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# EXPLORING TRUST IN B2C E-COMMERCE – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MÄORI CULTURE IN NEW ZEALAND

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to identify factors that are relevant to Mäori trust in terms of improving and encouraging the online shopping for B2C e-commerce by Mäori in New Zealand. The concepts of trust, risk and reputation are used to frame an exploratory study of the uptake of Internet shopping in a B2C context by Mäori, a minority - but significant - racial group, in New Zealand. The research presents a set of tentative conclusions, which will be used to generate hypotheses for a much larger statistical study. The Mäori concept of community is based on collective strength, which includes the sharing, nurturing, supporting and empowering of interdependent groups. Mäori are willing to help and trust people in their in-group. It was found that with positive word of mouth about a website from someone that a Mäori person knows and trusts, typically someone from their in-group or society, the better the reputation of that website will be. Reputation in Mäori culture emanates from family and tribe and by word of mouth and the adoption of e-Commerce is enhanced when that reputation is drawn down from that source. This study suggests that specific cultures like the Mäori have different elements in their trust of e-Commerce for shopping and this needs to be addressed in the local environment to encourage broader use.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since New Zealand was colonized by Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mäori, who arrived in New Zealand from the Pacific approximately a thousand years ago, have become a minority (Belich, 1996). Their culture, language and values have become secondary to those of the dominant European culture (Liu et. al. 1999). It is only recently that studies have been carried out on Mäori and their presence on the Internet (Smith, 1997; Smith and Sullivan, 1996; Kovacic, 2001). However, there are no studies examining the relationship between Mäori and their concept of trust in Internet shopping. There also has been no mention of the word “trust” in the Mäori literature. However, the notion of respect in the Mäori beliefs and values system, has been widely used, and the combination of these values and beliefs have constituted trust in Mäori culture (Patterson, 1992). There is a need to understand what “trust” means by Mäori and how influences Mäori behavior towards online shopping. This study also explores the concept of “trust” in Mäori culture for B2C e-commerce to enable better management and design of e-commerce websites for the New Zealand population. This study will enrich knowledge about trust in sub-cultures where the notion of multiculturalism in society is applied across a nation.

Many researchers suggest that trust varies across nationalities and cultures (Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000; Dawar, et al., 1996; Lynch, et al., 2001). Hofstede’s framework (1980) has been employed by Jervenpaa, et al. (1999, 2000) and suggests that consumers coming from an individualistic culture may

have greater trust and be more willing to conduct online transactions than those from a collectivistic culture. A Māori concept of community is based more on collective strength, which includes the sharing, nurturing, supporting and empowering of interdependent groups. This study explores the concept of collectivism inherent within Māori culture and its output on trust and the information required for committing to an online transaction on the Internet.

## **2. THE INTERNET CUSTOMER**

Business-to-Consumer (B2C) e-commerce focuses on direct transactions between businesses and end consumers (Dedhia, 2001; Lawrence, et al., 2000; Riggins and Rhee, 1998; Schneider and Perry, 2000; Ah-Wong, et al., 2001), that is, the trading and transactional relationship between an organisations website and an end user (Dedhia, 2001; Lawrence, et al., 2000; Riggins and Rhee, 1998). Consumers are able to purchase goods and services such as books, computer products, music, at any time that is convenient to the consumer.

One of the key benefits of e-commerce is convenience, that is, day and night trading, 365 days of the year (Dedhia, 2001; Chen, Ingraham and Jenkins, 2001; Lohse and Spiller, 1998). Despite this benefit of e-commerce, would-be consumers are still concerned about purchasing over the Internet. Whilst e-commerce increases, so too, do trust concerns (Gray and Debrecey, 1998; Cheung and Lee, 2001; Urban, Sultan, and Qualls, 2000; Ernst and Young, 1999). In these studies, the main questions asked by would-be consumers were: Is this company real? Is this a trustworthy company? If I send credit card or bank information, is it safe? If I place an order, will I receive what I asked for? Will any problems I have be resolved quickly? There is a common theme to these questions, with a majority of them referring to the trust and risk in the trading relationship between the website and the consumer.

