Cross Cultural Communication Conference
2016
28-29th January 2016
Bangkok, Thailand

Conference co-organised by:

Chulalongkorn University
Bournemouth University
Zayed University
Emerson College
Blanquerna-Ramon Llull University
Conference Chairperson

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavel Slutskiy, PhD, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Conference Reviewers

☐ Professor Badran Badran, Zayed University, UAE
☐ Professor Jaishri Jethwaney, Indian Institute for Mass Communication, JNU University, India
☐ Associate Professor Dr. Saravudh Anantachart, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
☐ Associate Professor Gaelle Duthler, Zayed University, UAE
☐ Associate Professor Kiran Kaur, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia
☐ Dr. Chompunuch Puniyapiroje, Burapha University, Thailand
☐ Dr. Chung-Chuan (Kenneth) Yang, University of Texas, USA
☐ Dr. Yowei Kang, KAINAN UNIVERSITY, TAIWAN
☐ Dr. Fiona Cownie, Bournemouth University, UK
☐ Dr. Enric Ordez, Blanquerna School of Communication, Ramon Lull University, Spain
☐ Dr. Howard Combs, San Jose State University, USA
☐ Dr. Jirayudh Sinthuphan, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
☐ Dr. Pavel Slutskiy, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
☐ Dr. Ratanasuda Punnahitanond, Bangkok University, Thailand

Editing of the Proceedings

John Viano, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Design

Asst. Prof. ShawHong SER, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST: A LITERARY AND HISTORICAL VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MADAME BUTTERFLY  BY NICK BAMFORD (BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY, UK)  

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: THE CHALLENGES FOR A DISCOURSE APPROACH, BY GWEN BOUVIER (ZAYED UNIVERSITY, UAE)  

COMMUNICATION CHARACTERISTICS OF A GLOBAL BRAND’S STORE STAFF AS A KEY CRM TOOL - LOCAL CUSTOMERS’ SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO REPURCHASE: A CASE STUDY OF UNIQLO THAILAND, BY PAPASSARA CHAIWONG (CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, THAILAND AND POHNPASSORN POKPERMDEE (SILPAKORN UNIVERSITY, THAILAND)  

SOCIAL ENDORSEMENT EFFECTS ON MESSAGE PROCESSING: CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS, BY MYOJUNG CHUNG, PH.D. (NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, SINGAPORE)  

EMOTION AND VIRALITY OF ONLINE CONTENT IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CONTEXTS, BY SUTTICHART DENPRUEKTHAM (CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, THAILAND)  

GETTING READY FOR A GLOBALIZED WORKPLACE: LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL VIRTUAL STUDENT TEAMS, BY INKA STEVER AND GAELLE DUTHLER, PH.D. (ZAYED UNIVERSITY, ABU DHABI)  

SIGNIFICANCE OF ETHICS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATIONS IN ETHICS EDUCATION: MIDDLE EASTERN PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION AS A CASE, BY SERRA GORPE PH.D., NOELA MICHAEL, PH.D. (ZAYED UNIVERSITY, UAE)  

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON PERSONALITY PREFERENCES FOR WORLD LEADERS: SEASONAL MARKERS OF CHRONOBIOLOGY EFFECTS, BY MARK A. HAMILTON (UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY)  

THE EFFECT OF LIFE EVENTS ON PERSONALITY, AUTHORITARIANISM, CONSERVATISM, AND VERBAL AGGRESSION: DEVELOPING A MODEL OF BELIEFS ACROSS CULTURES, BY MARK A. HAMILTON (UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, USA AND CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, THAILAND), JIRAYUDH SINTHUPHAN (CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, THAILAND) AND SHAW HONG SER, (CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, THAILAND)  

SAVING THE WORLD, ONE COUNTRY AT A TIME: THE IMPACTS OF CULTURE IN INTERNATIONAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, BY ALEXANDRA HOWARD (EMERSON COLLEGE, USA)
CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY IN BUSINESS INTERACTION: A THEORETICAL STUDY, BY DORIEN KARTIKAWANGI (SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION, ATMA JAYA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, JAKARTA, INDONESIA), YOHANES TEMALURU (SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, ATMA JAYA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, JAKARTA, INDONESIA) AND DOMINIKUS D. UNARADJAN (SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, ATMA JAYA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, JAKARTA, INDONESIA)

THE PROGRAM PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES OF NHK WORLD RADIO JAPAN, THAI SECTION, BY ANENCHA KLINKESORN (UNIVERSITY OF THE THAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THAILAND)

CANADA IS #IDLENOMORE: UNPACKING DYNAMICS OF INDIGENOUS POLITICAL EXPRESSION AND PROTEST ON TWITTER, BY VINCENT RAYNAUD (EMERSON COLLEGE, USA), EMMANUELLE RICHEZ (UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR, CANADA), KATIE BOUDREAU (CARLETON UNIVERSITY, CANADA), ABUNYA AGI (UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR, CANADA)

NEW WAVE IN STORYTELLING? MANAGING CONTENT IN CROSS-CULTURAL PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS IN AN ONGOING CHANGE OF ROLES OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA. A CASE STUDY OF THE PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS, BY ENRIC ORDEIX, PHD. (RAMON LLULL UNIVERSITY, CATALONIA-SPAIN) AND XAVIER GINESTA, PHD. (UNIVERSITAT OF VIC-CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF CATALONIA, CATALONIA-SPAIN).

FASHION SUPPLY CHAIN WORKER EXPLOITATION: A STRUCTURAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE THEORY PERSPECTIVE, BY JON M. SHAPIRO, PH.D. (NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY, USA)

CROSS –CULTURAL ISSUES AS AN INFLUENCER OF SERVICE QUALITY IN MEDICAL TOURISM, BY PROF. S. SUNDARARAJAN, DR. A. CHANDRAMOHAN AND DR. K. SADASIVAN (SRM UNIVERSITY, INDIA)

THE DETERMINANTS OF BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THAI AND VIETNAMESE TRAVEL AGENCIES, BY RATIWARN WATANASIN (SUAN DUSIT UNIVERSITY, THAILAND), MAI NGOC KHUONG (INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY - VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM)
EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST: A LITERARY AND HISTORICAL VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MADAME BUTTERFLY  by Nick Bamford (Bournemouth University, UK)

Abstract

In this paper, I will look at aspects of cultural difference as well as commercial and political relationships between East and West in a literary and historical context. These aspects have become evident during research for my PhD, which involves creating a contemporary, gay, screen adaptation of the story of Madame Butterfly.

I will demonstrate how the story, written by American author John Luther Long, emerged in response to the fashion of Japonisme; prompted by the opening up of new markets with Japan in the late 19th century, and in particular at how it was a moral response to the novella Madama Chysanthème by Pierre Loti, which described an early example of what could be called sex tourism - another aspect of Japonisme.

I will go on to examine the cultural misunderstanding, and in particular the cruel paradox of legal misperception intrinsic to the Madame Butterfly story; how that story was subverted by playwright and impresario David Belasco and opera composer Giacomo Puccini, again in response to commercial demand; and how that East/West misunderstanding has changed in subsequent adaptations, in parallel with political changes through the 20th century.

In particular I will look at M. Butterfly, the version of the story written by D.H.Hwang and filmed by David Cronenberg which subverted the dominant male West/submissive female East paradigm which is intrinsic to the story. I will also examine a film version made by NHK in Japan in 2011 with its reversed perspective.

Finally, I will analyze my own challenge to find an appropriate context for the story in the 21st century, and my choice of Bangkok. I will compare how making the story homosexual destabilizes the heteronormative expectations which govern the original versions, and how globalization has, in a similar way, ‘queered’ the macrocosm of that East/West paradigm in terms of who is now exploiting whom?

I will suggest that the internet and other aspects of globalization, such as the ready availability of cheap air travel, which have replaced the traveller with the tourist, might have increased mutual awareness between the cultures, but decreased understanding. While, for each culture a perception of the other is more readily available, it is, perhaps, more superficial.

I will conclude that a culture clash remains, and that having my Cio Cio San still be a victim of it, albeit in a different way, is therefore authentic in a contemporary setting.

Introduction

Although Kipling’s famous poem in fact suggests that all men are the same on the battlefield, whatever their racial or cultural background, the opening line ‘Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet’ (1889) has become a cliché in describing the relationship between Eastern and Western cultures. But their fundamental differences and consequent misunderstandings, as well as mutual exploitations, has been the stuff of many a work of fiction. In this paper I will look at how one of these – the story immortalised, though not created, by Giacomo Puccini in his 1904 opera Madama Butterfly – is driven by that misunderstanding, and at the same time was prompted by cross-cultural commercial interests - a developing commercial and cultural relationship between Asia, specifically Japan, and the West.
My PhD by practice is centred on the writing of a contemporary, gay, screen adaptation of this story, set in Bangkok. I am investigating where the story came from, as well as how it has been adapted, used, and indeed abused over the 120 years of its existence. In particular I am looking at how ‘queering’ the story - making the relationship homosexual – has driven quite specific and far-reaching changes.

During the second half of the 19th century, and at the beginning of the 20th, Europe was becoming fascinated with all things Japanese – art, culture, ceramics. This was a result of the ending of the Edo period identified by van Rij (2001). In his Japonisme: Cultural Crossings between Japan and the West, Lambourne says ‘The catalyst for the phenomenon of Japonisme was the opening up of Japan to international trade in 1858’ (2005:7). This followed more than the 200 years, during which Japan ‘embraced a policy known as sakoku – ‘the secluded country’ (2005:7).

The Japanese artefacts which were being transported west in ever-increasing quantities quickly became much sought-after novelties. As its name implies, the fashion began in France – Lambourne reports the term’s first use in 1872 by French author and collector Philippe Burty – but it spread throughout Europe as well as to America and ‘was at its height in the 1880s’ (2005:7). Lambourne also relates how the quote from Alexandre Dumas, fils’ play Le Francillon ‘everything is Japanese nowadays’ (1887) ‘rapidly became a widely-used catchphrase’ (2005:131); how the fashion was lampooned in Gilbert and Sullivan’s The Mikado (1885); and how: ‘It was at first within the covers of a successful novel that the artistic cross-pollination of Japan and Europe, first on the page and later on the stage, effectively took place’ (2005:135).

That novel was Madame Chrysanthème, written by the French author Pierre Loti in 1887. Loti was the pen name of French naval officer Julien Viaud; and the novella is largely autobiographical, telling the story of his marriage, arranged by a broker, to a Japanese girl in Nagasaki. This was a temporary arrangement, for the duration of Viaud’s posting in the harbour, and for which the girl was paid. It was a perhaps less salubrious aspect of Japonisme, which Burke-Gaffney describes: ‘By...1868..The practice of keeping Japanese women as temporary wives had gained such a reputation that it was known widely by the nickname ‘Japanese marriage’ among sailors and travellers’ (2004:28). This was clearly a way of offering a veneer of respectability to what was, in effect, prostitution, and could be described as an early example of what we would now call sex tourism.

As Lambourne (2005) makes clear, Loti’s novella was a popular work; but it prompted moral outrage from a number of his contemporaries, including Félix Régamey, who wrote the satirical ‘Le Cahier Rose de Madame Chrysanthème (The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthème)’ (1893) which told the story from the girl’s perspective, demonstrating an opinion of her husband rather lower than the man’s of himself: ‘My friends finally called him the Perfumed Rhinoceros’ (1893 – quoted Reed, 2010:77). But it was the American author, John Luther Long, who, in 1898, published another novella entitled Madame Butterfly in which a ‘Japanese Marriage’ is seen to have serious consequences. He was apparently prompted both by Loti and by the apparently true story told him by his sister, Jennie Correll, who lived in Nagasaki, of a ‘tea-house girl’ who had married and been impregnated, but then abandoned, by an American sailor. Long’s story is disarmingly simple. An American naval officer, Pinkerton, while stationed in Nagasaki, makes a temporary marriage to a 15-year-old Japanese Geisha girl, Cho Cho San (known as ‘Butterfly’), before returning to the US leaving her pregnant with his son, and promising to return ‘when the robins nest.’ She is completely in love with him, rejects her family and an alternative suitor, Yamadori, and remains faithful to Pinkerton, waiting patiently, and in penury, for three years until he finally returns, accompanied by his American wife. Despairing, and driven by her father’s Samurai code of honour, Butterfly threatens to kill herself with her father’s sword, but is saved by her maid Suzuki, and returns to her life as a Geisha, accompanied by her son.
Unquestionably written in the light of Loti’s story - there are many similarities and common details - this was the primary ancestor of the Puccini opera, via American impresario David Belasco’s crude 1900 theatrical adaptation. This latter was clearly commercially prompted by a thirst for Japonisme, and it is interesting to note how a change he made purely for theatrical purposes changed the story forever. In Long’s version the girl, Cho Cho San, does not go through with her suicide, but instead goes back to her life as a Geisha along with her son. Belasco evidently did not feel this would make a strong enough final curtain, so had the girl go through with the suicide and die in Pinkerton’s arms. Puccini, in London for the opening of his Tosca, saw this production and, despite not speaking a word of English, was so taken with the image of a mother sacrificing herself for her child, went backstage immediately after the show to acquire the rights to adapt the story, and the rest is history. Madame Butterfly has become forever the story of a mother who sacrifices herself for her child.

Prompted by the commercial value in the West of anything Japanese, this story is driven by misunderstanding between the two cultures. Pinkerton’s understanding of Japanese law is that while he has taken a 999-year lease on the marital house, he can end it with one month’s notice, and that he can end his marriage simply by walking out. Cho Cho San, on the other hand, has learned that American marriage is legally binding, permanent and very hard to dissolve. Each therefore operates on a misperception of the other’s culture – wilful on one side, wishful on the other. Concomitant with this cultural misperception is the heteronormative paradigm of the older, dominant man and the younger, submissive woman which matches the macrocosm of the context, where the West is perceived as dominant – commercially and politically – and the East submissive. Lambourne describes ‘the axiomatic assumption of Western superiority that falling in love with a white man entailed’ (2005:134).

In more than a century since the Madame Butterfly story was first written it has been adapted, reworked, and subverted in many ways; but my investigations suggest that the overriding perception of the dominant West and submissive East has always governed it – perhaps not surprisingly, given that the story originated as a Western perception of the East; and the vast majority of subsequent adaptations have looked in a similar direction (although there are some important exceptions, as I will discuss).

In the early part of the 20th century various film versions of the story were made, most notably the silent 1915 version, directed by Sidney Olcott, with Mary Pickford in the eponymous role; and another made in 1932 starring Cary Grant and Sylvia Sidney, directed by Marion Gering. Both of these versions were capitalising on the story’s fame following the Puccini opera, even though neither makes much reference to that, beyond some musical quotations in the latter. But there is no real attempt to offer a true picture of Japan or Japanese culture. The presentation is condescending, almost a caricature, and the suggestion is always that it is intrinsically inferior to American culture. Although Long’s original story was a clear moral comment on the Loti story which preceded it, with implicit criticism of a Western man’s exploitative behaviour, and the Puccini opera similarly presents Pinkerton as a callous user (which caused some issues for him when the opera was presented to American audiences) - there is little such criticism here. In these films the Pinkerton characters are seen as far less guilty – simply young men doing what young men do. The films are made by Westerners, mainly Americans, and totally aimed at Western audiences. American culture is perceived as supreme, and, like Loti before them, these Westerners are not perceived as to blame for amusing themselves with Eastern women.

It is important to remember the East/West political context at the time these films were made. Japonisme had given way to deteriorating trade relations and the sense of mutual threat, which would culminate in the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, the war in the Pacific and the 1945 atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In his 2012 novel The Heat of the Sun, David Rain capitalizes
on the chronology of that developing conflict’s parallels with what might have happened to Pinkerton and Cho Cho San’s son, Trouble. Here is a mixed-race young man who feels acutely divided loyalties as the US – Japanese conflict develops, and his father becomes an increasingly powerful American politician. The climax is, of course, the atomic bomb which destroys Trouble’s birthplace.

It took playwright David Hwang, American-born to Chinese parents, to challenge the implicit racism and political chauvinism of the Madame Butterfly story. He was prompted by the apparently true story of a French diplomat who had had a 20-year relationship with a Chinese opera singer without realising that his lover was a man masquerading as a woman, and who had been passing secrets through his lover to the Chinese government. Although he knew the Madame Butterfly story only by reputation, Hwang immediately saw the parallels: ‘I knew Butterfly only as a cultural stereotype; speaking of an Asian woman, we would say. “She’s pulling a Butterfly” which meant playing the submissive oriental number’ (1989:95). When Hwang listened to the opera he found few surprises: ‘Sure enough, when I purchased the record, I discovered it contained a wealth of sexist and racist clichés, reaffirming my faith in Western culture’ (1989:95).

In M. Butterfly (1989) he ridicules and subverts both the microcosm of the Pinkerton/Butterfly relationship and the macrocosm of the dominant West/submissive East cultural context:

‘what would you say if a blonde homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats her cruelly, then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage to a young Kennedy. Then, when she learns he has remarried, she kills herself. Now, I believe you would consider this girl to be a deranged idiot, correct? But because it’s an Oriental who kills herself for a Westerner – ah – you find it beautiful.’ (1989:17)

Although this play is about a relationship which is, even if on one side unwittingly, homosexual, what it actually addresses is male fantasies about women, particularly male Western fantasies about Eastern women: ‘I have often heard it said that “Oriental women make the best wives” (rarely is this heard from the mouths of Asian men, incidentally)’ (1989:95). Inverting the Madame Butterfly story, here is Gallimard (the Pinkerton character) being exploited by a man pretending to be a woman, whose spymaster is an utterly unfeminine Chinese woman who perceives Western men as weak and homosexual. Gallimard is the exploited one, so it is he who dons Butterfly’s costume and commits ritual suicide.

