding the answer of how Hofstede's cultural dimensions explained opinion leadership as well as opinion seeking orientation at individual level.

In order to find the answer for the research questions, the research plan included two studies. In the initial study, with the purpose of determining the reliability and validity of the scales (CVSCALE (Yoo's et al., 2011) & OL and OS Scale (Flynn et al., 1996), a deep interview was occurred (n=5), then initial survey (n=35) was also carried. The result of initial study found that all scales met the requirements for official study. In the official study, with the purpose of finding the association between opinion leadership/opinion seeking orientation and four Hofstede's cultural values, some key statistics were presented. Cronbach alpha for all scales showed sufficient with the larger sample (n=284). Still, exploratory factor analysis was carried to group as well as remove items not belong to the scale. After that, Person's coefficient was calculated to find out the relationship between opinion leadership/opinion seeking orientation and cultural values. Finally, the best fit models were suggested by using Akaike information criterion.

This study found that there is positive relationship between individualism and opinion leadership orientation. Also, opinion seeking orientation is found to have positive relationship with uncertain avoidance and negative association with power distance. With these findings, this study could contribute theoretically and practically. First, in term of theory, this reassured that CVSCALE could be used to measure Hofstede's cultural dimension at individual level, even though there are still have arguments related to this subject among researchers. What is more, this study also contributed two model that could measure opinion leadership orientation and opinion seeking orientation based on cultural values. Second, in term of practice, this study could assist managers in their viral marketing. In details, this study could help managers to define characteristic behavior of individual and seeding strategy, especially low-degree strategy.

Even though the study was carried out carefully, there are still some limitations regarding identical samples that make some hypotheses not significant. However, the writer also suggested some future direction for later studies to modify those limitations.

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