Quantitative studies, on the Internet (UMR Insight, Ltd, 1999; Ministry of Economic Development, 2001) completed in New Zealand found that 11% of those surveyed had made a purchase over the Internet using a credit card (Ministry of Economic Development, 2001). The frequency of purchasing via the Internet was higher in Wellington (eighteen percent) amongst the 'white-collar' occupational group (seventeen percent) and those in the top income group (eighteen percent). Twelve percent of males surveyed were more likely to have made a purchase than females (four percent). In 2000 twenty-one percent of those surveyed felt comfortable when shopping over the Internet and twenty-one percent felt uncomfortable using a credit card (Ministry of Economic Development, 2001). Māori were also identified as a group that felt distinctly uncomfortable giving their personal details via the Internet. Therefore, to encourage their presence on the Internet, there is a need to understand the factors that influence their trust interpretation of for online shopping.

## **3. ISSUES AFFECTING INTERNET SHOPPING**

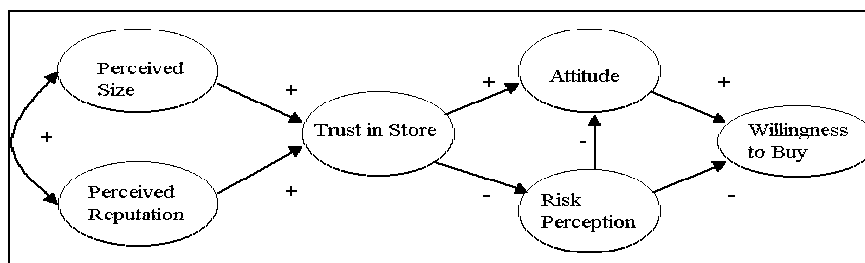
Before the Internet, face-to-face communication typically formed the basis for long-lasting and profitable ventures, instilling confidence in both parties (Sklar, 2001). Recent studies show that face-to-face interaction promotes the greatest trust, followed by telephone, then text chat, and, last, e-mail (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Ngwenyama and Lee, 1997; Sklar, 2001). But the changes brought about by the Internet have even broader implications. With the advent of Internet technology, every company becomes a global company, with the opportunity to buy and sell. This brings with it many issues that are preventing would-be consumers to shop online.

### **3.1 Trust**

The notion of trust has been examined under various contexts (Cheung and Lee, 2001; Stewart, 1999; Choudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Steinauer, Wakid and Rasberry, 1997; Hoffman, Novak and Peralta, 1999) and include trust in bargaining (Schurr and Ozanne, 1985), distribution channels (Dwyer, Schurr and Oh, 1987), industrial buyer-seller relationships (Doney and Cannon, 1997), partner cooperation in strategic alliances (Das, 1998) and the use of market research (Moore, Deshpande and Zaltman, 1993).

According to Lewicki and Bunker (1995), three theoretical perspectives exist. The first is the view of personality theorists, who conceptualise trust as a belief, expectancy or feeling that is deeply rooted in the personality of the individual. The second is the view of sociologists and economists, who see trust as a phenomenon within and between organisations and as the trust individuals put into those organisations. The third view is that of social psychologists, who characterise trust in terms of expectation and willingness of the trusting party to engage in a transaction (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995).

For the purposes of this study, the definition offered by McKnight, Cummings and Chervany (1998: 459) has been adopted: “an individual’s beliefs about the extent to which a target is likely to behave in a way that is benevolent, competent, honest, or predictable in a situation.” The consumer needs to believe that the Web merchant is trustworthy before they purchase online. A consumer’s willingness to buy from an Internet seller is dependent on their attitude towards the store, which, is affected by the seller’s ability to create consumer trust. Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999) proposed a model for the consequences of trust in an Internet store, seen in Figure 1 below. According to Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999), the model suggests, that consumers’ evaluation of stores’ reputation and size affect their trust in a store.



**Figure 1:** The Internet Consumer Trust Model (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, Saarinen and Vitale, 1999). (+) denotes positive relation and (-) denotes negative relation between variables.