Hwang was not the only adapter of this story to subvert that West/East perception. Boublil and Schönberg were inspired, as Puccini had been before them, by the image of a mother giving up her child for a better life – in their case in Vietnam – to adapt the Madame Butterfly story into the musical, Miss Saigon. The ‘American Dream’, with its assumption of American superiority, is at the heart of this story. The idealistic concept of the USA as the perfect capitalist society where anyone can achieve anything is in evidence throughout the show. The Vietnamese prostitutes dream of it – The Movie in my Mind. Chris (their exonerated ‘Pinkerton’) sings to Kim (Butterfly): ‘On the other side of the earth, There’s a place where life still has worth’ (1991:Act 1). But his plaintive: ‘Christ, I’m an American. How could I fail to do good?’ (1991:Act 2) is heavily ironic in the macrocosmic context of the Vietnam war – perhaps America’s most disastrous military adventure. There is equally crushing irony in Kim’s sacrifice of her life as the only way to ensure that her son can live in America just after the Engineer’s final production number ‘The American Dream’ has mercilessly mocked the whole concept. By the late 20th century, and certainly post-Vietnam, any assumption of Western cultural superiority was no longer acceptable, at least in terms of dramatic representations.
In 2011 the Japanese television company NHK made a two-part TV version of the Madame Butterfly story, entitled Cho Cho - a rare, and possibly unique example of an Eastern take on the story – and the different nuances are clear to see. The story is bookended at a performance of Madama Butterfly, with a member of the audience, who holds a copy of Loti’s Madama Chrysanthème, explaining to a fellow member how it really happened – and it is a clear attempt by an Eastern film to redress the intrinsic Western chauvinism of the original story. Butterfly is motivated by a fervent desire to go to America, but she is no kind of prostitute. The lovers are of a similar age and the relationship is based on mutual love – Franklin (as the Pinkerton character is called) is ‘not interested in Nagasaki marriage’ (2011). The outcome of Butterfly’s suicide remains, still inspired by her Samurai father, but it is presented as the honourable act of a woman who has failed in her ambition. Unlike her literary forebears, she is not the victim of inevitable male, and Western dominance. Whether the context this film depicts is more or less historically accurate than what the original versions offered might be a matter for debate, but what is important is that for a contemporary Eastern audience the cultural balance has been redressed, with the East re-empowered.

For my 21st century gay adaptation of this story I have chosen Bangkok as a location, because it is known as a sex tourism destination for all sexualities. And I have discovered an interesting parallel between the rebalancing of East/West dominance/submission assumptions required by the contemporary setting and a similar rebalancing which must be made in the microcosm of the love affair when both participants are male. In the original story there is no question that the strong, rich, male, Western Pinkerton is exploiting the weak, poor, female, Eastern Cho Cho San. But for two males in contemporary Bangkok the situation is very different. As long ago as 1989, Peter Tatchell heard from Lek, a Bangkok bar boy:

"Are the bar boys exploited?" asks Lek. Answering his own question, he replies: "Foreign tourists come here, fall in love and leave broken-hearted. The boys earn a standard of living they could never otherwise enjoy. So who's exploiting who?" (1989)

It could be argued, of course, that any prostitution is intrinsically exploitative of those who sell sex, be they male or female, and that the Bangkok sex industry is set up to service Western sexual needs because there is money to be made out of that. Again as Tatchell points out:

The principle reason for working in the sex industry is poverty. "There's a lot of unemployment and jobs usually pay very little," says Lop, a 20 year old bar boy. "It's a good job and much better than going hungry." (1989)

But once that system is established, the boys and girls can use it to exploit their Western clients’ weaknesses and wealth. Bishop and Robinson point out ‘the customers indeed believe they are often the ones being taken advantage of’ (1998:137), but describe this as the ‘the myth of reciprocity’ (ibid:188). However, there is an ambivalence in terms of the exploitation, as Tatchell suggests, though it might better be defined as the microcosm of personal exploitation within the macrocosm of a system generated by a stronger economy exploiting a weaker one. Another factor in this ambivalence is undoubtedly the greater access each culture has to information about the other through global communications – the internet and social media. A young man or woman in Asia today is, at least to an extent, more empowered because far better able to know about Western culture, and therefore to find ways to exploit it, than Cho Cho San would have been a century ago. The reverse is also true.

There is a clear difference in the 21st century between the tourist, who wishes only to look at another country or culture, and the traveller, who wishes to engage with, experience and understand it. The former option was, of course, not available in the 19th century, though, as Viaud (who
wrote Madame Chrysanthème under the name of Pierre Loti) demonstrated, it was still not uncommon to fail to take any genuine interest in a visited culture. Such an attitude is at the heart of the Madame Butterfly story. But the paradoxical question is whether a modern visitor will take advantage of the opportunity they now have fully to research the culture they will visit. Or will they prefer merely to exploit the ready availability of global flights to pay it a visit for a week or two – to be a tourist and look at the sights, and possibly take sexual advantage of the people, without exploring anything beyond that. In the 19th century Viaud, if only because of the greater challenge which travelling to the Far East presented, at least spent some weeks living in his ‘Japanese Marriage’ and observed the culture at first hand, even if only with detached amusement. His fictional descendant, Pinkerton, does the same.

So in my 21st century gay Bangkok Butterfly, there is the opportunity for my Cho Cho San (called Chai), in his contemporary context, to exploit, at least to an extent, as well as be exploited, and to be active, unlike his literary ancestor, who must in her context, as a woman, and as an Asian, always be passive. While Cho Cho San is at the mercy of the marriage-broker and then of her husband, Chai can seek out the man who, he hopes, will offer him what he wants – a ticket out of Bangkok. When Pinkerton leaves Cho Cho San she can only wait and hope, while Chai can travel to the UK in search of his departed lover, Ben.

But Chai’s power remains illusory. While he has youth, native wit, and good looks, and can convert the latter into money - at least temporarily; he lacks the education and the citizenship which will give him the power which Ben enjoys, quite simply because of the country of his birth. He is temporarily empowered in the microcosm, but the macrocosm is still loaded against him.

The global communication and quick, inexpensive, travel available in the 21st century offer ready and affordable opportunities to explore and to communicate with other cultures. But all too often we do no more than observe each other in a very superficial way. When it took weeks to get to Asia, it felt genuinely exotic, and ‘other’. Now that it takes just a few hours it feels perhaps too familiar, with the exotic otherness too easily hidden beneath a veneer of homogeneity. If that otherness is still there we do not need truly to discover or experience it, because we can fly home in a few hours. Paradoxically it is our wealth which permits that, which permits us to enjoy the sights of another culture from the comfortably familiar environment of a hotel or cruise liner. It is those who lack the wealth – the travelling youngsters and students on a gap year - who are obliged by that lack genuinely to experience and to engage with the culture - to be travellers rather than tourists.

The contemporary, gay context for my Madame Butterfly adaptation differs dramatically from that of its literary ancestors in many ways. But the behaviour of the characters within my story feels authentic in being little changed.

Bibliography and References:


REED, C. 2010. The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthème & other documents of Japonisme. USA. University of Hawaii Press


**Filmography:**


Madame Butterfly 1932. Dir. Marion Gering. Paramount Pictures
SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: THE CHALLENGES FOR A DISCOURSE APPROACH, by Gwen Bouvier (Zayed University, UAE)

Abstract

The wider field of discourse studies is still only beginning to turn its attention to social media, despite a number of notable scholarly works. This paper looks at some of the challenges for a discourse approach to multicultural communication on social media. It sees the global communication landscape as fundamentally transformed and shifted in the ways in which identities and communities play out. The paper concludes by thinking about what the consequence of these are, specifically the way identity is negotiated online, how cross-cultural debate pans out, how the status of knowledge is changing, and the relationship between the online and offline world. The challenge for discourse studies is to create more robust research and studies that provide concrete examples of these changes.

Keywords: social media; discourse; Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; discourse studies

Introduction

The growing popularity of social media has created a debate: Do these Internet services contribute to society by allowing people to become informed, find common cause, and participate in public life more often? In this sense, is there a place for greater cross-cultural sharing? Or do they foster shallower relationships, distract people from public affairs and deepen their political and civic disengagement? Do social media lead to increasingly disengaged and insular ideas, values, concepts, worldviews, and means of realizing these? After all, social media are social, but only in an immediate sense.

This paper looks at these issues from the perspective of discourse studies. Discourse studies focus on how people communicate their own identities, how they tell about who they are and what they do. It is also interested in how they communicate the identities of others and how, in turn, these identities are represented by others.

The key issues here are how differences are constructed and negotiated. Social media bring both the possibility of sharing, interaction, and dialogue, or for very new kinds of insularity. This paper shows this brings some new and specific challenges to researching intercultural communication - demanding that we rethink theories and produce new methodological tools.

Changes: intercultural communication, social media and discourse studies

The following changes bring new challenges not only for discourse studies but, more widely, for intercultural communication. This paper considers: i.) social media and self-presentation; ii.) the nature of cross-cultural debate online; iii.) issues regarding the changing status of knowledge; and iv.) the relationship between online and offline worlds.

Self-presentation

Social media have greatly shifted what people present about themselves for public knowledge. Indeed, many online social networking platforms seem to revolve around showing, sharing and performing the self. It has been suggested that identity representation on social media, (i.e. showing yourself in a specific place, dating, etc.), is always, to an extent, self-promotional (Hancock & Toma, 2009: 367; Lyu, 2016: 185). Consequently, these virtual places provide a new site for scholarly work that seeks to investigate issues of identity. It also brings new challenges, requiring new theories and new methods, which take on board the different ways social media allow identity to be realized.
Several recent studies about Facebook have focused on how narcissism, self-presentation and self-esteem are manifested by students (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Bouvier, 2012; Liu et al, 2016; Walters & Horton, 2015). More often than not, such studies have employed uses and gratifications as a theoretical framework (e.g. Baraket-Bojmel et al, 2016; Blanchnio et al, 2016; Marshall et al, 2015). Attention has also been paid to the cross-cultural aspects of how Facebook serves as a site of self-presentation, self-esteem, and interaction across countries and cultures see [See Barry and Bouvier (2011), Brailovskaia and Bierhoff (2016), and Taniguchi and Lee (2015)].

As some scholars have argued, this has accompanied massive shifts in what people present about themselves for public knowledge (Liu et al, 2016; Nussbaum, 2007). What is clear from studies of social media is that it is used for a combination of identity construction and the maintenance of social relationships (Bevan et al, 2015).

The ‘selfie’ can be considered the epitome of self-promotional content. This relatively recent term was coined in 2013 and included in The Oxford Dictionaries for the first time that same year. Since then, studies have tried to understand more about its appeal. Sorokowska et al (2016) found that selfie-sharing is positively related to self-esteem and solidifying social ties. From a gender perspective, more women than men post selfies on Facebook, but they do not have the same degree of motivation in doing this (Sorokowski et al, 2015). Studies found men are driven by entitlement, exploitativeness, and narcissism; whereas women share these motivations to a lesser degree (Sorokowski et al, 2015; Weiser, 2015). Overall, self-presentation is found to be a key motivator for social networking on Facebook. To some extent these studies do not point to substantial differences in identity work done by social media users. As I move through the following points, I suggest there are, indeed, important differences related to online-offline, the immediacy, and click-and-go nature of social media and to what kinds of identities tend to be fostered and what kinds of political or commercial interests these may serve.

Work on Twitter has also placed identity and self-presentation at its heart. Murthy (2012), for example, has drawn on the likes of Goffman (1981) and Bourdieu (1984) to look at the way that tweeting about the banal, even about what you had for breakfast, is about self-affirmation and signals being an engaged user. This was a time when Twitter had high cultural capital, was able to signify ‘debate,’ and was popular with professional middle classes. Page (2012) has also looked at Twitter in terms of it being a ‘linguistic marketplace,’ where people carry out a process of self-branding – although she views this ‘synthetic personalization’ (Fairclough, 1989) as very much the same thing found in mainstream media talk.

Chiluwa (2015) has discussed the way that extremist groups use social media for a kind of self-branding, where part of the process involves the re-formulation of ethnic divisions and creating imagined opposing interests. As a product is branded by loading it with ideas and values, so an ethnic group can be given new kinds of meanings and significance.

From the standpoint of intercultural communication, such identity construction and self-presentation are important, not only in themselves, but rather as these serve to position people against others, as part of processes of evaluation and legitimization of wider identities and social processes. Facebook and other social media, with their technology of ‘likes’ and ‘trending,’ could be thought of as providing ways to do such kinds of evaluations. Celebrities and extremist groups alike would be attentive to such things.

**Cross-cultural debate**

The theoretical notion of the public sphere is based on the idea that societies communicate, share, and debate ideas across a range of public sites, which can include news, political debates, and entertainment media (Habermas, 1962; Bennett, 2008). However, cross-cultural debate on some
social platforms, which are international by default, appears to have a very specific nature, which tends not to be highly reflective. Therefore, De Zuniga et al (2012) argue the increased activity on social media forces us to ask a pertinent question: Do these Internet platforms contribute to society, in the sense of providing a place for greater cross-cultural sharing? Or, do they distract and entertain (e.g. by fostering shallower relationships), diverting people away from public affairs, and deepening their political and civic disengagement (e.g. Hodgkinson, 2008)?

This suggests that, rather than enlarging and diversifying the public sphere, social media lead to increasingly disengaged and insular forms of ideas, values, concepts, worldviews, and means of realizing these. In other words, social media may indeed be social, but only in an immediate, superficial sense. Research into discussions of sociopolitical issues conducted online by Lindgren (2010) found the nature of the debate was not to deal with actual details but rather to seek to frame events into pre-existing personal interests and alignments. Georgakopoulou (2014) found discourses about a pressing political event, like the economic crisis in Greece, became a site for expressing xenophobic ideas about Germans. Similarly, Lindgren’s (2012) study about the discourses in forum posts focusing on shootings in schools, an important civic issue, found it became a launch pad for existing views on gun control. There was little evidence of receptivity.

Other research has returned a more optimistic view. In line with studies focused on self-presentation (see above), Hilbert (2009) found that, though people use social media for personal identity construction mainly, they, nevertheless, also access, contribute, and share information that has civic relevance. In his study of YouTube posts about political protests in Turkey, Way (2015) reached a less optimistic conclusion - finding that, in spite of the vast amounts of posted comments, people didn’t engage each other’s ideas. Rather, comments were framed in terms of categorizing people on the basis of his or her ‘true’ national identity, and contributions were homogenised and reduced forms of history. Similarly, Al-Tahmazi (2015) suggested political views expressed in Facebook posts in Iraq recontextualised political actions and actors in order to de/legitimize views, ruling some people in and some out as valid contributors to the discussion.

Taking a wider perspective on this, some theorists have pointed out broader shifts online interactions may both be a part and a symptom of. Žižek (1997) expressed concern about online behavior being non-committal. He noted language in forums and blogs ceases to be ‘subjectivized.’ Participants in a discussion do not have to stand by what they say, but can literally leave the conversation after making their contribution. They can post their comment and then disappear, or they can simply unhook if they do not like a response or want to escape the consequences of what they have said. This can be as simple as clicking away or closing the page. Conversely, this links to the phenomenon of trolling, whereby users can leave a harsh comment and then come back several days later to see its effects. Hardaker and McGlashan (2016) considered misogynist comments on Twitter. They described the nature of this forum as a “highly fluid, fast-moving environment […] populated by users who may coalesce around a topic or user and engage in transient interactions for a mere matter of seconds before moving on” (Hardaker & McGlashan, 2016: 90). Dean (2010) points to the way that these kinds of interactions can lead to discussion threads quickly disintegrating. Members may disengage, unsubscribe, or feel isolated.

The imbalance between participants and lurkers, who may appear suddenly in threaded discussions, can also add to this problem. In fact, Johnson (2001: 143) argues that when you consider the proportions of lurkers to discussants in a particular forum, it is in fact less interactive than a face-to-face lecture and much less so than a conversation around a dinner table. In the light of Blommaert’s (2010) comments about the need for discourse studies to adapt, we can ask whether new approaches and tools are needed to deal with these changes.
The status of knowledge

The lack of a genuine culture of engagement and participation in discussions online may have another consequence, suggests Dean (2010). The Internet’s potential for scan-and-go has generated skepticism of the intrinsic value of knowledge and facts that we find and share online.

Žižek (1997) links this to the collapse of a sense of the ‘big other’ – a waning of the influence exerted by a central, forceful, and institutional body of knowledge that sports commonly agreed upon, or at least enforced, ideas, values and identities. According to Hardt and Negri (2000) this decline resulted in a shift from a culture defined by the role of the citizen subject with more determined identifications, to a culture that continually offers new ways to imagine ourselves. Dean (2010: 5) has coined this new situation as the culture of ‘communicative capitalism.’ In sum, a decline of ‘the symbolic’ or ‘the decline of symbolic efficiency,’ to use Žižek’s exact words, leaves a gap into which the images and effects of social media can be poured (Dean, 2010: 5). This leads to a shift of more specialist kinds of forums and online spaces, often with their own more specialist language and terms that can easily exclude, annoy, and confuse the outsider. In contrast, Myers (2010) shows that successful blogs should have such specialist language as part of signaling a community of shared interest. Downey and Fenton (2003) point to a trend whereby political activist sites on social media can easily become radical, inhospitable ghettos. In this sense, much is to be established in a discursive sense as regards social media groupings, where more localised identities, ideas, and values are celebrated by how esoteric there are. I will consider the research implications for such issues shortly. Arguably then, this shift requires new kinds of approaches and tools, as suggested by Blommaert (2010), as we move away from either highly personalised or mass media-based texts. It also raises the question as to whether such shifts apply cross-culturally.

Beck (1992) argued the shift to neoliberalism and the gradual privatization of institutions has led to their diminishing status. Constant attacks on the professions in the news media has further helped to weaken public trust in them. Jessop (2007) also points to the way neoliberalism has led to a shift away from government to ‘governance.’ Formerly, a centralised government controlled everything in a stable society with fixed, powerful, large institutions that carried the authoritative knowledge of the professions. This stability went along with the more stable and regulated kinds of identity required by the priority of creating wealth through production. People benefited, in turn, from protection by the state in terms of welfare. After the 1990s there was, what has been called, a hollowing out of government (Jessop, 2007). Government starts to give away much of its power to corporations and semi-private organizations. All parts of society are run on market principles. The new neoliberal system does not want fixed identities but mobility, where the economic driver is no longer productivity and full employment, but competition. The large institutions begin to break down and lose their relevance. The older fixed forms of knowledge no longer fit where the emphasis is on the ability to adapt and change.

Whereas the state wanted relatively fixed identities (as seen in HR monitoring forms, where even third generation Asian people remain ‘Asian British’ for example), corporations require something very different. They want flexible identities that can best be aligned with lifestyles and consumer choices. We can see these shifts in social media, where identities can tie closely to consumer preferences, and where there are massive amounts of fragmentation and specialization.

Technology, too, has been harnessed in this process. Fairclough (1992) argued culture is now going through a process of ‘technologisation.’ By this he refers not specifically to actual technology per se, although this can be included. What he refers to, specifically, is the increasing codification of language and semiotic resources. So, for example, a professional teacher would formerly teach according to what her professional training indicated, she will now draw on dense classifications of learning outcomes and will have to present these as a list of learning objectives. Quite intangible
things, like learning, have become codified and measured. Later, each student will have learning targets measured and the teachers, themselves, will have their own performance evaluated by a coded system. All of this will be accompanied by software packages used for inputting the data, which will then be used by a manager operating in the system of governance, who may have no knowledge of teaching, to create rankings and allocate performance related rewards. Professional trust is replaced by data and, to an extent, is all structured by the software packages and the templates they provide. WordArt, for example, is used to produce flow charts to show work performance. These come with certain shapes and direction indicators already packaged into the templates. The result is the classifications and the databases and the software become formats that govern actions.

One of the things that hasn’t been academically addressed yet, is that all this software leads us to interact through its templates like Facebook or Instagram – we can only act and interact in the ways that it allows us to do. The technologisation, or, in other words, templatization of culture through the classification systems of language and software, exert huge semiotic control over us. We tend to think about what we can do with software, rather than what we cannot. In a way we are now so used to technologies that templatise what we do, we no longer see them.

We should also stay mindful of the fact that these templates are built on top of algorithms, where the software platforms have as priority, the aim of gathering data and linking behaviour, knowledge, and identities to consumer practices. We began with a state that had rigid fixed categories, and represented authoritative and centralized bodies of knowledge. Now knowledge becomes completely fragmented but is always realized through templates and through a technologized semiotics, aligned to the algorithms built into system of interlocking software.

But do the arguments of Žižek (1997) and others apply so well in cultures with very different histories, ideas and values? Are these ‘symbolic gaps’ of the same order? For Dean (2010), the decline of the symbolic has a further consequence that may have great relevance for intercultural communication through social media. She suggests that, along with the demise of central authoritative ideas and identities, the Internet, with its culture of engagement, of participation, and of scan-and-go, has generated skepticism. This skepticism means users tend to regard comments always as opinion and not as information, which, in turn, means we tend not to engage in receptive discussion, but fall back on what is comfortable. All else is just opinion. This resonates with the kinds of wider changes observed by sociologists that have pointed to a shift taking place from placing emphasis on the personal-as-political and where this is realized in a world where everything is supposed to be rewarding.

What this means for discourse studies is we may have to ask what the new sites are where issues are being communicated, besides older media like newspapers and television. In addition, to asking who is providing ‘the dominant ideology’ that discourse studies tended to focus on, now that large institutions are in decline? Maybe this ideology is to be found in templates used by software?

**Online/offline**

At the start of this paper I asked whether indeed social media could enhance intercultural communication, where cultural communities can present themselves and the beliefs they share online. But one crucial issue here is the relationship between the online and the offline worlds. In the first section, I looked at the way researchers had considered identity as it is presented online. In the case of social media, this is made more complex, since people often do different things with different platforms and social media, as we saw trends towards promotional types of behavior given the rule of trending and of likes. In the part of the Middle East where I live, there is also the issue that people commonly have multiple accounts. This relates to issues of anonymity and personal
freedom. But it is common to find people engaged in discussions through multiple guises. At a different level, each can allow these people to align with different kinds of interests and communities, some of which claim to exist offline. The truth is we know little about how offline and online relate.

Of course this very online/offline distinction is problematic, since social media are so much a part of much of what we do (Bakardjieva, 2005). We book a restaurant online, looking first at the reviews. We look at blogs on medical sites to check out the rash on our foot. But what we should, in fact, be asking is exactly where and how these social media shift things in our lives. As regards multicultural communication, in what new ways do people engage within their own communities and in what new ways have these come to be defined? Indeed, research has shown that politically motivated groups spend much time manufacturing and defining the interests (e.g. threats to ethnic groups) (Chiluwa, 2015).

One theme in scholarly research relates to the role of anonymity and how this influences behavior, (Ellison et al, 2006: 416) allowing them to make comments on the discrepancy between ‘actual selves’ and ‘ideal selves’ in people’s online self-presentation, where people tend to be rather creative with the truth (Hancock & Toma, 2009; Yurchisin et al, 2005: 742). What seemed clear in interactions was the nature of the lag in responses gave users time to carefully craft an attractive persona (Gibbs et al, 2006 ).

Other researchers suggest social media identities should be better thought of as hoped-for selves (Zhao et al, 2008). More research is needed to begin to understand how identities play out in face-to-face and online contexts (Ellison et al, 2011). Conversely, from the viewpoint of intercultural communication, we would want to know more about what resources and what kinds of identity characteristics were legitimised or delegitimised, for example.

So far the most compelling research into online/offline relationships deals with protest movements, where social media is used to mobilize people in anti-capitalist movements and environmental rallies, for example (Howard & Hussain; 2011, Bennett & Segeberg, 2012). Social media have been credited with the rise against authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North African, though others have put this in perspective (Cohen, 2011; Cottle, 2011). Twitter in particular has been thought to have been a highly powerful way to recruit and radicalize protesters and militants (see González-Bailón et al, 2012). However, other researchers have been less certain about the direct role of social media. In regard to the uprisings in Egypt and Iran, Lim (2012) argued there were previous waves of attempts on social media to mobilize the population. But what had shifted was that society had become less stable, with high unemployment and where fewer young people had been able to settle down and have families.

The point is that social media, in this sense, operate within specific contexts. Put simply, it may be that, on the one hand, in order to understand discourses found in social media we must place them in the everyday lives of users (Thurlow, 2004). On the other hand, it is such social circumstances that can be used on social media to mobilize a population to a specific kind of interest. As we saw earlier, social media are a kind of ‘linguistic marketplace’ (Page, 2012) comprised of a kind of ‘synthetic personalization,’ to use Fairclough’s (1989) term. As Chiluwa (2015) describes, extremist groups can self-promote in a way that can be highly engaging. We know that social media can be highly exclusive where those who orbit around a site can become highly insulated from alternative points of view.

As to discourse studies, perhaps research should not solely focus on the question of how identity is expressed online. There should be research looking into understanding how the way we are expressing ourselves online is starting to change how we are living offline.
Conclusion

To summarise the consequences of these areas for a discourse approach to multicultural communication I see four key challenges. Since poststructuralism, the idea of fixed, monolithic identities has been challenged. Social media, although these vary, appear to favour the promotional and the shifting and idealization. In a globalised world, where semiotic resources fly across older boundaries, becoming remade and being used constantly to remake and re-imagine identities, social media facilitate this perfectly.

The idea of community, either ethnic or political (among others), is also challenged. It may not be so much that actual physical communities have visibility in social media, but those versions that have visibility are those that are trending and get likes. As we know, to some extent, social media are a world of self-promotion, dependent on how skilled you are at developing a presence and getting content promoted.

The idea of fixed knowledge about histories, geographies, and identities is crumbling. On the one hand, there is a retreat into opinion. Much social media, it has been observed, is ghettoised. Those that are more open, like Facebook, tend to lack actual dialogue, as people look out at the world from their ghettos and hit out.

As well as the decline of Big Knowledge, as the reach of the central government wanes, there is the technologization of culture – the checks and measures required by government, which are also linked into software. So do we become used to acting through the templates of software. This can be recording our teaching objectives, but it can also be how we react to others, e.g. through ‘liking’ or through accepting the value of trending and then becoming part of the world of algorithms that successfully connect everything about us to consumer patterns. Whereas the former state and big institutions wanted fixed identities, the new neoliberal world gives us what looks like choice, but choice that is always tracked algorithmically and always part of consumer lifestyle patterns. Corporations will foster difference and, even, identities that had no place in the former fixed world of the state, but these will be technologized in way that is useful to them.

Put simply, social media are different than the old top down media, where we may study the discourses used to represent different cultures, represented as monolithic. People and their interests can be voiced from the bottom-up. We must understand more about the ways in which the templates of the platforms and software format this. Just as the old system controlled and shaped in its interests, what is currently the case? In part, these media offer new freedoms of identity expression. But to what extent do these align with new patterns in the global semiotic flow? And to what extent are the dominant images and representations governed by trending and likes? And what, then, will the relationship of the voices of communities and identities that we find trending on social media be to the people they claim to represent. As research has shown, in social media, community and identity is very much up for interpretation.

The challenge for discourse studies is to create more robust research and studies that provide concrete examples of these - to show, in each case, what kinds of ideas, values, attitudes, and identities are part of this flow and point to how much these are subject to some of the forces I have considered in this paper.

Bibliography


COMMUNICATION CHARACTERISTICS OF A GLOBAL BRAND'S STORE STAFF AS A KEY CRM TOOL - LOCAL CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO REPURCHASE: A CASE STUDY OF UNIQLO THAILAND, by Papassara Chaiwong (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand and Pohnpassorn Pokpermdlee (Silpakorn University, Thailand)

ABSTRACT

The fast fashion business in ASEAN is growing rapidly because young consumers in the region now have higher purchasing power and are very keen on fashion. The business is also thriving particularly in Thailand (Kasikorn Research Center, 2013). In the past decade, UNIQLO, a Japanese leading fast fashion retailer run by Fast Retailing Co., Ltd., has become one of the most popular international apparel brands in this country. According to its business strategy, ‘Stores Managed by Locals, for Locals,’ UNIQLO marks their staff as the stars and empowers local stores and staff to effectively connect and build relationships with their local customers (http://fastretailing.com).

This article, originally part of a paper entitled ‘Store Staff – Customer Communication for CRM: A Case Study of UNIQLO Thailand,’ will examine: 1) CRM strategy, exploiting store staff as the main players; and 2) the communication characteristics of the store staff that lead to customer satisfaction and repurchase intent. A Multi-method research strategy was employed. Quantitative data were gathered by distributing two hundred questionnaires to UNIQLO customers from five branches across Bangkok. Qualitative data were collected via in-depth interviews with the brand’s first store manager (in Thailand) and with twenty questionnaire respondents.

The results show:

1) According to its CRM strategy, UNIQLO Thailand expected their staff to be brand representatives and the main players in building customer relationships. In doing so, UNIQLO’s nine DNAs: Cleanliness, Tidiness, Politeness, Energetic, Punctuality, Briskness, Hospitality, Teamwork and Correctness were imparted to the store staff through several channels, like company training programs and daily morning meetings.

2) According to the respondents, the most satisfying communication characteristic was ‘the store staff used polite language and tonality’, which reflected the ‘Politeness’ DNA; while the least satisfying was ‘the store staff were able to give advice in choosing clothes that fit you.’ In addition, among communication characteristics that affected repurchase intention, the respondents rated ‘the store staff gave a warm welcome and service with smile,’ which reflected ‘Hospitality’ and ‘the store staff communicated with polite manners,’ which reflected ‘Politeness,’ as the highest; while ‘the store staff had good product knowledge and able to provide right information’, reflecting ‘Correctness,’ was rated the lowest. At a significance level of 0.05, scores of satisfaction and repurchase intention rated by customers who were different in sex, age group, range of income, and from different branches, were statistically different.

3) The respondents could not clearly distinguish the store staff’s communication characteristics meant to reflect ‘Energetic’ and ‘Briskness’ (Haki Haki in Japanese) because, in Thai culture, the actions that reflected both terms were quite similar; while in Japanese culture, they are clearly different.
IMPLICATION: In this study, a gap between Japanese management and Thai staff was found. For Thai staff to fully adapt UNIQLO Japan’s DNAs, good demonstration and examples from the management were consistently needed. Moreover, to empower local staff to effectively connect with local customers, the management should develop healthy relationships with them. The more the staff feel sense of belonging, the more aligned they will be with the company and willing to be trained to become effective brand representatives.

BACKGROUND

During the past five years, the fast fashion business in ASEAN has been growing rapidly because young consumers in the region have increased purchasing power and are very keen on fashion. These factors, coupled with strong growth in the Thai retail business, to the point that Thailand has become one of ASEAN’s major trade, tourism, and shopping centers; Thailand’s fast fashion retail segment has also attracted many international brands, like Zara, H&M, Forever 21, and UNIQLO to expand there. (Kasikorn Research Center, 2013).

In this highly competitive market, effective customer relationship management (CRM) is one key marketing strategy employed by many brands. It helps to differentiate each brand by building good relationships between the customer and the retailer; eventually leading to customer loyalty (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner and Gremler, 2002 cited in Bojie and Alwie, 2010). In building good relationships with customers, a retailer’s commitment to offer an assured quality of goods (and services) should result in the repeated satisfaction of customers (Kenedy, B, 2013). The relationship is enhanced when: the assured quality is superior to competitors; when the company follows high standards of corporate culture and ethics; uses effective communication and avoids malevolent intentions (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, cited in Kenedy B, 2013). According to Yim, Anderson, & Swaminathan (2004), healthy interpersonal relationships between brands and their customers allows them to be seen as “trusted consultants and partners, working together with customers toward long-term mutually beneficial relationships.” More precisely, salespeople (or store staff) were involved in customer relationship management for their companies. In the Thai business context, previous studies show that interpersonal skills, especially face-to-face communication between service providers and customers in a service encounter, were crucial to effective CRM (Pondphan Shoeychitr, 2013: 59; Natphimon Lertcharoenpohn, 2012).

In the past two decades, UNIQLO, a Japanese leading fast fashion retailer run by Fast Retailing Co., Ltd., had become one of the most popular international apparel brands. As of 2014, there were 632 stores outside Japan, accounting for over 30% of total UNIQLO sales. It could be said that global markets, especially in Asia, were the brand’s key drivers of growth. In Thailand, UNIQLO’s first store (Central World Branch) opened in September 2011. Only four years later (August 2015), the number of stores across the country increased to 30. In Bangkok alone, 19 stores have been opened (http://fastretailing.com). Thailand is the second largest ASEAN market for UNIQLO, after Singapore (The Nation Online Newspaper, March 11, 2013).

According to its international business strategy, ‘Stores Managed by Locals, for Locals’, UNIQLO marks their staff as stars and empowers local stores and staff to effectively connect and build relationships with their local customers (http://fastretailing.com). Mr. Takahiro Nishimura, Chief Operating Officer of UNIQLO (Thailand), said that apart from managing the physical environment well, (e.g. interior space planning and decoration, window display, and product arrangement to attract customers) UNIQLO (Thailand) also emphasizes store staff training in order to make them brand representatives and main players in CRM; so that at every touch point (e.g. store front, sale area, fitting room and cashier), they could effectively interact with customers, build satisfaction and trust, and make them become repeat customers (Positioningmag, 2012, Online).
However, in effectively running stores worldwide, the management needs to understand that the CRM implementation issues encompass cultural rather than technical factors. According to Ali and Alshawi (2004), multinational organizations face the challenge of how they, as people in one cultural context, build a quality relationship with different customers in different cultural contexts. Therefore, this study was purposed to investigate the policy and strategy of UNIQLO (Thailand) in training its store staff to be main players in CRM; and the communication characteristics of store staff that lead to customer satisfaction and repurchase intent.

This paper is structured in the following fashion. Firstly, we review CRM and interpersonal communication to provide an understanding of the nature and effect of staff-customer communication on CRM. Secondly, to understand how a parent company imparts its corporate culture (DNAs) to their local branches, we review the relationship between corporate culture and service culture, exploring 3 related elements of the service-culture triad: 1) management 2) standards and 3) training. Thirdly, to provide an understanding of Thai-Japanese cultural differences, and cross-cultural business management, Hofstede’s Dimensions of Culture are reviewed. Finally, the research questions that guide this study are presented and the study is discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CRM and Interpersonal Communication

Ali and Alshawi (2004) defined CRM as “a business strategy that seamlessly integrates every aspect of business that touches customer. Kotler and Armstrong (2004, p. 16) defined CRM as “the overall process of building and maintaining profitable customer relationships by delivering superior customer value and satisfaction.” The underlying premise of CRM is that customer relationships can be managed to create long-term customer loyalty and higher profits.

In terms of the relationship between CRM and interpersonal communication, Kotler and Armstrong (2004) mentioned that, from previous studies (e.g Reynolds & Arnold, 2000, Periatt, LeMay, & Chakrabarty, 2004 cited in Kotler and Armstrong, 2004), CRM strategies typically were initiated by top management but salespeople who interacted most frequently with the company buying centers were the ultimate customer relationship managers. In other words, only salespeople, who served as the primary conduit between buyer and seller, could effectively and efficiently implement CRM at the customer level. Their performance largely determined the success of a company’s CRM strategy and programs.

According to Bojie and Alwie (2010), relationship quality influenced the loyalty in credence services and experience services. Two sets of factors, firm factors (commitment, trust and satisfaction) and interpersonal factors (closeness, communication, communication quality and special care), were examined. Even though a firm factor like ‘commitment’ had the strongest influence on the relationship quality, the service provider should also focus on interpersonal factors, like ‘communication quality,’ between service provider and customer because it was a crucial approach to express commitment and build satisfaction and trust.

Beaujean, Davidson & Madge (2006) said “What is regularly missing in our experience is the spark between customer and frontline staff member. That spark and the emotionally driven behavior that creates it explain how great customer service companies earn trust and loyalty during ‘the moment of truth’: those few interactions, for instance, a lost credit card, a damaged piece of clothing.” Effective frontline staff were those who could handle the situation by putting the customer’s emotions at the moment ahead of the company’s or their own agenda. Pondphan Shoeychitr (2013: 55-57) said that, every touch point in a service could create some impressions and experiences or the moment of truth in the customers’ mind. Therefore, it was important for the brand’s
management to train their frontline staff to cope with any situation at the contact point wisely, sincerely, and according to the company’s standards. In first impression management, Pondphan suggested four key points of concern: 1) physical appearance: staff must dress properly, neatly, and cleanly; 2) spirit of hospitality: staff must always express the following actions with no partiality: a) warm greetings and welcomes, b) respect by politely and properly ‘wai’ (the Thai way to show respect and honor to people); and especially c) willingness and enthusiasm to provide service; 3) external personality: gestures, postures, and manners when providing service, (inviting, giving explanations, or suggestions, to customers); and 4) internal personality: understanding of individual difference, empathy, and emotional intelligence to handle challenging situations.

Related Research in CRM and Interpersonal Communication: Natphimon Lertcharoenpohn (2012) found that in the staff-customer interactions at an AIS (a leading service mobile phone network provider) service center, the communication characteristics of frontline staff with which the customers were satisfied the most were: 1) having proper tone of voice 2) dressing properly and 3) expressing warm greetings and words of thanks; while the least satisfying characteristics were: 1) ability to use English according to the language rules (e.g. speaking, pronunciation) 2) ability to give information clearly and accurately and 3) ability to give information thoroughly. Moreover, at significance level of 0.05, customer satisfaction towards staff communication characteristics were positively related to their perception of service quality.

Gwinner, Gremler and Bitner (1998 cited in Bojie and Alwie, 2010) showed that customers get involved in a relationship because of three benefits: (a) confidence benefits, (b) social benefits, and (c) special treatment benefits. Confidence benefits are the most important, followed by social, and special treatment benefits. However, Patterson and Smith (2001 cited in Bojie and Alwie, 2010) mentioned that:

“...when comparing these benefits between Eastern (Thais) and Western (US) cultures, the results indicated that, Eastern cultures place high value on special treatment benefits while their US counterpart’s value confidence benefits more. It proved that Eastern cultures place a high value in building a long term relationship by knowing that loyalty will be compensated in the form of special favors.”