Higher trust will directly improve attitudes towards a store (Jarvenpaa, et al., 1999). Besides helping to shape attitudes, perceived risk might also have an independent, direct influence on the willingness to buy. According to the model, a consumer may be willing to buy from an Internet store that is perceived as low risk, even if the consumer’s attitudes towards that merchant are not highly positive. Conversely, a consumer may not be willing to buy from a merchant perceived as being high risk, even in the presence of positive attitudes towards that merchant.

### 3.2 Risk

Risk is defined as the consumer’s perceptions of the uncertainty and adverse consequences of engaging in an activity (Dowling & Staelin, 1994; Jarvenpaa, et al., 1999; Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000; Camp, 2000; Bhatnagar, Misra and Rao, 2000). There is little assurance that the customer will get what he or she sees on the computer screen, in the quantity ordered. It has been suggested that two types of risk are predominately associated with Internet shopping (Fram and Grady, 1997; Jarvenpaa, et al., 1999; Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000; Lynch, Kent, and Srinivasan, 2001). These risks are product category risk and financial risk. Product category risk is risk associated with the product itself and is the consumers’ belief that the product will function according to their expectations. Financial risk refers to the risk associated with the Internet as a purchasing medium. Consumers are apprehensive about putting their credit card information over the Internet because it puts the consumer at risk of losing money via credit card fraud (Jarvenpaa, et al., 1999; Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000; Fram and Grady, 1997).

### 3.3 Reputation

The reputation and size of the web merchant has also been suggested as factors that contribute to consumer trust in a seller organisation (Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Ganesan,

1994). Reputation is the extent to which buyers believe that the selling organisation is honest and concerned about its customers (Doney & Cannon, 1997). One of the popular methods of promoting reputation is by publishing customer testimonials on their sites (Quelch and Klein, 1996; Lohse and Spiller, 1998; and McKnight, et al., 1998). Testimonials have been found to help people decide who to trust, encourage trustworthy behaviour and deter participation by those who are unskilled or dishonest, especially when the parties have not interacted before (Lohse and Spiller, 1998; and McKnight, et al., 1998). Reputation requires a long-term investment of resources, effort and attention to customer relationships' (Jarvenpaa, et al., 1999). The better the seller's reputation, the more resources the seller has presumably committed to build that reputation. The perception of a large organisation implies that the merchant has significant resources invested in the business and has much to lose by acting in an untrustworthy way (Stewart, 1999; Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000).

#### 4. TRUST IN MÄORI CULTURE

It is only recently that studies have been carried out on Mäori and their presence on the Internet (Smith, 1997; Smith and Sullivan, 1996; Kovacic, 2001). However, no studies examining the relationship between Mäori, trust and Internet shopping were found, indicating a gap in knowledge. There has been no mention of the word 'trust' in the literature but many articles discuss the notion of Mäori beliefs and values with respect being the common term used (Patterson, 1992).

Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999, 2000), Dawar, et al. (1996) and Lynch, et al. (2001) found that trust varies across nationalities and cultures. Using Hofstede's (1991) typology, Javenpaa, et al. (1999, 2000) claim that consumers coming from an individualistic culture may have greater trust and be more willing to base their trust in a Website than consumers from a collectivistic culture. Mäori culture is collectivist in nature. As a result, the collectivism construct will be investigated in this research. According to Hofstede (1980), those in collectivistic society: are born into extended families or clans, which protect them in exchange for loyalty; have an emphasis on belonging to an organisation; and have a "We" consciousness.

The Mäori concept of community is based on collective strength, which includes sharing, nurturing, supporting and empowering of interdependent groups. The Mäori see community as a form of relatedness, in which people are interdependent (Gregory, 2001). An important method of communication for Mäori is through the *whanau* (family) structure (Light, 1999). That is, the connections are about relationships to people and to place. Patterson (2000) supports this by claiming, "in Mäori eyes a person without family is scarcely a person at all, and the *mana* of any member of a family extends to all members" (p. 232). *Mana* is a (supernatural) power that can be present in a person, place, object, or spirit. It is commonly understood as prestige, power, or authority; but really such status is derived from possessing *mane*. The power of *mane* is undifferentiated and dangerous if uncontrolled (Patterson, 2000; Perrett and Patterson, 1991; and Harple, 1996).

Individualism tends to promote a trusting stance in an individualistic society (Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999). As a result, one gets better outcomes assuming that others are reliable. Individualists are more likely to trust others until they are given some reason not to trust. By contrast, those high on collectivism are more likely to base their trust on relationships with first-hand knowledge. Members of collectivist cultures are less likely to trust someone who is not part of their in-group (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994; Thanasankit, 1999).

Mäori view their personal information as *taonga*, that is, their property or treasure (Te Puni Kokiri, 1994), and do not feel comfortable letting people have their information. Although a person's details may seem small, they are precious as they relate to the individual concerned. Questions normally asked when personal information is required include

- Why do you want this information?

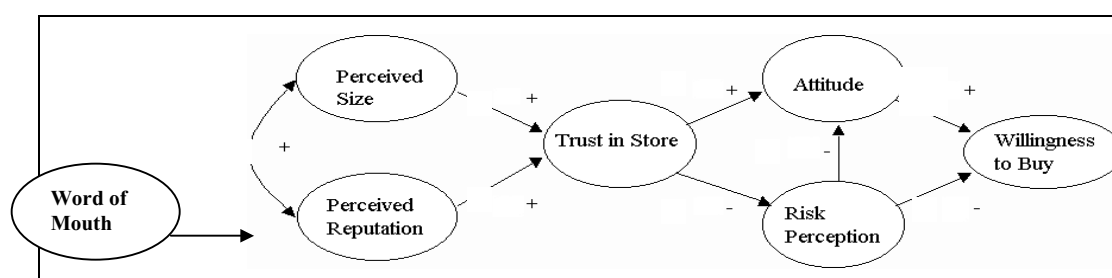
- How will my personal information be used?
- Who will have access to my personal information?

Using this, it can be seen that similar questions to those in general e-commerce transactions exist. The question of how the information collected could be used, could be a strong deterrent for Māori to shop online as it is their information, or *taonga*, that will be collected and possibly misused or passed onto a third party. The preferred way for Māori to communicate is face-to-face (Light, 1999), as this helps build trust in a relationship, something the Internet cannot offer.

## 5. DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this research is to bring the issues of trust, risk and reputation, into a New Zealand context, specifically the Māori Internet shopper. As a result a conceptual framework has been developed.

The framework model, depicted in Figure 2 below, is an adaptation of the model created by Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999, 2000) (Figure 1). The difference is the extra step leading to reputation.



**Figure 2:** Māori trust model (Peszynski, 2001).

It has been recognised that, according to the literature, the definitions for trust and reputation are similar. However, as Māori are part of a collectivist society, they are more likely to base their trust on relationships with immediate family members (*whanau*) and tribal (*iwi*) elders. The repetition of ones (good) reputation will normally lead Māori to increase their personal trust towards purchasing products and services online. That is, through the creation of the extra parameter (word of mouth), if a would-be Māori Internet shopper heard many good recommendations about a specific website, the perceived reputation of the website would increase. This leads to an increase in the trust in that website. Māori are also less likely to trust someone who is not part of their in-group (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994; Thanasankit, 1999). It is therefore proposed that through positive word of mouth about a website from someone that person knows and trusts, typically someone from their in-group or society, the better the reputation of that website will be. The better the seller's reputation, the more likely the would-be consumer would trust that website.

In conjunction with reputation and following trust, is risk. Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999) found that when risk is present, trust is needed to make transactions possible. It is therefore proposed that when trust in the website is reduced, risk (product category or financial category) is reduced, which leads to a reduction in a willingness to buy from that website. Finally, when there is high reputation for an organisations website and high trust in the website, then risk associated with the trading and transactional relationship between the organisation and the consumer decreases, leading to an increase in a willingness to buy.