Service Culture

Edvardsson & Enquist (2002) defined ‘service culture’ as cultural expressions of a corporate members’ shared values and shared meaning reflected in both internal (management-employee & employee-employee relationships) and external (between corporate representatives and customers or suppliers) interactions. Gronroos (1990a, cited in Edvardsson & Enquist, 2002) mentioned that, “a service company can become service oriented by creating a service culture, but it is not an easy mission.”
In order to create a service culture in a company, there are three related factors, known as ‘Service Culture Triangle’, adapted from the principles of the service marketing triad, shown below (Pisit Pipatphokakul, online):

1) Management: First and foremost, the management must value all customers. According to this concept, the management must also value their staff and treat them well because they are partners of success who help deliver satisfying products and services to customers. In other words, the brand’s CRM strategies or implementation must exemplify a ‘customer-centric’ approach - both to external and internal customers (employees). 2) Standards: in this regard, standards are systematic and thorough work instruction - including key performance indicators (KPI) in every related process of service, which help enhance effectiveness and consistency of frontline staff when providing service. 3) Training: Currently, training is not only just the act of teaching employees a body of knowledge, skills, or behavior; it also a channel for staff from different branches to exchange experiences and expertise. Moreover, it is a channel for management to cultivate and socialize shared corporate values and behaviors.

Related Research in Service Culture (Internal Marketing): Conduit & Mavondo (2001) studied the relationship between employee (internal customer) orientation and market orientation (or the organization culture that most effectively creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers and thus superior performance for the business). They had a notion that organizational dynamics and managerial action in areas, such as employee training, effective communication systems, and managing human resources were critical to building an internal customer orientation and, consequently, a market orientation. Their findings suggested that integration between departments, the dissemination of market intelligence (all personnel having access to appropriate information to proactively anticipate and to creatively respond to current customer needs), and management support for a market orientation were important for its development.

Hofstede’s Dimension of Culture: Thai and Culture

According to Hofstede’s Dimensions of Culture Framework (2010), the national culture found among Thai and Japanese employees in his study was characterized by: 1) individualism vs collectivism: Thais had low individualism and were socially-oriented, whereby the needs of the in-group supersede individual aspiration; and interpersonal harmony and group orientation are upheld for the sake of cordial relationships. Moreover, they believe in ‘kreng jai’ – an extreme reluctance to impose on anyone or disturb another’s personal equilibrium by refusing requests, accepting assistance, showing disagreement, giving direct criticism, challenging knowledge or authority, or confronting in a conflict situation. While the Japanese showed many of the characteristics of
collectivism, as in Thai society: the Japanese put harmony of group above the expression of individual opinions and people had a strong sense of shame for losing face. However, people had chosen for themselves, which is an Individualist thing to do; 2) masculinity vs femininity: According to Hofstede, Thais had lowest masculinity ranking among Asian countries. Thais expressed characteristics of low masculinity through manners of indirect, relational-oriented, situation-centered, face-saving, and conflict avoiding. In contrast, the Japanese had one of the most masculine societies in the world. However, as their characteristics were mild in collectivism, thus, assertive and competitive individual behaviors would not been seen much in the society; but a severe competition between groups. For instance, at the workplace: a) employees were most motivated when they were fighting to beat competitors; b) their norm was to work hard and long hours; and 3) the drive for excellence and perfection in their material production (monodukuri in Japanese) and in material services (hotels and restaurants) were found in every aspect of life; 3) high power distance: Thais were status and hierarchy-focused, taking seriously addressing people according to status. Social differences in Thai culture also had a lot to do with age differences. For example, younger people were taught to respect their elders, as well as those who are in higher roles, and status. While Japan was a borderline hierarchical society. At one end, the Japanese had hierarchical positions in every social setting and acted accordingly. In corporate settings, for instance, all the decisions must be confirmed by each hierarchical layer and finally by the top management. At the other end, Japan had always been a meritocratic society. The Japanese education system emphasizes that everybody is born equal and anyone can get ahead and become anything, if that person works hard enough; 4) high uncertainty avoidance: in Thai culture, social order and correct behavior were emphasized. They were able to tolerate a higher level of uncertainty. Under the influence of ‘face-saving’ and maintaining harmony, Thai employees preferred to avoid uncertainty by controlling everything in order to eliminate or avoid the unexpected. While Japan was one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries on Earth. In corporate Japan, a lot of time and effort was put into feasibility studies, having all the risk factors worked out before any project could start. Managers asked for all the detailed facts and figures before taking any decision. This high need for Uncertainty Avoidance was one of the reasons why changes are so difficult to realize in Japan; 5) Low Long-term Orientation: In Thai culture, people were more normative than pragmatic. They exhibited great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. While Japan was one of the most Long Term Orientation oriented societies. In corporate Japan, the long term orientation perspective guided a consistently high rate of investment in R&D rather than to a quarterly profit.

Bojie and Alwie (2010) mentioned that, according to Hofstede, in Asian countries, described as collectivist in culture, relationships either in business or personal life were not strange to them. It was rooted from their beliefs and therefore most customers were willing to be involved in a relationship due to their culture which emphasizes long-term relationships. However, the concepts of interpersonal relationships in Asia were facing new challenges as Yang and Ho (1988 cited in Bojie and Alwie, 2010) (in a study on university students in Taiwan) found that ‘personal choice’ socialized by information technology played a more important role in the formation of relationships.

In light of the issues mentioned in the previous three parts, this study poses the following research questions: 1) what is UNIQLO’s CRM strategy in Thai society? 2) How does the Japanese management exploit Thai store staff as the main players in CRM? and 3) what are the communication characteristics of the store staff, trained by Japanese management, which lead to Thai customer satisfaction and repurchase intent?

**METHODOLOGY**

Research Population and Sampling
In order to answer RQ1 and 2, we conducted an in-depth interview with the UNIQLO Thailand’s first store manager. Also, to gain insights, an interview with an expert in cross-cultural business communication was conducted.

To answer RQ3, the research population consisted of repeat customers of UNIQLO (Thailand), who lived in Bangkok Metropolitan area and regularly shopped at UNIQLO (more than once a month, with spending of more than 1,000 baht/month). Of the nineteen stores across Bangkok, geographical purposive sampling (with respect to economic zone designated by Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 2014) was employed. Five UNIQLO branches were selected; three were located in business areas and two were in residential areas.

Respondents

As this study was a senior project of an undergraduate student, the sample size was calculated at the 90% confidence level. Two hundred questionnaires were equally distributed to voluntary respondents in the five sampling stores. To acquire further understandings for discussion, qualitative data were gathered by in-depth interviewing with another 20 customers (different sex, age groups, and experience to visit UNIQLO shop in Japan) from the five branches.

Scale Development and Pilot Test of Questionnaires.

Items in the questionnaire were generated to reflect the first part of the literature review: communication characteristics which lead to customer’s satisfaction and repurchase intention. After having an interview with UNIQLO Thailand’s CEO, we added more items and grouped them according to UNIQLO’s nine service DNAs: cleanliness, tidiness, politeness, energetic, punctuality, briskness, hospitality, teamwork and correctness.

As for research tool development and testing, a draft questionnaire was presented to 5 experts in CRM for a content validity test. After that, copies of the edited version were distributed to 30 respondents from the 5 sample stores for a reliability test.

Procedure

At each store, questionnaires were distributed to 40 respondents.

The questionnaires were divided into 3 major sections. The first part sought demographic information: gender, age, highest level of education, occupation, monthly income, RFM - recency, frequency, monetary questions, and reasons for purchasing products at UNIQLO. The second part sought the level of each customer’s satisfaction with store staff communication characteristics. This section contained 25 randomly ordered items. The third part comprised 20 items, which sought the customer’s intention to repurchase. Apart from communication characteristics, this part also included items derived from the 7Ps of marketing for further discussion. Across all questionnaire subjects were asked to indicate on 5-point, Likert-type scales (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency, distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were examined for each item, allowing the researcher to rank the mean scores of the items in each part. Inferential statistics (T-test and One-way ANOVA) were employed to find differences between the means of independent groups.
RESULTS

Demographic and RFM Data

Most of the respondents in this study were female (59%). Three-fourths (75.5%) were in the age group of 18 to 30 years old and almost one-fifth (18.5%) were 30 to 45 years old. In terms of occupation, most of the respondents were employees of private companies (51%), university students (28.5%), and business owners (13.5%); their monthly incomes were 5,000 to 15,000 baht (34.5%), more than 15,000 – 25,000 baht (27.5%), and more than 45,000 baht (15.5%) respectively. Of the 200 respondents, 21.5% had visited a UNIQLO shop in Japan.

As for RFM data, all the respondents went shopping at UNIQLO shops more than once a month. Most of them visited the store 1 to 2 times/month (83%), and they spent 1,000 to 3,000 baht/visit (48.0%) and less than 1,000 baht/visit (43.5%), respectively.

RQ1 and RQ2: What is UNIQLO’s CRM strategy in Thai society? How does the Japanese management exploit Thai store staff as the main players in CRM?

According to an interview with the first UNIQLO (Thailand) store manager, the management both in Japan and Thailand share the same business and CRM policy. In the entry phase, they did studies of Thai consumer behavior and found that, for instance, Thais believed in ‘kreng-jai’ and were attracted by good quality products at reasonable prices (at low price).

In terms of specific CRM strategies for this country, even though UNIQLO (Thailand) had not set any clear direction for the cross-cultural business adaptation yet, the management expected their staff to be brand representatives in building relationships with local customers. To deliver the best quality products and services to the customers, UNIQLO staff were trained to be main players in building customer satisfaction; for example, to provide service with communication empathy and make it beyond the customers’ expectation. The management believed that these actions would definitely create repurchase intent and, eventually, become loyal to the brand. Therefore, UNIQLO’s nine DNAs (as listed in Table 1) were seriously imparted to the store staff through several channels (e.g., the company training programs and daily morning meetings). Among the nine DNAs, the spirit of Hospitality – to give warm welcome and provide service with willingness demonstrated through a sincere smile - was strongly emphasized. To make the staff feel and understand this DNA, the management had the staff imagine that how delighted they would be if someone, very important they had been longing for, came to visit their house.

Table 1 – UNIQLO’s Nine DNAs of Store Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DNA</th>
<th>Communication Characteristics (Verbal and Non-verbal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>To keep every point of store area, including oneself, clean always.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidiness</td>
<td>To keep everything in order and pleasant to the eyes, dress properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness</td>
<td>To communicate with courteous, respectful and considerate manners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>To be enthusiastic, demonstrating by communicating with pleasantly loud and clear voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuality</td>
<td>To provide service by the appointed time, never be late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briskness</td>
<td><em>Haki Haki</em> - To express feeling of quickness, smartness and readiness to provide service, demonstrating by standing straight and being ready to move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>To be friendly, express willingness to provide service with sincere smiley face, and have communication empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>To be able to coordinate and work in collaboration with other staff, both from the same and different store, to supportively respond to the customer’s requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctness</td>
<td>To give accurate information relating to product and service to the customers in every contact point/process; and do the best to avoid mistakes in communication/actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNIQLO (Thailand)’s general training program for store staff was very systematic and standardized. All staff must remember and recite the six following rules during morning meetings: Have a FRIENDLY SERVICE, Be COURTESY, Keep CLEANLINESS, Work FAST & HUSTLE, Have INVENTORY MANAGEMENT, and CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS FIRST. In addition, 1 or 2-week CRM training programs and ‘new starter handbooks’ were provided for all new store staff. The staff would be trained in terms of both principles and practices: company profile and milestone, sales talk, how to smile, how to bow in greetings according to Japanese etiquette, and proper behavior and appearance, when providing service at each point of contact (entrance, sales floor, fitting room, and cashier). Moreover, during a probation period, senior store staff from different branches serving as ‘mentors’, would help coach and give advice during a daily meeting. The meeting content was mainly relevant to service quality and how to satisfy the customers.

RQ 3: What are communication characteristics of the store staff that lead to customers’ satisfaction and repurchase intention?

Communication Characteristics and Customer’s Satisfaction: From Table 2, the three most satisfying communication characteristics rated by the respondents were: ‘Staff used polite language with tone of voice’ (Politeness: \( \bar{x} = 4.34, SD = 0.69 \)), ‘Staff communicated with proper tonality while providing service’ (Politeness: \( \bar{x} = 4.31, SD = 0.71 \)) and ‘Staff were friendly and had sincere smiley face’ (Hospitality: \( \bar{x} = 4.31, SD = 0.73 \)). On the other end, the two least satisfying were: ‘Staff were able to give advice on how to choose clothes that suited you.’ (Correctness: \( \bar{x} = 3.69, SD = 0.78 \)), and ‘Staff attentively listened to your problem with supportive facial expression’ (Hospitality: \( \bar{x} = 3.97, SD = 0.78 \)).
Table 2 – Mean scores and standard deviation of customer satisfaction towards communication characteristics of UNIQLO store staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>UNIQLO’s DNA and its reflected Communication Characteristics</th>
<th>Level of Satisfaction* (n=200)</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CLEANLINESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1 Staff had personal cleanliness (e.g. hair, nails, body odour)</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TIDINESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1 Staff properly packed your purchased product(s) and put it/them in a bag.</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Staff dressed properly, suitng their job.</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>POLITENESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1 Staff used polite language with tone of voice ‘ka/krub’.</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Staff communicated with proper tonality while providing service.</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Staff at admission point (distributing promotion info at the front) were polite and gave you a warm welcome.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4 Staff used level of language that suited you/other customers while providing service.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5 Staff at cashier’s desk provided service politely but correctly and fast.</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.6 Staff kept proper physical distance when communicating with you</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ENERGETIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1 Staff expressed willingness and enthusiasm while providing service (e.g. helping you to find your desired product that was not available on shelf.)</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2 Staff showed themselves available to you to provide supports or suggestions if needed.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PUNCTUALITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1 Staff delivered your purchased product(s) / service to you by/within the appointed time (e.g. in case of product delivery from another branch, clothes fixing/alterations). 4.11 0.75 14

6 **BRISKNESS**

6.1 Staff quickly responded to your request (e.g. checking if the requested size and color of your desired product was available). 4.14 0.75 13

7 **HOSPITALITY**

7.1 Staff were friendly and had sincere smiley face. 4.31 0.73 3*

7.2 Staff, both in front of the shop and in the shop, warmly sent you greetings when you came in; and said thank you to you when you left the shop. 4.30 0.72 4

7.3 Staff attentively and willingly listened to your suggestions or complaints. 4.09 0.74 16

7.4 Staff attentively listened to your problem with supportive facial expression. 3.97 0.78 21*

8 **TEAMWORK**

8.1 Staff effectively coordinated with store staff from other branches to get and deliver product(s) and service(s) to you according to your desire. 4.01 0.84 20

9 **CORRECTNESS**

9.1 Staff communicated with you with language that easy to understand (clear, concise and precise). 4.19 0.67 10

9.2 Staff gave answer to your questions clearly, providing enough information to tackle with your doubt. 4.14 0.75 13

9.3 Staff gave clear and accurate product information to you. 4.08 0.73 17

9.4 Staff at fitting-room section willingly provided service, and correctly responded according to your request. 4.10 0.78 15

9.5 Staff were able to give advice on how to choose clothes that suited you. 3.69 0.78 22*

* Level of Satisfaction: 1.00 – 1.80 = strongly dissatisfied; >1.80 – 2.60 = dissatisfied; > 2.60 -3.40 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; > 3.40 – 4.20= satisfied; > 4.20-5.00 = strongly satisfied

Store Staff Communication Characteristics and Customer Repurchase Intention: Table 3 shows that, UNIQLO’s product and place (location) most strongly impacted the respondents repurchase intention; while the people factor ranked fourth. When focusing only on the people factor, among communication characteristics that affected their repurchase intention, the respondents rated the two
following behaviors as the most influential: ‘Staff had spirit of hospitality, giving you warm welcome and a sincere smile’ (Hospitality: \( \bar{x} = 4.20, SD = 0.78 \)), ‘Staff politely and gently communicated with you’ (Politeness: \( \bar{x} = 4.20, SD = 0.78 \)); while they rated ‘Staff had good product knowledge and were able to provide accurate information’ (Correctness: \( \bar{x} = 4.20, SD = 0.78 \)) as the least.

Table 3 – Mean scores and standard deviation of customer’s repurchase intention affected by 7P marketing mix and communication characteristics of UNIQLO store staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Factors affected Repurchase Intention</th>
<th>Level of Agreement* (n=200)</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>PART 1: 7P marketing mix</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Place (location)</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Promotion (sales promotion)</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>People (store staff)</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Process (Product Arrangement)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Physical Evidence (e.g. ambience, decoration, signage)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART 2: Store Staff’s communication characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Staff had spirit of hospitality, giving you warm welcome and sincere smiley face.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Staff politely and gently communicated with you.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Staff expressed feeling of enthusiasm and quickness while providing service</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Staff effectively coordinated with one another in service delivery.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Staff had good product knowledge and were able to provide accurate information.</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Overall: Staff had good personality.</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Overall: Staff made your shopping experience at UNIQLO awesome.</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Level of Agreement: 1.00 – 1.80 = strongly disagree; >1.80 – 2.60 = disagree; > 2.60 -3.40 = neither agree nor disagree ; > 3.40 – 4.20= agree ; > 4.20-5.00 = strongly agree

Testing for differences between means from separate groups of subjects: At significance level of 0.05, mean scores of satisfaction rated by respondents who were different in sex (female > male),
age group (18 to 30 years old > 45 to 60 years old), range of income (lower income > higher income) were statistically different; whereas, mean scores of satisfaction rated by customers who had and had never visited UNIQLO’s shop in Japan were not statistically different.

REMARKS: According to the response from questionnaires, and in-depth interviews with voluntary respondents, they could not clearly distinguish the store staff’s communication characteristics that reflected ‘Energetic’ and ‘Briskness’ (Haki Haki) because, in Thai culture, the actions that reflect both were quite similar; while in Japanese culture, they are clearly different.

DISCUSSION
CRM Strategy in Exploiting Store Staff as Main Players

The findings were in accordance with previous studies (e.g. Beaujean, Davidson & Madge, 2006; Bojie and Alwie, 2010; Pondphan Sheoychit, 2013) and clearly showed that in running a cross-cultural business, the management of UNIQLO (Thailand) had been focusing on training their store staff to be main the players in their CRM strategy. In doing so, the nine UNIQLO DNAs, initiated by the parent company in Japan, were imparted via their systematic training programs to ensure that the Thai staff could effectively communicate and build relationships with local customers to create a positive moment of truth at every touch point (i.e. admission, sale area, fitting room and cashier); eventually leading to customer loyalty.