## 6. RESEARCH METHOD

The aim of this study was to explore the role of Maori culture and its influence on trust and the attitude of the Māori towards online shopping.. The qualitative researcher is interested in meaning, that is, they

are interested in how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world (Klein and Myers, 1999, Myers, 1997a, Myers, 1997b). In this study, an exploratory, in-depth data collection was required to ascertain the relevance of the concepts noted above. The data collected is reported below and will frame a detailed study by survey to be undertaken at a later date. An interpretive stance was adopted and focuses on the complexity of human-sense-making, and it attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Walsham, 1995, Chua, 1986; Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). An interpretive stance was adopted as it enabled the researchers to analyse and understand the information gathered during the interviews.

Eight interviews were done with five females and three males, who identified themselves as Māori descents. Table 1 shows the characteristics of each interviewee.

Table 1. Characteristics of Interviewees

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>P1</b>	Part-time postgraduate working in the public sector. Heavy use of the Internet and has used the Internet to make many purchases.
<b>P2</b>	Works in the public sector. Regularly uses the Internet to make purchases.
<b>P3</b>	Works in the private sector and occasionally uses the Internet to make purchases, becoming more regular.
<b>P4</b>	Works in the private sector and uses the Internet to make less-than-regular purchases.
<b>P5</b>	Works in the public sector and regularly uses the Internet to make purchases.
<b>P6</b>	Works in the public sector. Rarely uses the Internet to purchase, but becoming more regular.
<b>P7</b>	Works in the public sector and makes heavy use of Internet shopping.
<b>P8</b>	Works in the public sector and makes regular purchases via the Internet.

Face-to-face, one-on-one, in-depth interviews were used to obtain participants views and opinions. This method was selected as, according to Light (1999) Māori culture prefers face-to-face interaction as it creates a trusting relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. To obtain reliable results, steps were taken during the interview to help reduce the distance between the interviewer and the interviewee. OPRA Limited (1998) claim that the interviewer can increase the respect and interest with the Māori interviewee by “facing the interviewee when sitting and maintaining good eye contact by way of spontaneous glances to express interest” (p. 18). Questions were modelled around guidelines by OPRA Limited (1998). What helped define a ‘good’ question was one that was “open ended; single focused; & start with ‘what’, ‘how’ or ‘could’” (p. 19).

The process consisted of three stages. The first stage was to obtain general impressions of what the Māori Internet shopper looks for as signs of trust in a Website. This also helped get the interviewee into the right context for the remainder of the interview. In the second stage, the interviewee read a one-page summary of trust and Internet shopping, and this was followed by the third stage, where more questions were asked to find out, by means of an interview schedule, what trust means to them as a Māori Internet shopper.

As the data collection method was face-to-face, one-on-one in-depth interviews were used lasting between one and a half and two hours. The data was collected via audiotape-recorder with the interviewee’s permission and then transcriptions of the interview were made. Notes were also made during the interview, including reflective notes and demographic information such as the time, date and location of the interview, which aids in providing an audit trail. Two member checks were performed. The first member check involved the researcher sending each interviewee a copy of the transcript as soon as it had been transcribed, which was typically the day following the interview. This

allowed the participant to correct the transcript if necessary. The second member check was performed once the results section had been written, allowing the participants to agree or disagree with the interpretations made by the researcher.

The hermeneutic cycle (Figure 3) was employed for this study. Hermeneutics is primarily concerned with the meaning of text. Myers (1997b), Klein and Myers (1999) and Gadamer (1976) claim that the hermeneutic cycle helps us in the understanding of the text as a whole and the interpretation of its part, in which descriptions are guided by anticipated explanations. That is, the researchers read the complete transcript of each interview before analyzing the answer given by interviewees to each question. This also enabled the researchers to generate a variety of categories that tentatively fit the information given in the interviews (Marshall & Rossman 1989). The eight-step guideline proposed by Tesch (1990, p. 142-145) allowed the researchers to group similar categories together into a theme based on the transcripts of the interviews. These themes were then abbreviated into codes and these codes were placed next to the appropriate segments of text. Categories that were related were then grouped together. The hermeneutic cycle was repeated until all apparent themes emerged from each transcription (reported in Section 7) (Creswell, 1994).