In their training process, however, the results indicated that some specific DNAs in Japanese culture, i.e. Briskness (Haki Haki or a feeling of quickness, smartness, and readiness demonstrated through manners of standing strait, chest-out, and being ready to move), could not be fully imparted. Hence, it could not be clearly seen in the communication characteristics of the staff; whereas, DNAs of Hospitality and Politeness were obviously expressed. Regarding these results, Nakai (2015, interview) pointed that this was not surprise because the Thai and the Japanese share several cultural characteristics, which reflect the DNAs of Politeness, Hospitality and Teamwork (Hofstede’s cultural dimension of Collectivism and Femininity); while Energetic and Briskness were distinguishing characteristics of the Japanese people (Hofstede’s cultural dimension of Masculinity). Moreover, he rarely found such Haki Haki attributes among Thai store staff or service providers; in his view, they were quite passive and slow.

Moreover, Nakai also commented that, in general, Japan’s staff training process and procedure were seriously systematic and quite different from the cultural characteristics of Thai staff. However, TOYOTA (Thailand), which has been operating in Thailand for 50 years, successfully kept learning about Thai cultural characteristics and has successfully developed their training program to suit the local staff. TOYOTA’s service culture was effectively imparted to their staff; thus, the staff could be effective main players in its CRM, greatly profiting the company.

Communication Characteristics That Lead to Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention

The results show that staff communication characteristics of Hospitality and Politeness strongly satisfied Thai customers and strongly influenced their repurchase intentions. Moreover, the test of mean differences indicated that respondents in 18-to-30 age group and had lower income were more satisfied with the staff’s communication characteristics than those in the 45-to-60 age group with higher income. The findings corresponded with Hofstede’s study (2010) that Thais’ prominent cultural characteristics were low masculine (relational-oriented, situation-centered, face-saving and conflict avoiding) and high power distance (hierarchy-focused, taking serious in addressing people according to their status). Those who perceived themselves as senior and high social status (indicated by higher income) expected to experience better service delivery from the staff; whereas
the younger customers, socialized by exposure to information and communication technologies, did 
not expect such treatment.

Interestingly, at a significance level of 0.05, the satisfaction level of respondents who had and had 
never visited a UNIQLO shop in Japan were not different. It was possibly because Thai and 
Japanese people share a common cultural characteristic of collectivism. Moreover, as shown in the 
results, Thai customers mainly focus on expressions of politeness and hospitality. So they do not 
mind if Thai staff might respond to their request a bit slower or less actively than those in Japan.

CONCLUSION

In this study, a gap between Japanese management and Thai staff was found. For the Thai staff to 
receive UNIQLO’s DNAs, good demonstration and examples from the management were 
consistently needed. Moreover, in accordance with Conduit & Mavondo (2001), to empower local 
staff to effectively connect with local customers, the management should develop a healthy 
relationship with them. The more the staff feel a sense of belonging, the more they will be aligned 
with the company and willing to be trained to become effective brand representatives.

REFERENCES

Articles and Textbooks:

(CRM) systems. Retrieved from: http://v-scheiner.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/1875/1/CISTM04-
1.pdf

Case Study’. Retrieved from: http://dspace.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/1878/1/UKAIS06-
final3.pdf.

organizational perspectives. Psychology & Marketing, 23(2), 139-159. Retrieved from 


International journal of economics and management, 4(1), 81-100.

Burnett, J., & Moriarty, S. E. (1998). Introduction to marketing communication: an integrated 
approach. Prentice Hall.


from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/08858620410523981

Conduit, J., & Mavondo, F. T. (2001). How critical is internal customer orientation to market 

---

1 References published in the Thai language are not included


Kennedy, B. (2013). Retail Marketing Theory In Fashion Retailing Context.


Interviews:


SOCIAL ENDORSEMENT EFFECTS ON MESSAGE PROCESSING: CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS, by Myojung Chung, Ph.D. (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

Abstract

This study examines cross-cultural variations in the effects of social endorsement on online message processing. A 2 x 3 between-subjects experiment (N = 567) was conducted, in which country (Korea vs. U.S.) and social endorsement level (none vs. low vs. high) were manipulated. Results suggest the level of social endorsement affects perceived quality of message in the U.S., but not in Korea. Results also show that Korean subjects are not dominantly collectivistic, as many scholars have assumed. Rather, they display a bi-cultural tendency. The U.S. subjects demonstrate dominantly independent self-construal, but report higher interdependent self-construal scores than Korean subjects. The findings also reveal that independent and interdependent self-construal may influence the direction and magnitude of social endorsement effects on perceived quality of message to some extent, albeit not as a primary factor. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Introduction

Today, message consumption is a social experience. The advent and development of the Internet has enabled people to have direct and real-time information of others’ reactions to media messages. From online advertising to news articles, social endorsement tools, such as like or recommend, provide message recipients with information of what others think about the message.

A growing body of research has discussed how this change affects message processing (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2005; Messing & Westwood, 2012; Metzger et al., 2010; Sundar & Nass, 2001). Although these studies have revealed the mechanism of social endorsement effects, the discussion has largely been confined to a single country's borders - mainly the U.S. Thus we are left the following question: Do social endorsements have the same effect on message processing across cultures or countries?

To answer this question, this study employs a cross-cultural approach in investigating how the exposure to other users' endorsements alters the way people perceive online messages. Using a 2 x 3 between-subjects experiment (N = 567) in which country (Korea vs. U.S.) and social endorsement level (none vs. low vs. high) were manipulated, this study explores the interplay between social endorsement and audiences' cultural orientation. Among several dimensions of cultural orientation (Hofstede, 2001), this study focuses on collectivism and individualism.

Along with the increasing globalization of message production and dissemination, comprehensive examination of social endorsement effects in the context of cultural orientation will be a meaningful addition to our understanding of message processing in the digital era. Given that user participation in online communication activities is an international phenomenon, stretching the scope of audience trait analysis beyond the domestic level will provide us with important insights into effective communications strategies in the global era.

Literature Review

Social Endorsement Effect

Defined as an aggregate of users’ positive reaction to online content, social endorsement is one of the most prominent features of the new media environment. The Internet has provided users with easy and accessible communication channels through which they can share opinions about media
messages (Boczkowski, 2004; Thorson, 2008). For instance, people can share their reviews regarding a new product sold in online shopping mall. After reading a news article, people often press a recommend or like button to express their positive response to the article.

Many scholars have explored how social endorsement influences online message consumption and processing. In a study on how user recommendations affect news selection, Knobloch-Westerman and her colleagues (2005) found that participants picked more articles if the portal featured explicit recommendations, and stronger explicit recommendations instigated longer exposure to associated articles. Other scholars have also shown that people utilize other users' reaction in selecting digital media (Salganik, Dodds, & Watts, 2006) as well as when selecting and endorsing articles that friends endorse (Lerman, 2007).

If knowing how the endorsements of others' influences individual expectations and selection of messages, the knowledge may also affect the way people perceive and evaluate the message. Research examining the actual consequences of message consumption - what happens after people read media messages with social endorsement - is starting to grow. Westerman, Spence, and Van Der Heide (2012) showed the indication of popularity affects the audience's perception of content credibility. Stavrositu and Kim (2014) also found that social endorsements, displayed alongside online news stories, shape users' perceptions of the content and its influence.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provides a theoretical explanation for how other users’ endorsements affect our perceptions of message content. The basic premise of the ELM is attitude change depends on the likelihood an issue or argument will be elaborated upon (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). The ELM posits there are two routes to attitude change: when motivation and ability to process a persuasive message is high, persuasion is likely to occur through careful and elaborated processing of information (central route). In contrast, when motivation and ability to process the message is low, people tend to rely on simple cues to make a decision without complex cognitive efforts (peripheral route) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The ELM has been used as a general model for understanding message processing (Cho et al., 2006; Igartua & Cheng, 2009; Knobloch-Westerman et al., 2005; Metzger et al., 2010; Perse, 2001; Sundar et al., 2007). Knobloch-Westerman et al. (2005) found that an online news cue, such as implicit and explicit recommendations from other users affect information choices. In a similar vein, Sundar et al. (2007) investigated how various news cues, such as (a) the name of the primary source, (b) the recency of the story, and (c) the number of related articles published on the same topic, influence online news consumers' perception of news stories. A more recent study by Metzger, Flanagin, and Medders (2010) also suggested most online users rely on the news cue provided by other users to assess the credibility of the information. Extending this line of research, this study attempts to find the relationship between social endorsement - a cue dictated by other users - and perceived message quality; leading to the first hypothesis:

H1: The more endorsements a news article receives (none vs. low vs. high), the higher the perception of content quality, by the subjects, will be.

Cultural Orientation: Individualism vs. Collectivism

A rich body of research has demonstrated the characteristics of the audience play a role in determining media effects (Mastro, 2009; Reid, Giles, & Harwood, 2005). This study focuses on cultural orientation as an important audience trait. In 1980, the Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede theorized that national cultures vary along several dimensions. Based on interviews with IBM employees in 53 countries, Hofstede (2001) identified five cultural dimensions (power
Among the five dimensions that Hofstede proposed, the individualism-collectivism continuum has been recognized as the central dimension. Studies on cultural values and orientation have shown that countries have different tendencies toward individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001; Singelis & Brown, 1995). A country's position on collectivism and individualism is reflected in how people define their self-images, particularly in terms of "I" or "we" (Hofstede, 2001). Members in an individualistic society tend to prefer a social framework in which individuals' focus is on themselves and their immediate families (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, individual uniqueness is highly valued in individualistic societies. On the contrary, in a collectivistic society, people tend to prefer a tightly-knit social framework and conceptualize a self as an extension of "us" (Gudykunst et al., 1996). Subsequently, community cohesiveness and congruence are more essential values than individual uniqueness in collectivistic societies.

The constructs of individualism and collectivism have been extensively discussed in the cultural psychology literature. Different studies have recognized them as an important foundation to explain differences between cultural groups in terms of communication (Gudykunst et al., 1992), personal motivation (Phalet & Claeys, 1993), perceptions of in-group vs. out-group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), conflict styles (Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991), attribution styles (Morris & Peng, 1994), and consumer behavior (Han & Shavitt, 1994).

Although more than three decades of research have created meaningful discussions in many contexts in the social sciences, the dichotomous approaches have revealed several limitations. The assumption that individualism and collectivism are contrasting dimensions (Hui & Triandis, 1986) has yielded inaccurate assessments of cultural differences, primarily that each culture is purely individualistic or collectivistic. Furthermore, in the traditional constructs of individualism and collectivism, audiences are treated as mono-cultural individuals who blindly accept and follow the prevailing culture of their countries (Lau-Gesk, 2003).

However, most cultures in fact are a mixture of both individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1993). Also, people do not homogeneously and blindly represent or replicate the culture of their countries (Singelis et al., 1995). This tendency is particularly salient in many East Asian countries, such as China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Although being categorized as collectivist cultures in contrast to Western countries, these countries have experienced intense social, political, cultural, and economic changes and subsequent alteration of their cultural orientations. For instance, Zhang (2010) found a generational gap in terms of cultural orientation in Chinese society. The study showed Chinese Generation-X (born between mid-1960s and late 1970s) possesses both individual and collectivist cultural attitudes, unlike their parents’ generation that is strongly collectivistic.

**Korea vs. U.S.**

For a cross-cultural analysis, this study chose two countries - Korea and the U.S. - for the following reasons. First, the two countries offer a unique circumstance to examine online news perception and evaluation. Both Korea and the U.S. are well known as two of the most wired countries in the world. According to the 2014 OECD report, Korea ranked 5th (37.9%) and the U.S. ranked 16th (30.2%) for the share of broadband subscribers to the total population (OECD, 2014). Although specific features vary slightly, all major online news sites in both countries allow readers to endorse news articles.

Second, Korea and the U.S. may not be solely individualistic or collectivistic countries as often
have been assumed. For instance, Korea has been a prime example of a collectivistic society. In a 2001 study by Hofstede, Korea was ranked 43rd out of 50 countries in individualism, which has contributed to the perception of it as a highly collectivistic society (Hofstede, 2001). Scholars have found people's behavior is controlled by tacitly shared norms in Korea (Kashima et al., 1995; Rhee, Uleman, & Lee, 1996). Koreans emphasize the concepts of Cheong (emotional connection) and Woori (we-ness) in interpersonal relationships (Cho, Mallinckrodt, & Yune, 2010). Koreans have also been known to possess a strong tendency to identify with an in-group while clearly distinguishing themselves from out-groups (Na & Min, 1998). This collectivistic culture has often been attributed to its ethnic homogeneity as well as the country's long-held respect for Confucian values that highlight hierarchy, seniority, and modesty (Lankov, 2012).

However, often overlooked in these analyses is the rapid Westernization and individualizations Korean society has experienced. As observed by some scholars (Han & Shin, 1999; Park & Kim, 2006), Korean society has undergone extensive economic, social, and political changes, which have led to increasing emphasis on individual freedom and rights. A nationwide survey conducted in 2011 also suggested individualism was on the rise in the Korean society; out of 1,800 respondents, 36.4% prioritized the individual over the organization. Also, 36.8% disagreed with an argument that actions undertaken for the public good should limit or infringe upon their individual rights (LG Research Center, 2011).

Such changes in cultural perspective are more evident among young adults (Han & Na, 2004; Hwang & Yang, 2002; Kim, 2009). Growing up under the strong influences of a Westernized education system and pop-culture, young adults in Korea today are experiencing an intensifying tension between emerging individualistic values and the customary values of collectivism (Cho, Mallinckrodt, & Yune, 2010). Particularly, Korean college students, who have a greater exposure to Western textbooks and seek jobs in multinational corporations than any other group in the society, tend to demonstrate a stronger "me-first" trend than others (Cho & Kim, 2001).

On the contrary, the U.S. was ranked the most individualistic country out of the 50 countries examined (Hofstede, 2001). Hence, many studies testing the individualism-collectivism model were conducted in a U.S. versus collectivistic country (mostly Asian) context, assuming that the U.S. is a predominantly individualistic culture (Buda & Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1998; Grimm et al., 1997).

However, the U.S. is not a rigid or static cultural entity. Different studies showing the variation across individuals, regions, and generations challenge the stereotypic notions of American individualism. For instance, Vandello and Cohen (1999) showed that the Deep South region had strong collectivist tendencies, whereas the Mountain West and Great Plains region had strong individualist tendencies. The degree of individualism could also vary depending on the issue. Based on analysis of the General Social Survey (GSS) data, Celinska (2007) stipulated Americans had an individualistic attitude toward gun ownership but a collectivistic attitude toward gun control.

Scholars also contend American individualism has been often tempered by collectivistic concerns related to family, church, and community (Matsumoto, Kudoh, & Takeuchi, 1996). In addition, collectivistic concerns have been quite strong during wars or equivalent national threats throughout American history. For example, the nationwide flag displays after 9/11 symbolized a strong sense of unity in American society (Bratta, 2009).

**Independent vs. Interdependent Self-Construal**

Above discussion shows the dichotomy of individualism-collectivism at the national level of analysis is too simplistic and thus could fail to fully explain the complex dynamics of intercultural communication (Young, 2007). To overcome this limitation, this study employs independent and interdependent self-construal, the concepts introduced by Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Singelis
Self-construal refers to individuals' perceptions and behaviors concerning the relationship between self and others; in particular, the degree to which people see themselves as "separate from others or connected with others" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 226; Singelis, 1994). Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed that people with high independent self-construal stress the uniqueness of self and internal attributes, while people with high interdependent self-construal emphasize connectedness and relationships. In this sense, independent and interdependent self-construal are similar to individualism-collectivism in that both are concerned with the relationship of the individual to the collective.

However, independent and interdependent self-construal are different from the concepts of individualism-collectivism in several ways. First, independent and interdependent self-construal focus on the individual level of analysis, while individualism-collectivism observes differences between cultural groups (Singelis, 1994). Given the country-level analysis of individualism and collectivism cannot fully explain individual behavior (Hofstede, 2001), this approach has been acknowledged as an important step forward in cross-cultural communication studies.

Second, unlike individualism-collectivism measures that define cultural groups on a single bipolar dimension, independent and interdependent self-construal are separate dimensions (Singelis, 1994). Therefore, independent self-construal is not necessarily the opposite of interdependent self-construal. This proposition is supported by numerous studies, including Yamaguchi et al.'s (1992) finding that low individualism is not equivalent to collectivism. Their survey in Korea and the U.S., found that individualism items and collectivism items show no correlation (the U.S.) or only moderate negative correlation (Korea). Other scholars also showed some individuals may have two well-developed self-concepts (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Cross & Markus, 1991; Triandis, 1994). In this vein, measuring individuals' independent and interdependent self-construal can be more useful than measuring individualism-collectivism in examining whether individual variations correspond to the cross-national or cross-cultural differences. This discussion leads to the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How are Korean and U.S. subjects different in independent-interdependent self-construal?

**RQ2:** Do Korean and U.S. subjects react differently to social endorsement in their news content evaluation?

As concepts about the relationship between self and others, independent and interdependent self-construal provide an apt context to examine how individual audiences' personal characteristics moderate the effects of social endorsement on message perception. Independent self-construal is the propensity to view personal independence and uniqueness as being more valuable than "the common good." In contrast, people with strong interdependent self-construal are more sensitive to the majority opinion and less likely to diverge from it. Thus, individuals who have strong interdependent self-construal may let social endorsement (popularity indications) guide their message, whereas others who have strong independent self-construal make a more independent assessment of message. Hence, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H2:** The effects of social endorsement on perceived quality of message will vary according to individuals' self-construal, such that

**H2a:** The effects will be stronger among individuals with stronger interdependent self-construal
H2b: The effects will be weaker among individuals with stronger independent self-construal tendency.

Method

Design and Procedure

This study employs a 2 x 3 between-subjects experimental design. Study subjects in two countries (Korea vs. U.S.) read a news story about a food safety issue, with varying degrees of social endorsement (none vs. low vs. high).

Once subjects clicked a link on the recruitment post, they were directed to the online survey. After providing consent, they were randomly assigned to one of the study conditions: no endorsement (n = 185; Korea = 90, U.S. = 95); low endorsement (n = 185; Korea = 90, U.S. = 95); high endorsement (n = 197; Korea = 90, U.S. = 107).

After reading the stories, participants answered questions about perceived quality of the news story, perceived credibility of social endorsers, perceived role of social endorsements as an indicator of public opinion, tendency to value social endorsements, independent and interdependent self-construal, demographics, and media use. When the questionnaire was completed, participants were debriefed that the news story was based on actual news stories but modified.