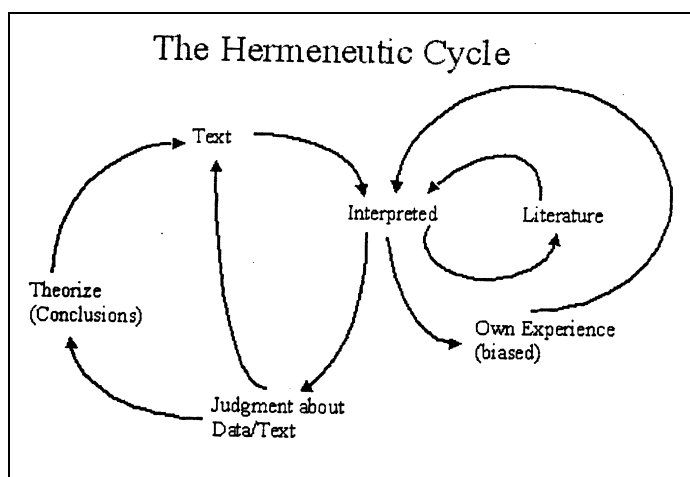


Figure 3. The Hermeneutic Cycle

## 7. DATA ANALYSIS

It was found that for the Māori participants in this study, the security of systems used by online organisations creates a fear in regards to the confidentiality of their personal information. This in turn raises issues about information being accessible to other people or even the possibility of the website being hacked into. Fears are increased when financial details are being transmitted via the Internet.

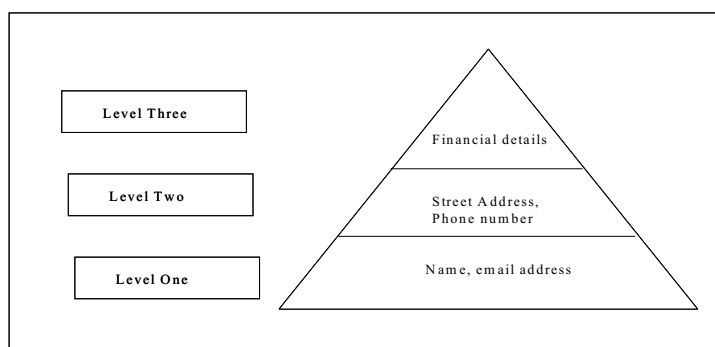
### 7.1 Trust levels in Māori culture

One concept that developed early in the interview process was that of levels of trust. Specifically trust in terms of personal information, for example, one participant said:

P1: Level 1 trust, which is name, email address, it's pretty easily given away, I mean, as soon as you start using the net, people get that information anyway. Level 2 trust is when you start giving things like your actual street address and you know, people could track you down if they wanted, and then the financial stuff with credit cards, that's when you start thinking, oh is this a secure site? Have they got high-tech security built around their web-server and network?



Using the response taken from one participant and applying it to the remaining participants, a model was developed (Figure 4).



**Figure 4:** Levels of trust as proposed by interviewees

There are some differences between the concepts defined by the literature and the Māori respondents. It was found that Māori are responsible for more than just their personal information. When the respondent is performing a transaction via the Internet on behalf of their tribe, they are providing “historical information”, that is, information about their tribe (*iwi*), sub-tribes (*hapu*), family (*whanau*), and cultural knowledge and information. *Taonga* stands out, as it is the protection of such private and personal information.

The reoccurring theme of trust and Internet shopping in the majority of interviews was that of the reputation of the organisation and their website. This issue was also raised in previous research. However, Māori place heavy emphasis on word of mouth from various *iwi* or *whanau* members about the reputation of a website. One participant said:

P2: ...now the reputation of, I think I’m still people based. The reputation of a website doesn’t come from the website itself. It still comes from the people around me. So like if I know people order stuff off the net, say books, I’ll go and ask them which sites they order off.

The ability to increase the reputation of the website was not usually through customer testimonials, as they “could’ve been trumped up” (P3), but more likely through word of mouth:

P8: I tend to go with the supplier or service provider if it’s been recommended to me by somebody else...it would have to be someone else I know.