I constructed the questionnaire in English first, and it was based on my literature review. Then I translated these measures into Korean. To check the reliability of the translation, a Korean professional living in Seoul, who had received an advanced degree from a U.S. institution, back-translated the Korean questionnaire into English. The translation showed a high level of consistency. A few questions that were back-translated in slightly different ways were re-analyzed and adjusted.

Participants

Data in this experiment were collected in Korea and the U.S. Korean subjects were recruited from an online panel managed by Survey Link, a leading firm known for its expertise in survey sampling. U.S. participants were recruited from Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a crowd-sourcing service by Amazon.com. The data were collected over a one-week period during March 2015.

Participants in Survey Link's online panel agreed to a standard set of rewards for participating in this online experiment. The pre-recruited national panel consists of approximately 300,000 members that mirror the demographic characteristics of the 20-75 year-old population in Korea. The sample (n=270) was drawn via a quota sampling method to represent four age groups, 20-29 (n=68), 30-39 (n=65), 40-49 (n=64), 50 and over (n=63), and an equal ratio of gender: males (n=132) and females (n=138). The online survey was closed once each subgroup (age and gender) reached its quota, and thus the response rate was not calculated.

U.S. subjects were recruited from Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a crowd-sourcing service by Amazon.com. Subjects were self-selected into the database, and agreed to a standard set of rewards for participating in this online experiment. Although there have been increasing challenges for the external validity of MTurk samples, scholars suggest that MTurk certainly builds a more representative sample than a college student sample (Buhrmester et al., 2011) or an in-person convenience sample (Berinsky et al., 2012). Furthermore, given that MTurk provides a great
resource for attracting respondents who are interested in online news (Huff & Tingley, 2015), a MTurk sample does not particularly threaten the external validity of this study.

The data contained 270 completed responses in Korea (Female = 51.1%, Male = 48.9%, M age = 39.28, SD = 11.64), and 297 completed responses in the U.S. (Female= 42.1%, Male = 57.2%, Transgender = .7%, M age = 36.14, SD = 11.58). Table 1 and 2 present additional demographic information of subjects in Korea and the U.S. Chi-square analyses in both countries found no significant differences in the distributions of males and females across study conditions in both countries. There were also no significant differences in subjects' ages, education, and income across conditions.

**Stimulus Material**

The news stories used in the study were about an E.Coli outbreak. For the purpose of this study, it was important to select an issue that generates moderate personal relevance from participants, but does not instigate polarized opinions. It was also important to find an issue that has a similar level of importance in both Korea and the U.S.

As food safety is mainly about handling, storing and preparing food to prevent infection, it presents a major challenge to both general and at-risk populations. Therefore, issues surrounding food safety have received increasing public attention in the policy, consumer, and media arenas (Meijboom et al., 2006; Sparks & Shepherd, 1994; Worosz et al. 2008). Nevertheless, food safety news is somewhat different from other controversial issues that often generate strongly divided opinions among readers (i.e., gun policy issue, economic inequality issue, same-sex marriage).

A set of pretests with 60 subjects in Korea and 61 subjects in the U.S. was conducted to measure personal relevance to the food safety issue. The pretest subjects were asked to answer the following questions regarding the E.Coli outbreak on a 7-point Likert scale: "This issue is important to me", "This issue is relevant to me", "I'm interested in this issue" (1 = not at all, 7 = very much). Subjects in both countries demonstrated moderate personal relevance to the issue Korea (M = 4.23, SD = 1.38, α = .87; U.S. M = 4.11, SD = 1.86, α = .96). Therefore, the issue was used in the actual experiments.

The food items tied to the E.Coli outbreak were pork belly (Korea) and grilled hamburgers (U.S.). The items were selected based on the common dietary habits in each country. The content of the articles was primarily based on actual news stories with some minor revisions concerning details such as the date, location, and people's names. To increase the authenticity of the language and tone of the stories, an experienced journalist created three different versions of the news stories.

In order to control for the potential effects of using a single version of the news story, three different versions of news stories were employed. Although the core content remained the same, there were slight variations, such as the names of states and people in the stories. Analysis of variance tests found no significant differences in media credibility, news evaluation, and perceived realism among the three versions of the news story. Responses for the three versions were therefore merged in subsequent analyses.

A web application was designed to replicate a typical online news site in each country. The pretest subjects were randomly assigned to three different layouts of social endorsements display: horizontally under the title, vertically on the left side, and a combination of both. Then subjects were asked to rate the typicality of the news site on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not typical at all, 7 = very typical). The pretest results in Korea showed social endorsements displayed horizontally under the title as well as vertically on the left side was rated the most typical (M = 5.00, SD = 1.68). The results in the U.S. showed no statistical differences in perceived typicality among the layouts, F (2,
Independent Variables

Social endorsement. Previous research often used different categories of user participation interchangeably as indicators of social endorsement, without a clear-cut conceptualization. For instance, Knobloch-Westerwick and colleagues (2005) used how many readers have viewed a news article as an indication of implicit social endorsement, and the average rating of the article as an explicit social endorsement. Thorson (2008) posited that the most e-mailed stories list on the front page of the New York Times website works as an indicator of public endorsement and thus helps online users navigate news stories; while Garett (2013) suggested that sharing is a form of endorsement.

However, not all actions by online users are the same in terms of valence or magnitude. For instance, reading a news article is different from emailing, sharing, or recommending the news story. Readers do not need to take any additional action to make an article appear on the "most read" list other than simply reading it. Furthermore, although the number of times a news article was read or e-mailed can represent positive user interest to some extent, it can also say something about users' negative interest in the news article (Das et al., 2007). That is, people not only read the article when they think it is good, but also when they believe the article is controversial or deviant (Sukumaran et al., 2011).

Therefore, to better understand the role of social endorsement in online news perception and evaluation, a clear explication of the concept is needed. The Oxford Online Dictionary defines endorsement as "an act of giving one's public approval or support to someone or something." The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines endorsement as "a statement or action which shows that you support or approve of something or someone." Based on these definitions and previous research, this study defines social endorsement as an aggregate of users' positive reaction to the online news.

Based on this definition of social endorsement, this study operationalizes social endorsement using the number of recommendations (i.e., Facebook "likes"). Rating was not included even though it is an indicator of explicit endorsement, as rating is not a common feature in online news sites currently.

In each condition of the experiment, the news stories were accompanied by no endorsement, low level of endorsements, and high level of endorsements. Replicating Messing and Westwood (2012), the specific numbers indicating a low and high level of endorsements was determined by monitoring the typical number of "recommend" by online news consumers for news stories from the websites of two news organizations in each country. For the Korean condition, websites of the Chosun Ilbo, an online version of a newspaper that has the largest circulation in Korea, and Naver.com, the largest Korean news portal website, were observed over a three-day period. For the U.S. condition, websites of the New York Times, an online version of the newspaper that has the second-largest circulation in the U.S., and Yahoo! News, the largest U.S. news portal website, were observed for the same period.

The observation yielded a different range of numbers for each country. In Korea, even the highest number of recommendations was around 3,000. In contrast, the highest number of recommendation or sharing in the U.S. often went over 10,000. Similarly, a low level of endorsements was generally under ten in Korea, while the range was mainly two digits in the U.S. This gap can be explained by the fact that the two countries have different numbers of people. As of 2014, Korea's population was 51.23 million, making it the 26th-largest country by population. On the contrary, the U.S.
population was 318.9 million, making it the third-largest country by population (Worldmeters, 2014).

Given these differences, using the same level of high and low endorsements for both countries could make the stimulus materials look unrealistic. Therefore, this study randomly generated numbers between 0 and 10 (low endorsement) and between 3,000 and 5,000 (high endorsement) for the Korean stimulus materials, while it used randomly generated numbers between 30 and 80 (low endorsement) and between 13,000 and 18,000 (high endorsement) for the U.S. stimulus materials.

**Measured Variables**

*Perceived quality of news.* Perceived quality of news was assessed using an 11-item scale, based on Sundar (2000) as well as the common elements of traditional measurement of news quality (Austin & Dong, 1994; Burgoon, Burgoon & Atkin, 1982; Slater & Rouner, 1996; Weaver et al., 1974) (Korea $M = 4.49$, $SD = .78$, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .91$; U.S. $M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.08$, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .94$). Subjects were asked to evaluate the quality of news stories they read by indicating how well each of the following words described the news story on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Described very poorly to 7 = Described very well: accurate, believable, clear, comprehensive, factual, fair, informative, important, objective, well-written, and biased (reverse coded).

*Independent self-construal.* To measure independent self-construal, participants rated the following 12 statements on a 7-point Likert scale (Singelis, 1994) ($M = 4.48$, $SD = .73$, $\alpha = .81$ in Korea; $M = 5.03$, $SD = .89$, $\alpha = .86$ in the U.S.): "I'd rather stay "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood", "Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me", "Having a lively imagination is important to me", "I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards", "I am the same person at home that I am at school", "Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me", "I act the same way no matter who I am with", "I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am", "I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met", "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects", "My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me", "I value being in good health above everything" (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). A higher mean score indicates stronger independent self-construal.

*Interdependent self-construal.* To measure interdependent self-construal, subjects rated the following 12 statements on a 7-point Likert scale (Singelis, 1994) ($M = 4.46$, $SD = .75$, $\alpha = .84$ in Korea, $M = 4.58$, $SD = .97$, $\alpha = .86$ in the U.S.): "It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group", "My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me", "I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in", "I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments", "It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group", "I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I'm not happy with the group", "Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument", "I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact", "I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor", "I respect people who are modest about themselves", "I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/career plans", "If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible" (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). A higher mean score indicates stronger interdependent self-construal.

*Perceived credibility of endorsers as a source.* To measure perceived credibility of endorsers as a source of information, subjects were asked to rate, on a 7-point bipolar scale, how well they think 11 adjectives describe other users as a source of information. The source credibility measure was adapted from Hallahan (1999) and Lee and Sundar (2013): dependable/undependable, honest/dishonest, reliable/unreliable, sincere/insincere, and trustworthy/untrustworthy, not
independent/independent, expert/not expert, experienced/inexperienced, knowledgeable/unknowledgeable, qualified/unqualified, and skilled/unskilled (1 = described very poorly, 7 = described very well). Higher mean score indicates higher credibility of other users as a source (M = 3.94, SD = 1.05, α = .96 in Korea; M = 4.68, SD = 1.15, α = .95 in the U.S.).

Valuing social endorsements. Two survey items were used to measure the subjects' tendency to value social endorsements in online news consumption. Subjects indicated their tendency to value social endorsements by rating the following statements on a 7-point bipolar scale: "I pay attention to other readers' recommendation or sharing when I read news stories on online news sites", and "I refer to other readers' recommendation or sharing when I evaluate news stories on online news sites" (1 = not at all, 7 = very much). The items were correlated (r = .850, p < .001 in Korea; r = .806, p < .001 in the U.S.). These items were averaged to create an index Valuing Social Endorsements (M = 3.96, SD = 1.41 in Korea; M = 4.25, SD = 1.46 in the U.S.).

Social endorsements reflecting public opinion. A single item measured the subjects' perception of social endorsements as an indicator of public opinion. Subjects were asked to rate, on a 7-point Likert scale, the extent to which they agree with the following statement: "Other readers' recommendation or sharing reflects general public opinion about the issue" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). (M = 3.77, SD = 1.35 in Korea; M = 4.17, SD = 1.42 in the U.S.).

Media use. To measure individual differences in online news consumption, the respondents' reported their frequency of reading: news articles on online news sites (Korea M = 3.43, SD = .99; U.S. M = 3.56, SD = 1.11), of social media use in general (M = 2.72, SD = 1.42. in Korea; M = 3.67, SD = 1.45 in the U.S.), and of reading news articles on social media (Korea M = 2.38, SD = 1.13; U.S. M = 2.73, SD = 1.22) on a scale ranging from "1 = Never" to "6 = More than 2 Hours a day". In Korea, subjects were significantly more likely to spend time reading news on online news sites than social media, t(269) = 13.85, p < .001. Similarly, the U.S. subjects were significantly more likely to spend time on reading news on online news sites than social media, t (296) = 10.01, p < .001. There were no significant differences in any of the media use variables between study conditions in both countries.

Demographics. Basic demographic information such as subjects’ age, gender, annual household income, and education were collected.

Results

Manipulation Check

To check the manipulation for social endorsements levels, subjects were asked to recall the level of social endorsements for the news article they read (i.e., There was no recommendation, A small number of people recommended the article, A large number of people recommended the article), with “not sure” as a fourth response option. Their responses were then recoded to reflect the accuracy of recall (1 = correct recall, 0 = not sure, -1 = incorrect recall, M = .41, SD = .64 for no endorsement in Korea, M = .53, SD = .68 for low endorsement in Korea, M = .51, SD = .70 for high endorsement in Korea; M = .43, SD = .67 for no endorsement in the U.S., M = .54, SD = .73 for low endorsement in the U.S., M = .56, SD = .69 for high endorsement in the U.S.). One-sample t tests confirmed that the mean accuracy scores were significantly higher than zero for every condition in Korea and the U.S. Taken together, I concluded that the manipulations for the social endorsements level performed well and continued with the analysis.

Hypotheses Testing

H1: Hypothesis 1 predicts a news article with higher level of endorsement will be perceived to have
higher quality than a news article with lower level of endorsement. The relationship between social endorsement level and perceived news quality can be confounded by a number of factors. For instance, perceived credibility of other users who recommended or shared the article as a source of information could affect the relationship. Other potential confounding factors include individuals' tendency to value social endorsement in news consumption and evaluation, or perceived role of social endorsements as an indicator of public opinion. A series of bivariate analyses found the credibility of endorsers as an information source, tendency to value social endorsements, and perceived role of social endorsements are significantly correlated with perceived quality of news.

Hence, to assess whether different levels of social endorsement lead to different evaluation of the news article once these covariates are controlled for, a series of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. The following assumptions were checked, (a) independence of observations, (b) normal distribution of the dependent variable, (c) homogeneity of variances, (d) linear relationships between the covariates and the dependent variable, and (e) homogeneity of regression slopes. All the assumptions were met.

The results found even after controlling for the covariates, the three endorsement groups (none, low, high) did not differ significantly in perceived quality of news in Korea (Table 3). However, in the U.S., the three endorsement groups (none, low, high) differ significantly in perceived quality of news, after controlling for the covariates (Table 4). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported in the U.S., but not in Korea. This result also provides an answer to research question 2.

Since two of four covariates (valuing social endorsement and perceived role of social endorsement as an indicator of public opinion) did not have confounding effects on the relationship between social endorsement and perceived credibility, only credibility of endorsers and age were used as covariates in the subsequent analyses.

**RQ1:** To examine how different Korean and U.S. subjects are in their independent-interdependent self-construal scores, a series of ANOVA was conducted first. Results found statistically significant differences between Korean and U.S. subjects in independent self-construal scores. On the contrary, there was no statistically significant difference between two countries in interdependent self-construal scores (Table 5). It is noteworthy that the U.S. subjects demonstrated higher scores for both independent and interdependent self-construal, compared to the Korean subjects.

For further analysis, I analyzed how individual subjects in each country demonstrate overall self-construal, using the abovementioned index, *Self Construal* (continuous variable). A one-way ANOVA found that subjects in Korea and the U.S. demonstrate different patterns of self-construal. The U.S. subjects demonstrated dominant independent self-construal, while Korean subjects demonstrated almost dual-self construal. These results are quite different from traditional assumptions that Korean people are dominantly collectivistic, while the U.S. people are dominantly individualistic.

**H2:** Hypothesis 2a and 2b predict the effects of social endorsement on perceived quality of news will be stronger among individuals with dominant interdependent self-construal, while the effects will be weaker among individuals with dominant independent self-construal. To conduct two-way ACNOVA, overall self-construal (continuous variable) was transformed into a categorical variable; subjects scored bigger than 0 were under the category "dominant independent self-construal (n = 303)," and subjects scored less than 0 were under the category "dominant interdependent self-construal (n = 241)." Twenty-three (23) subjects who scored 0 were excluded from the analysis.

The results did not indicate statistically significant main effects of social endorsement level, overall self-construal, or the interaction between social endorsement and self-construal, even after controlling for age and the perceived credibility of endorsers (Table 6). Therefore, hypothesis 2a
and 2b were not supported. However, a post hoc Bonferroni test revealed, that for subjects with dominant interdependent self-construal, the difference between those who received the no and high endorsement treatments was approaching significance (p < .10); those who saw no endorsements perceived the news article was of lower quality. Figure 1 graphically shows this relationship.

**Discussion**

This study had two overarching goals. The first was to examine whether there are cross-cultural variations in social endorsement effects, and the second was to explore what role individual self-construal plays in the process. Departing from the dichotomized approach of individualism-collectivism and schematized understanding of each country's cultural traits, I employed independent-interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994) with individual subjects as the units of analysis. The idea was that if individual self-construal is taken into account, the wide-spread assumptions that Korea is a collectivistic country and the U.S. is an individualistic country may not apply anymore.

This approach yielded interesting findings. Firstly, the data showed that Korean subjects were not dominantly collectivistic as many scholars assumed (Jin, Yong Park, & Kim, 2008; Park, Baek, & Cha, 2014). Rather, the subjects displayed a bi-cultural tendency with the almost same level of independent and interdependent self-construal. Another notable point is that the U.S. subjects reported higher scores than Korean subjects both in independent and interdependent self-construal. While the U.S. subjects demonstrated dominantly independent self-construal, they also had collectivistic tendencies.

These findings support the contention in the previous literature about the limitation of an individualism-collectivism dichotomous approach. It is also consistent with prior studies arguing that the development of independent self-construal does not necessarily exclude development of interdependent self-construal (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1994). The two dimensions of self-concepts indeed can be developed together. By showing that within-nation individual variations do not necessarily correspond to the between-nation differences, this study offers a meaningful addition to the understanding of cross-cultural communication.

Secondly, based on a theoretical assumption that interdependent self-construal is linked to people's desire to conform to majority opinion, I tested whether individuals' overall self-construal (dominant independent vs. dominant interdependent) moderates the effects of social endorsement on perceived quality of news. The main idea was that if an individual has dominant interdependent self-construal, he/she is more likely to be influenced by social endorsement when evaluating the quality of news.

The results did not firmly support my prediction; whether subjects have dominant independent self-construal or dominant interdependent self-construal, the results showed that these did not significantly influence the relationship between social endorsement and perceived quality of news. Nevertheless, there was a difference in the expected direction. Particularly, for subjects with dominant interdependent self-construal, the distinctive impact of social endorsement level (none vs. high) on perceived quality of news was noticeable. On the contrary, for subjects with dominant independent self-construal, different levels of social endorsement did not have a distinctive impact on perceived quality of news.