However, no matter how trustworthy the site may look, and how good the reputation is, there is still that doubt that “nothing is infallible, especially on the net” (P7). It is up to the organisation to provide policies and honour those policies. After experiencing good service and/or products from the website, the level of trust then was more likely to increase among Māori

## 7.2 Māori trust and government direction on security

The use of assurance services was noted as helping increase the trust of a consumer. However, those that were interviewed claimed to pay little attention to these web-seals. Two respondents claimed to recognise few groups and organisations supporting the web seals. Participant one made the comment that there “aren’t any decent IT security certification authorities or auditing authorities in New Zealand”. This led to a new question in the interview process, the creation of a New Zealand web-seal and how that would affect the respondents trust in a website:

P3: That would be good because I think...I don't know what things to look for until these problems are highlighted...there might be occasions where we find what they're saying is misrepresented, and until these problems start popping up, I won't know what solutions to look for...there's going to be a lot of cowboys in there, and we're going to need some protection at some stage.

It was suggested that the creation of web-seal for New Zealand websites would make a difference in terms of increasing the sense of trust in that website. However, it depends who creates that web-seal:

- P4: Only if that organisation has substance and credibility to it...I don't know how you would achieve substance or credibility...I think the consumer watchdog, like the Commerce Commission, who's jurisdiction covers fair trading...people who can guarantee or underwrite security, you know, you can guarantee performance, and keep them to their policies, so you are going to get what you ordered for, and when you pay for it, your payment details are not threatened.
- P6: Yeah, to have someone like the Commerce Commission checking, giving their seal of approval and that anyone that has that sign over the Internet, that they should actually be registered. I think that's really important. It's like a protection for New Zealand citizens, for us, we need that.

An institute such as the Commerce Commission is seen as being a reputable source that those interviewed would trust. This could tentatively be attributed to the fact that Māori have trust in the New Zealand Government, particularly as there is the Department of Māori Development (Te Puni Kokiri), or it is the recognition of a nationally known organisation. The idea would be to have all New Zealand e-commerce websites register with the Commerce Commission, provided they meet certain criteria such as honour their policies and delivery times and have a secure server. As a result, that website would be able to display an image showing proof of being registered with the Commerce Commission and providing a trustworthy service.

### **7.3 Risk**

The concept of product category risk and financial risk was apparent to those interviewed. Two types of risk associated with risk and Internet shopping, product category risk and financial risk. There was little difference in respondents' views of financial risk, which is the risk associated with the Internet as a purchasing medium. Consumers are apprehensive about putting their credit card information over the Internet because it puts them at risk of losing money via credit card fraud (Fram and Grady, 1997; Jarvenpaa, et al., 1999; Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000; Lynch, Kent, and Srinivasan, 2001).

However, it was felt that product category risk applied not only to the Internet, but the traditional 'bricks and mortar' environment. Product category risk refers to the risk associated with the product itself and is the consumers' belief that the product will function according to their expectations (Fram and Grady, 1997; Jarvenpaa, et al., 1999; Jarvenpaa, et al., 2000; Lynch, Kent, and Srinivasan, 2001). This was seen in the response by participant three:

P3: ...it's like if I went into a shop and picked up an appliance and I'd expect it to work a certain way, and till I get home and plug it in, I don't know that.

If the risk factor can be reduced or eliminated, then "trust and reputation and almost irrelevant" (P4).

### **7.4 Reputation**

The popular method of publishing customer testimonials (Quelch and Klein, 1996) is used to increase website trustworthiness and reputation. However, those interviewed tended to pay little attention to customer testimonials. Reasons included not knowing if they are real or how the person who wrote the testimonial based their judgements.

P7: It's a bit like when you read a newspaper and they have critics talking about certain restaurants, and it's like, for all I know, he could be tasteless! I don't know! This is where it comes back to that trust thing...if I got a comment from someone I knew, then that would mean a lot more than someone else.

Respondents prefer to speak to someone they know that has visited that site to see how they found that site, rather than trust a total stranger. This could be tentatively attributed to the collectivist nature of the Māori culture, or the trust Māori have in their in-group (Māori trusting their family (*whanau*) and tribe (*iwi*)). The word-of-mouth parameter as shown in Figure 2 is important at this stage, for those interviewed. As shown in the above extract, participant seven would prefer a comment from “someone I knew, then that would mean a lot more than someone else”, and again, this can be seen in the following extract:

P5: I know a lot of other people who have purchased the same product from that site, so I've seen the merchandise, and through that referral, I've got confidence in that site and the product.