These findings suggest independent and interdependent self-construal may influence the direction and magnitude of the social endorsement effect to some extent, albeit not as the primary factor. The concept of similarity or homophily also offers an alternate explanation for the vague impact of self-construal on the social endorsement effects. Given that independent and interdependent self-construal are based on individuals’ understanding of the relationship between self and “others in the community,” distinguishing *endorsers within the community* from *endorsers outside the community*
may yield different results. Therefore, future research could benefit from including varying identity of endorsers using the in-group and out-group criteria in analyzing the role of self-construal in social endorsement effects.

Upon the growing socialization of online news, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social endorsements in message processing. Specifically, through examining the similarities and differences between Korea and the U.S., this study reveals that there could be divergences and variations in the role of social endorsements in message processing. Given the fact that no social phenomenon or process recurs in the same form (Ginsburg, 2006), cross-cultural comparative analyses help us see the divergent formations of the phenomenon and better understand the principle of variation. This enhanced understanding would benefit scholars and practitioners in the field of international communication. For instance, international public relations require a thorough grasp of the social and cultural milieu of the market. Therefore, understanding how the impacts of each information source on message processing differ across countries would be a critical asset for successful strategic communication.

While this study offers interesting findings and meaningful implications, it is important to recognize some limitations of the study and to propose better paths for future research. First, as with any cross-national research, conducting experiments in Korea and the U.S. revealed intrinsic dilemma of comparative analyses that the different findings may stem from differences in the way people being studied view their social reality, or, even differences in the methodological approaches (Ginsburg, 2006; Kohn, 1987). For instance, although the design of this cross-national experiment was aimed at enabling valid comparative analyses of online news processing, subjects in Korea and the U.S. were quite different in their age distribution. While the number of Korean subjects in each age group was carefully balanced, the U.S. subjects in their 20s and 30s were overrepresented, making up almost 70% of the sample. Given that young adults are generally more familiar with the cues imbedded in and transmitted by digital technologies compared to older adults (Sundar, 2008; Lenhart et al, 2010), some consideration must be given to the possibility that the results of this study are specific to the sample under examination.

Differences in the way subjects view the issue created the second limitation of this study. As discussed earlier, the Korean and U.S. subjects reported significantly different levels of personal relevance to the topic, contradicting the pretest results. Considering that personal relevance can be an important factor influencing individuals' overall information processing, the results could be different if the study selected a topic that generated the equal level of personal relevance across countries. Future research would benefit from employing the same sampling process across countries and a more careful selection of the topic.

Also, subjects in Korea and the U.S. may have different interpretations of some items measuring independent and interdependent self-construal. Therefore, pre-testing all the self-construal measures and using only the items that yield similar interpretations in both countries would help us better understand the role of self-construal in news processing and evaluation.

Taken together, future research would be more fruitful with more careful consideration and reflection for the cross-national comparison method strategy. Expanding the scope of research beyond Korea and the U.S. would allow researchers to cultivate better insights into the differences and similarities, and thus develop a causal theory that can explain most of, if not all, the cases under observation. This is, after all, the ultimate goal of cross-cultural research (Azarian, 2011).
References


Grimm, D., Church, A.T., Katigbak, M.S., & Reyes, J.A.S. (1999). Self-described traits, values, and


### Table 1. Characteristics of Subjects (Korea, $N = 270$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M = 39.28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school or G.E.D.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associates degree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some graduate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s degree or higher</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household</td>
<td>Less than 25 million ($23,000)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 million – less than 50 million</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (won)</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 million – less than 75 million</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 million – less than 100 million</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 million – less than 150 million</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 million – less than 200 million</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 million and greater</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.** Characteristics of Subjects (U.S., N = 297)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M = 36.14)</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or G.E.D.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates degree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree or higher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>296</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Household Income</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 – $24,999</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$74,999</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000-$99,999</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$149,999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000-$199,999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>295</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Analysis of Covariance of Social Endorsement Level on Perceived Quality of News (Korea, $N = 270$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main effect</th>
<th>Perceived Quality of News $^a$</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
<td>$df$</td>
<td>Sig (p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Covariates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility of endorsers $^b$</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>1, 263</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing endorsements</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1, 263</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsements reflecting public opinion</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1, 263</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>$-$</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1, 263</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main effect of endorsement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>2, 263</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.39-4.70</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.28-4.59</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.34-4.65</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $^a$ Subjects were asked to evaluate the quality of news story by indicating how well each of the following words described the news story: accurate, believable, clear, comprehensive, factual, fair, informative, important, objective, well-written, biased (reverse coded) (1 = described very poorly to 7 = described very well).

$^b$ Subjects were asked to rate how well they think the following adjectives describe endorsers as a source of information: dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, trustworthy, independent, expert, experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, skilled (1 = described very poorly, 7 = described very well).
Table 4. Analysis of Covariance of Social Endorsement Level on Perceived Quality of News (U.S., N = 294)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main effect</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality of News&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig (p &lt;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility of endorsers&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>59.43</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td><strong>.001</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing endorsements</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsements reflecting public opinion</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main effect of endorsement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5.25&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.05-5.45</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>5.33-5.72</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.64&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.45-5.83</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup> Subjects were asked to evaluate the quality of news story by indicating how well each of the following words described the news story: accurate, believable, clear, comprehensive, factual, fair, informative, important, objective, well-written, biased (reverse coded) (1 = described very poorly to 7 = described very well).

<sup>b</sup> Subjects were asked to rate how well they think the following adjectives describe endorsers as a source of information: dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, trustworthy, independent, expert, experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, skilled (1 = described very poorly, 7 = described very well).
Table 5. One-Way ANOVA for Independent / Interdependent Self-construal by Country (N = 566).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Self-Construal</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (p&lt;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>[4.31-4.57]</td>
<td>(.73)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>[4.41-4.68]</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>[4.99-5.37]</td>
<td>(.75)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>[5.68-5.95]</td>
<td>(.97)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>[-.09-.13 ]</td>
<td>(.75)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>[.30-.59 ]</td>
<td>(1.27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Responses were coded 7 = strongly agree, 4 = neutral, 1 = strongly disagree.
Table 6. Two-Way ANCOVA of Social Endorsement and Self-construal on Perceived Quality of News (N = 541).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main effects and interaction</th>
<th>Perceived Quality of News</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (p &lt;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility of endorsers</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>129.49</td>
<td>1, 533</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1, 533</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main effect of social endorsement</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2, 533</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>4.78-5.07</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>4.86-5.16</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>5.00-5.28</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main effect of self-construal</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>1, 533</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant independent</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>4.94-5.16</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant interdependent</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.88-5.12</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction between self-construal and social endorsement</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>2, 533</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent and No endorsement</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>4.73-5.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent and Low endorsement</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>4.90-5.26</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endorsement Type</th>
<th>Quality Rating</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent and High endorsement</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>4.94-5.30</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent and No endorsement</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>4.71-5.10</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent and Low endorsement</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>4.71-5.17</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent and High endorsement</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>4.95-5.37</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  

- Subjects were asked to evaluate the quality of news story by indicating how well each of the following words described the news story: accurate, believable, clear, comprehensive, factual, fair, informative, important, objective, well-written, biased (reverse coded) (1 = described very poorly to 7 = described very well).  
- \( b \) indicates approaching a statistically significant difference between pairs of means, according to Bonferroni’s post hoc test.  
- \( b p < .10 \).

**Figure 1.** Interaction between Social Endorsement and Self-Construal on Perceived Quality of News

Note. 1 = Lowest quality of news, 7 = Highest quality of news
AN ANALYSIS OF WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATION AMONGST STUDENTS. DO UK STUDENTS BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY FROM THEIR OVERSEAS COUNTERPARTS? by Fiona Cowrie (Bournemouth University, United Kingdom)

Abstract

This paper examines students’ reports of speaking about their experiences of higher education in the UK. It specifically investigates differences and similarities between UK and overseas undergraduate students’ experiences of word-of-mouth. The study illuminates the comparatively high level of intentions of all students to speak positively about their HE experience. The study demonstrates strong disagreement amongst both UK and international students regarding intentions to speak negatively. That is, students say, often strongly, that they do not intend to speak negatively about their time at university. The study provides an empirically informed definition of word-of-mouth communication appropriate to the HE sector. It is hoped that the study can be replicated within Asian or Middle Eastern contexts to examine students’ intentions to emit word-of-mouth within non-UK institutions.

Keywords: word-of-mouth; advocacy; students; cross-cultural; higher education.

Background.

Word-of-mouth communication is arguably an important aspect of the student experience. Positive conversations about University life may be outcomes of experiences characterized by commitment, satisfaction or perceived value (Cowrie 2014; De Matos and Rossi 2008), but also at the heart of behaviours which define university life alongside engagement within the learning process and interactions within the social context. The purpose of this study is to define word-of-mouth communication within the context of HE, to measure the extent to which undergraduate students emit positive and negative word-of-mouth, and to analyse similarities and differences between UK and overseas students’ reports of word-of-mouth within the context of study at UK higher education institutions (HEIs). Recent years have seen a small number of studies examining word-of-mouth in the context of HE (Bruce and Edgington 2008; Herold and Sundqvist 2013; Li 2013; Li and Wang 2010; Mitsis and Foley 2012; Patti and Chen 2009; Swanson et al. 2003; Taylor 2009). The focus of many of these studies is positive word-of-mouth communication; this study seeks to extend this analysis to also include negative word-of-mouth.

Literature Review.

Marketing communication scholars are increasingly interested in the study of word-of-mouth communication, within both offline and online contexts. Initial conceptualisations of word-of-mouth saw it as part of the advertiser’s armory (Arndt, 1967), this continues to an extent within the recent work of Kimmel and Kitchen (2013) who are particularly interested in the impact of social media on word-of-mouth behaviours. Recent scholarship examines word-of-mouth as an outcome of relationship marketing concepts and practice (e.g. De Matos and Rossi 2008; Fullerton 2005, 2011; Harrison-Walker 2001). Relational participants speak positively about their relational partner, when they consider themselves within relational exchanges characterized by commitment, trust or gratitude (Palmatier et al. 2009).

The last ten years have seen a small but increasing number of studies of word-of-mouth within the context of higher education. In the main these studies have focused upon the receipt of word-of-mouth communication and its role as an information source within decision making, either prior to university entry (Herold and Sundqvist 2013; Patti and Chen 2009), or within the process of choosing options of study once at university (Taylor 2009). The emission of word-of-mouth, has
been the subject of study within the Australian (Mitsis and Foley 2012), American (Bruce and Edginton 2009) and Taiwanese (Li 2013) contexts. This is the first study which compares the extent of intentions to emit word-of-mouth communication amongst UK and overseas students studying within UK HEIs.

**Conceptualising word-of-mouth.**

Despite its age, Arndt’s (1967) seminal definition of word-of-mouth communication arguably stands the test of time. Arndt (1967) conceived word-of-mouth (advertising) as:

*Oral, person-to-person communication between a perceived non commercial communicator and receiver concerning a brand, a product, or a service offered for sale.*

Arndt (1967:190).

Arndt’s (1967) original words resonate within Harrison-Walker’s (2001) much cited (e.g. Sun et al. 2013; Mitsis and Foley 2012) definition:

*Informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization or a service.*


Like Harrison-Walker (2001), Patti and Chen (2009) also draw from Arndt’s (1967) definition and base their work within the context of higher education, upon their adapted definition of word-of-mouth communication:

*An informal, person-to-person communication process of information searching between a perceived non-commercial communicator and third parties about consumers’ feelings after services post-consumption*

Patti and Chen (2009:360).

Whilst Patti and Chen (2009) usefully retain the notion of informality and reinforce the non-commercial orientation of word-of-mouth communication, their definition appears to be overly focused on consumers’ feelings excluding notions of rational transmission of information emphasized by Brown et al. (2005).

Patti and Chen’s (2009) focus upon ‘post-consumption’ is a little unclear, but if this is interpreted as in essence implying communication based upon episodes of consumption (rather than following the absolute conclusion of consumption), then the context aligns with that required for this study.

De Matos and Rossi (2008) used Westbrook’s (1987) definition to underpin their meta analysis of research in the area of word-of-mouth communications, seeing word-of-mouth as,

*informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers*


This definition provides a broader context for word-of-mouth communication than that offered by Patti and Chen (2009) and in particular its reference to the characteristics of services and sellers provides a parallel with the study of word-of-mouth communication in the context of higher
education, in which students may speak of the experiences they have and the institution within which they reside.

However, Patti and Chen’s (2009) work has relevance because of the similarity of the research context, it is therefore worth noting that their definition resulted in the identification of three types of word-of-mouth communication: Service information gathering triggers and guidance (e.g. ‘The programme leader can help you’); subjective personal experience (e.g. ‘I loved studying with tutor x’); and personal advice (e.g. ‘I’d seriously recommend you apply to this University’).

Thus in the context of this study and drawing from the work of previous scholars (including Arndt 1967; Harrison-Walker 2001; Patti and Chen 2009; and Westbrook 1987;) word-of-mouth communication is defined as:

*Informal, interpersonal, planned or spontaneous non-commercial communication, about higher education experiences, participants and institutions (including information guidance, subjective personal experience and personal advice) originating from students and orientated towards other students and external audiences.*

Thus, specifically, this study is interested in communication:

- regarding higher education experiences, participants or institutions;
- between students and from students, to strong and weak ties within and outside the university context;
- conversational, including oral, face-to-face comment and verbal comment on social networking sites;
- of both positive and negative valence.

**Valence and intentions.**

Scholarship has long recognized the existence of both valences of word-of-mouth, indeed Arndt (1967) himself suggested that ‘advice offered to the receiver need not be positive. Recommendations favouring non-purchase will be considered word-of-mouth advertising’ (Arndt 1967:190). Indeed the characteristics of word-of-mouth, its spontaneous and uncontrollable nature mean that conversations may not neatly fit into ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ boxes as they flow from topic to topic. Nevertheless studies adopting both qualitative and quantitative forms have sought to measure the extent of negative and positive word-of-mouth within consumer contexts, finding variation by context. Therefore whilst a series of scholars (e.g. Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; DeCarlo et al. 2007; Goles et al. 2009; Luo 2007) have found negative word-of-mouth to be the more prevalent, Romaniuk’s (2007) work on word-of-mouth in the context of television viewing found positive word-of-mouth to be the more extensive and impactful. Indeed East, Hammond and Wright’s (2007) word suggesting a 3:1 ratio between positive and negative word-of-mouth is much cited including by Kimmel and Kitchen (2013).

This study seeks to examine word-of-mouth intentions, in line with the approach taken by a series of scholars interested in word-of-mouth as an outcome of relational exchange (e.g. Fullerton 2005, 2011). Mazzarol et al.’s (2006) qualitative study of word-of-mouth recognized reliance on memorized recollections to be a limitation of their study. Focus on intentions avoids reliance on such recall of behaviours, however intentions may not be as good a predictor of those word-of-mouth behaviours (Wangenheim and Bayon 2003) as might be intuitively assumed.

**Culture and word-of-mouth communication.**
A series of studies have suggested that culture may have an influence on word-of-mouth communication. Lam et al. (2009) examining the impact of cultural values on new product diffusion, found that cultural values drawn from Hofstede’s (1991) work impacted word-of-mouth behaviours to in and out groups. Within the context of referral marketing, Schuman et al. (2010) found uncertainty-avoidance to have an impact on the effect of received referrals within relational service exchange. Money et al. (1998) examining referrals within the business to business context, found that national culture impacted receipt of referred sources. Increasingly work which considers culture and word-of-mouth is within the context of electronic word-of-mouth, embracing blogs (e.g. Ma 2013), social networking (e.g. Chu and Choi 2011) and general web-based communication (e.g. Zhang and Lee 2012). Therefore there is some evidence that culture may have an impact on word-of-mouth whether it be the generation of word-of-mouth (as in this study) or its receipt.

**Methodology.**

This study employed a quantitative research approach using online survey method with a research tool employing statements evaluated on a 1-7 ordinal scale. The survey was distributed to a research population estimated to comprise 7190 undergraduates at four UK universities. A pilot study allowed the use of exploratory factor analysis in order to develop reliable scales for two constructs ‘intention to emit positive word-of-mouth’ and ‘intention to emit negative word-of-mouth’. Items for positive word-of-mouth were routinely drawn from underpinning scholarship (e.g. Brown et al. 2005; Fullerton 2005; Harrison-Walker 2001; Lacey et al. 2007; Roman and Cuesta 2008) whilst items for negative word-of-mouth were adapted for valence as few appropriate extant measures existed. Principal components analysis and direct oblimin rotation identified five items for each construct which produced reliable scales based on the pilot dataset (Cronbach Alpha 0.880 for ‘intention to emit positive word-of-mouth’; 0.883 for ‘intention to emit negative word-of-mouth’). Whilst scales were reliable, the pilot data highlighted at an early stage reasonable variation in the responses to the positive word-of-mouth statements, but considerable skew in the responses to negative word-of-mouth statements.

**Findings and analysis.**

A total of 1474 undergraduate students participated within the study of which 1129 (77% of respondents) completed all questions. Whilst the majority of respondents were from the UK, 168 overseas students (self-identified as such) completed the survey, of which 157 completed all questions relating to word-of-mouth communication. Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of responses from overseas students. A clear limitation to the analysis is borne from the lack of distinction between country within the overseas students’ responses. This means that comparisons will only be able to be made between self-declared UK and overseas undergraduate students rather than by Hofstede’s (1991) cultural values as the work of Lam et al. (2009) and Schuman et al. (2010) had achieved within the consumer context.

**Table 1: Responses by category of student.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Overseas students</th>
<th>As % of all overseas responses</th>
<th>As % of all responses (UK and overseas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Male  |   74  |   44%  |   38%  
---|---|---|---
Female  |   93  |   56%  |   62%  
Year 1  |   50  |   30%  |   41%  
Year 2  |   53  |   32%  |   27%  
Year 3  |   25  |   15%  |   18%  
Year 4  |   27  |   16%  |   14%  
Parents didn’t attend HE  | 114  |   68%  |   58%  
Parents attended HE  | 54  |   32%  |   42%  

The full dataset confirmed the reliability of scales for ‘intention to emit negative word-of-mouth’ and ‘intention to emit positive word-of-mouth’, with Cronbach Alphas of 0.846 and 0.839 respectively, a slight reduction in the pilot data scores. Before the descriptive analysis of data was undertaken, checks for collinearity were undertaken. As items were ordinal variables, they were correlated using Spearman’s rho (Cohen et al. 2011). Of the 50 potential correlations for word-of-mouth (10x10/2), four were over 0.7 (excluding those at 1.0), all of which were between items measuring the same construct (see appendix 1). No correlations were over 0.8 thus tests demonstrated that the word-of-mouth constructs were not highly correlated or demonstrating collinearity.