This is the main difference between those interviewed and what previous research has to say regarding reputation. Rather than read customer testimonials left on the website by unknown customers, the Māori respondents prefer to seek and speak to someone they know and trust who has been to that website and made a purchase from it.

### 7.5 Miscellaneous Factors

Another suggestion to those interviewed was the creation of websites that were *Te Reo* Māori (the Māori language). There was great appeal for Māori websites. However, the same features are necessary to instil that sense of trust in the Māori Internet shopper. An implication of the current research could be for New Zealand websites to contain bilingual text. For example, some websites, such as <http://www.alibaba.com>, have the ability to be viewed in either English, Chinese dialects or Korean, as seen in the above link. If the New Zealand website is bilingual, from what the respondents have said, there would be an immense interest by the Māori Internet shopper to “delve” into it and be “compelled” to view it. Photos of the people inside the organisation on the website can also make a difference as it gives the Māori Internet shopper recognition that the organisation does exist and they do have people working there, in other words, they are not a faceless organisation.

Finally, the association of recognisable Māori names to e-commerce sites could also make a difference, as there is that reputation or word-of-mouth notion that if other recognisable Māori trust the site, then the Māori Internet shopper should do so. Examples of recognisable Māori names could be associations via tribes (*iwi*), sub-tribes (*hapu*), or family (*whanau*).

## 8. REVISITING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework in Figure 2 was developed as an adaptation using the model created by Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999, 2000). This was modified from a review of previous research to allow for an extra parameter linking to reputation in the form of ‘word of mouth’. This was established through the notion that the Māori concept of community is based on collective strength, which includes sharing, nurturing, supporting and empowering of interdependent groups (Gregory, 2001). That is, Māori are willing to help and trust people in their in-group. It was proposed that through positive word of mouth about a website from someone that person knows and trusts, typically someone from their in-group or society, the better the reputation of that website will be. This was reinforced via comments made by participants in the interview process. As stated earlier, rather than read customer testimonials left on the website by unknown customers, the Māori respondents prefer to speak to someone they know and trust who has been to that website and made a purchase from it.

The conceptual framework developed in Figure 2 could be modified in future research. One possibility is to include the perceived size of the Internet store, a parameter of the Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999, 2000) model, presented in Figure 1. No reference was made explicitly to this parameter in the current study, and could influence the Māori Internet shopper as Jarvenpaa, et al. (1999, 2000) found. One practical implication of the results of this study could help New Zealand (and possibly international) e-commerce businesses as it brings to light some issues that Māori have that either hinder them or assist them to purchase via the Internet. The inclusion of photo's of the organisation and staff could give the Māori Internet shopper recognition that this organisation is not faceless. That is, they do exist and they do have people working there. If the Māori Internet shopper needs to call the organisation for any reason, they have a face to the name. That is, "it's just as if you've walked into a shop" (P6). A larger survey-based extension of this research will enable comparison with the *pakeha* or non-Māori population. That will then support the adoption of existing recommendations in New Zealand about a 'NZ Trust Seal' and the adoption of bilingual web sites.

This research has made a significant contribution to the body of trust in e-commerce knowledge by exploring the role of a collectivist culture and its influence on attitudes toward online shopping. By gaining more understanding of the role of collectivist culture on trust, there is the prospect of future research projects into cross cultural research, comparing other collectivist cultures in different countries. The culture dimensions identified by Hofstede (1991), power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity and femininity can also be employed in future studies to better understand the role of culture and its influence on e-commerce.

The findings of this study assist both practitioners and researchers to understand the role of indigenous culture and values on online shopping. The study will assist practitioners in the planning and development of e-commerce where culture significantly influences the indigenous behaviours and attitudes. Therefore, the social construction of a culture has an impact on the development of trust and success of e-commerce websites.

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