The process of exploratory factor analysis resulted in the generation of five measures for both ‘intention to emit positive word-of-mouth’ and ‘intention to emit negative word-of-mouth’. Examination of the selected measures for ‘intention to emit positive word-of-mouth’ reflected the following themes: only good things to say (about people); willing to go out of my way to recommend/encourage; plan to say; expect to say. Accepted items for intention to emit negative word-of-mouth, reflected themes of: plan to say; likely to say; only bad things to say (about people). The only themes which were apparent for both positive and negative word-of-mouth, were ‘plan to say’.
Figure 1 seeks to identify those themes which appear to define ‘intention to emit positive word-of-mouth’ and ‘intention to emit negative word-of-mouth’, within the context of higher education.

**Figure 7.1: Intentions to emit word-of-mouth within higher education.**

Drawing from the conceptual themes illustrated in figure 1 this study proposes definitions of students’ intentions to emit word-of-mouth within the context of higher education to:

*Students’ plans and expectations of the good things they might say regarding their University and tutors to other students and external audiences such as family and friends.*

And

*Students’ plans and self-assessed likelihood of the bad things they might say regarding their University and tutors to other students and external audiences such as family and friends.*

It was interesting to note that the subjects University and tutors were as equally represented as they might be in the final selection of measures for both positive and negative word-of-mouth intentions, thus both find their place within the definitions provided. Reflecting on this research, it might have been of value to more specifically include reference to students’ experiences as the subject of word-of-mouth, as initially indicated within the literature review, although the assumption of this research was that students’ experiences were reflected in their judgments about academics and University.

**Intention to emit positive word-of-mouth communication.**

Participants demonstrated general agreement with statements measuring ‘intention to emit positive word-of-mouth’ (5, 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree). Table 2 shows that at least 60% of participants agreed with each statement, with nearly three quarters agreeing that they would be ‘willing to encourage friends and relatives to study with my University’. Measures focused on either university or tutors; no consistent distinction between these as foci for positive comment emerged. The highest proportion of agrees related to conversations about the institution, the lowest proportion of disagrees related to conversations about
tutors. Just 11% of students disagreed to any extent with statements relating to their plans and expectations regarding positive conversations about tutors. Modes were 6.0 for four of the five measures (table 2). Thus we can see that the majority of undergraduate students are well disposed to speak positively about their experience at university.

Table 2: Breakdown of completed responses by intention to emit positive word-of-mouth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean/Mode</th>
<th>1 (%)</th>
<th>2 (%)</th>
<th>3 (%)</th>
<th>4 (%)</th>
<th>5 (%)</th>
<th>6 (%)</th>
<th>7 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have only good things to say about my tutors.</td>
<td>Mean: 4.71</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode: 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the topic of Universities comes up in conversation I am willing to go out of my way to recommend my University.</td>
<td>Mean: 4.95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode: 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to say positive things about my tutors to other people.</td>
<td>Mean: 4.94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode: 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to say positive things about my tutors to other people.</td>
<td>Mean: 5.05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode: 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to encourage friends and relatives to study with my University.</td>
<td>Mean: 5.29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode: 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst there was an imbalance between the number of participants from the UK and from overseas, there were sufficient overseas respondents to allow the application of non-parametric tests on responses to the measures for positive word-of-mouth.

Statements were subject to the Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests (table 3). The outcome of the tests was that none of the items showed any significant difference by country of origin. Thus we conclude that students’ country of origin has apparently little impact on their reported intentions to emit positive word-of-mouth communication.
Interestingly gender, parental experience of HE and year of study also had no significant impact on intentions to emit positive word-of-mouth (table 3). Gender had just one significant difference with females tending to agree more and disagree less than males with the statement ‘When the topic of Universities comes up in conversation I am willing to go out of my way to recommend my University’ (8.5pwom6). However institution of study and even more so, subject of study, did have a significant impact on intention to emit positive word of mouth.

Therefore we can see that participant characteristic has limited influence on students’ intentions to speak positively about their experience of university. There was however some variation by students’ institution and subject of study.

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis test outcomes of significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Parental experience of H.E.</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Institution of study</th>
<th>Subject of study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.4pwom5</td>
<td>0.644</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>0.907</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5pwom6</td>
<td>0.551</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.852</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3pwom7</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4pwom8</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td>0.589</td>
<td>0.637</td>
<td>0.439</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5pwom9</td>
<td>0.932</td>
<td>0.380</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>0.387</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bold** indicates significant difference <0.05

**Intention to emit negative word-of-mouth communication.**

Participants demonstrated general disagreement (62-91%) with statements associated with ‘intentions to emit negative word-of-mouth’. The strength of that disagreement was apparent (see table 4) with over half of all participants strongly disagreeing (1 on a scale of 1 to 7) with the statement ‘I have only bad things to say about my tutors’ and nearly half of all students strongly disagreeing with the statement ‘I plan to say negative things about this University to other people’. Modes were 1 for four of the five statements corroborating the strength of feeling (table 4).

Table 4: Breakdown of completed responses by intention to emit negative word-of-mouth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manifest variable</th>
<th>Mean/Mode</th>
<th>1 (%)</th>
<th>2 (%)</th>
<th>3 (%)</th>
<th>4 (%)</th>
<th>5 (%)</th>
<th>6 (%)</th>
<th>7 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I plan to say</td>
<td>Mean: 2.01</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
negative things about this University to other people.  | Mode:1  | 86  |  | 8
I plan to say negative things about my tutors to other people.  | Mean: 2.21  Mode: 1  | 38  | 31  | 13  | 11  | 5  | 2  | 1
  | 62  | 8
I am likely to say negative things about the my tutors to other people.  | Mean: 2.48  Mode:2  | 31  | 32  | 13  | 11  | 10  | 3  | 1
  | 76  | 14
I am likely to say negative things about the University to other people.  | Mean: 2.19  Mode: 2  | 40  | 30  | 12  | 8  | 7  | 2  | 1
  | 82  | 10
I have only bad things to say about my tutors.  | Mean: 1.78  Mode: 1  | 54  | 27  | 10  | 5  | 1  | 1  | 1
  | 91  | 3

Again non-parametric tests were used to identify significant differences in intentions to emit negative word-of-mouth by participant characteristic. Country of origin elicited no significant differences in the data (table 4), thus we can conclude that there is no evidence that overseas and UK students have different intentions to speak negatively about their experiences of higher education. Indeed and perhaps unsurprisingly a similar pattern emerged as for positive word-of-mouth: Subject of study had the most impact on differences in students’ responses, with institution of study generating significantly different response to three of the five statements measuring negative word-of-mouth.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U and Kruskall Wallis test outcomes of significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manifest variable</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Parental experience of H.E.</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Institution of study</th>
<th>Subject of study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1nwom3</td>
<td>0.289</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td>0.187</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2nwom3</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.449</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1 nwom5</td>
<td>0.973</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.375</td>
<td>0.667</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bold indicates significant difference <0.05

Conclusion.

This study develops new definitions for word-of-mouth intentions appropriate for the context of higher education. The study finds that overseas and UK undergraduate students studying at universities in the UK report the same intentions to speak both positively and negatively about their experiences, university and tutors. This is perhaps surprising given the importance attributed to culture within word-of-mouth communication highlighted by authors such as Lam et al. (2009), Money et al. (1998) and Schuman et al. (2010). There is no doubt that the lack of differentiation of overseas students in the study into country of origin or by Hofstede’s (1991) cultural values, may have concealed any differences, but it is likely that the numbers from each country or even continent may have been too small to provide significant results within this study. It is suggested that this study be replicated perhaps as part of a broader piece of research examining relational exchange within student populations attending Asian institutions, with word-of-mouth as a consequence to relational variables such as commitment, trust and gratitude. Such a study should specifically seek to gather data from distinct national groupings.

Implications.

This study suggests that the impact of cultural differences highlighted in the literature is not evident within a body of students who travel to engage in their undergraduate study in the context of those students’ intentions to speak positively or negatively about their university experience. This may be a consequence of the types of students who are prepared to move overseas at a comparatively early age or it may be a response to overseas students’ immersion within the UK education process over a period of a minimum 4 months and a maximum of over 3 years (the time into their UK university experience which respondents were assumed to be at when they participated in the study). It is possible that differences by country were in effect cancelled out within the body of data, and future research should seek to resolve this limitation.

The aim is to continue to investigate word-of-mouth communication amongst students across cultural boundaries and the author welcomes opportunities for research collaboration within Asian, Middle Eastern, American or European contexts. It would be interesting to compare the responses of overseas students with native students studying within these geographical areas, to uncover whether the similarities uncovered here are consistent with the types of students who choose to study abroad, or whether they are particular to international students’ experiences within the UK.

Originality

This is the first paper to analyse word-of-mouth intentions amongst UK and overseas undergraduate student populations within the UK higher education context.
Appendix 1: Correlations between manifest variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word-of-mouth measure</th>
<th>Word-of-mouth measure</th>
<th>Same/different construct</th>
<th>Correlation*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.2nwom3</td>
<td>9.1 nwom 5</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>0.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5pwom6</td>
<td>9.5pwom9</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3pwom7</td>
<td>9.4 pwom 7</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1nwom3</td>
<td>10.1nwom7</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>0.723</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spearman’s rho correlation

References.


EMOTION AND VIRALITY OF ONLINE CONTENT IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CONTEXTS, by Suttichart Denpruektham (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand)

Abstract

This paper studies the effect of activating emotional appeals as a possible factor that provides significant prediction of social media virality and whether cultural factors produce variation in this degree of prediction from society to society. The data used in this study are taken from articles that were the top 5 most emailed/shared articles from the New York Times and Thai Rath websites. A team of raters, comprised of journalists and communication experts being native speakers of Thai, Japanese, and English, are tasked with rating the articles in terms of their emotional appeal: “Awe,” “Anger,” “Boring,” and “Content.” The correlation between the rated emotions and rank of each article on the top 5 most emailed/shared list are determined using linear regression analysis, with rank being the dependent variable, and emotional appeals, after controlling for the interest and practical nature each article, are the independent variables. The outcome of this paper is marked by a severe lack of inter-rater reliability, however the results gravitate towards activating emotion being more significantly correlated to the rank of an article in the most emailed/share list.

The Study of Social Media and Online Virality

With the development of Internet and telecommunication technology, we are living in a world of increasing social interconnections through web-based interactive platforms (i.e. social media and Web 2.0). This highly advanced state of inter-connectivity through online social networks has allowed us to see the transfer of communication power and authority from traditional media organizations to individuals through the phenomenon of social media virality. Social media virality has been described by some as a stage in which users can create, share, and consume information, adding value to the mass of available content Tapscott and Williams (2007). However, despite having significant impact, little is understood about why some content has been extensively shared while a greater amount of content remains obscure. This research takes an empirical approach to address this question by focusing on specific emotional variables; based on the context of two dimensional core affect theory that has been empirically studied (Berger and Milkman, 2012) and advances it further, to include a more dynamic dimension of linguistic and cultural context that could prompt a very different reaction from these specific emotional variables, affecting the results this previous study.

Emotional factors as significant variables in social network vitality

This paper is based on the concept of emotional variable in the manner of Berger and Milkman (2012). The concepts of emotional variables which both Berger and Milkman (2012) and this paper are based sit atop the concept of two dimensional affect (feeling), considered to be the basic urges that form the source of emotions. This paper relies on the framework of core affect, which is a two-dimensional affective framework, established by Barrett and Russel (1998). The core affects, considered to be the most primal form of emotions (from which other emotions are drawn from), consist of activation and pleasure. To closely model this analysis after this framework, this analysis employed 4 emotional variables based on these two dimensions: Awe (activation-pleasant), Anger (activation-unpleasant), Sadness (deactivation-unpleasant), and Calmness (deactivation-pleasant). According to some older findings (Barrett and Russell 1998), activation is “a continuum ranging from sleep (at the low end), through drowsiness, relaxation, alertness, hyper-activation, and, finally, frenetic excitement (at the opposite end)” (p. 10). Anger, anxiety, and sadness are all negative emotions, anger and anxiety are characterized by states of heightened activation and action, while sadness is characterized by low arousal or deactivation (Barrett and Russell 1998). These
understandings of emotion and activation are well rooted in neurology: when the piece of information perceived through our sensory motors was entering the state of activation, they were reverberating longer and spread through the neuron system of the entire mental globe (Dehaene et al. 2006). Without this stage of activation, the information even if perceived will be limited to only sensory processing and could not be retained at will - easily slipping into sub-consciousness and, perhaps, forgotten.

Thus a process of content sharing online might be understood as some form of social interaction in which modern users may either engage in social activity or follow the principle of pleasure. As such, the content that brings about a pleasurable experience is more likely to be shared than content does the opposite. Beside from the one of the previous research perspective (Berger and Milkman, 2012), most people would prefer to be known as someone who shares upbeat stories or who makes others feel better rather than someone who shares things that make people angry or upset. People may also share positive content to help boost a recipients’ mood or provide information about potential rewards (i.e. this restaurant is worth trying). The same paper also found a correlation between the activating emotion variables to the prospect of the virality of newspaper content through empirical study.

That is why, from the both theoretical and empirical perspectives, these specific emotional variables should have a significant effect on the sharing behavior of web users and should be a fairly accurate measurement of the cultural and linguistic context that this paper would like to study. Should the relationship between some of these variables be significantly changed or even reversed by the impact of the shift in cultural and linguistic context – we should be able to conclude that the latter two factors had enough impact on personal perception to the point where they could significantly impact the outcome of the communication campaign.

Research Objective and Significance

From the modern marketing and communication perspective, social media virality has tremendous influence on the modern perception and practice of professionals in this field. Prior to the emergence of the Internet and the discovery of social media virality, communications messages were largely one-way and top-down from the sender to the receiver, with the goal of getting a message to as many people as possible via mass media platforms. Although the concept of an organic self-promotion of consumer does exist (e.g. word-of-month), the significance of the outcome of said concept both in terms of brand image, communication message, or, even, financial outcome, has been greatly expanded with the proliferation of the Internet, Web 2.0, and the modern recognition of viral marketing. For example, Sony benefited greatly from one couple’s creative approach to a wedding ceremony, caught on film and posted on YouTube (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2010a). Sony saw Brown’s endorsements and engagements withdrawn in rapid succession; the explosive popularity of the JK Wedding Dance—over 3.5 million views in the first 48 hours—led a significant proportion of the population to associate Brown with humor and matrimony, both very positive associations given the timing (Mills 2012, p. 163). On the other hands, United Airlines suffered a crippling blow to brand equity when baggage handlers carelessly handled and broke customer Dave Carroll’s prized guitar (Deighton and Kornfeld 2010b). After over a year of getting the runaround and no compensation from United headquarters, Carroll, an amateur musician, wrote a song entitled ‘United Breaks Guitars,’ 3 filmed a music video for it and posted it on YouTube. The video had over 1.6million views in only 48 hours and within a month had reached 4.6 million viewers - becoming YouTube’s top rated music video of all time. The video also was receiving massive popular media attention. United’s stock price dropped 10% on the day CNN picked up the story and discussed the video, costing shareholders $180 million (Mills 2012, p. 164). The significant impact of viral communication campaigns also do not stop only in the fields private
sector marketing and public relations, but heavily influence the way in which a political campaigns are conducted in the modern world. The best example of this was President Barak Obama’s election campaign. The Obama campaign managers posted over 1800 videos on their YouTube channel, garnering over 110 million views during the election (Mills, 2012). Similarly, in the Philippines, Senator Francis ‘Kiko’ Pangilinan ranked 22nd in campaign spending, yet became the fifth-most popular candidate overall—an impressive feat, considering he was the first ever to successfully run as an independent. Pangilinan’s success is largely attributed to massive surges in popularity and recognition with younger voters, because of a ‘Reality TV’ series called KTubed, produced by his campaign and starring his wife and children that was posted regularly on YouTube (Hicks, 2007).

**Industrial Implications**

Globalization is a major trend, as many corporations and industries are increasingly extending their hands to overseas consumers. One of the major challenges every international organization has to face is to communicate effectively with their new market from across traditional borders – some choose to tailor messages to their newly entered markets; some choose to simply adopt their old message and hope for the best. In either case, understanding social functions, in the age of Internet proliferation, social media, globalization, and interconnected national identities, is important for anyone aspiring to reap the benefits of the modern global market.

One industry which is both threatened by and benefits from the Internet Age, is the media industry. The Internet Age saw the decline of many players in the traditional media business: 7 of the major publicly traded U.S. newspaper corporations (Gannett, E.W. Scripps, The New York Times Co., A.H. Belo, Journal Communications, McClatchy, and Lee Enterprises), have witnessed revenue decreases of more than 50% (from a height of USD ~50 billion in 2005 to USD 20 billion in 2014). One of the growing markets for these groups of dying businesses is the online platform, which, in some cases, outperforms their traditional counterparts. The New York Times, for example, attracted over 50 million unique online visitors to their website during January 2015, while their weekday printed circulation accounted only for 650,000 copies in September 2014. This figure is, perhaps, illusory; the same study reported people spend less than 4 minutes on the webpage (which might suggest that they were not there to read an article). Nevertheless, this event demonstrates the potential of the Internet for the future of the news business (Michael Barthel, 2015. Newspaper: Fact Sheet. Retrieved d from http://www.journalism.org/2015/04/29/newspapers-fact-sheet/). The online audience has become more significant to the news media. The online audience, specifically the overseas audience, has become an important source of readership for companies like the BBC, where almost 70 percent of their readership come from outside Europe - among those with at least 35 percent of readers coming from non-English speaking regions (BBC World News: Reach and advertising audience, 2015. Retrieved from http://advertising.bbcworldwide.com/home/mediakit/reachaudience/bbcworldnews). There are some new-generation media companies focusing exclusively on their presence on the Internet. Examples of this are HuffingtonPost.com, Buzzfeed.com, and BleacherReport.com. These digital native news corporations can match even the most established traditional news corporations in the number of unique online visitors and have outperformed many of them.

**Emotion, Affect, and Emotional Variables**

In order to observe the effect of emotion and responses from multiple cultures, a universal emotion variable was required. One solution to this issue is the use of affect based variables instead of emotion, which are more cultural-dependent. Eric (2005) described emotion and affect as often being used interchangeably. However, a distinction had been made to categorize the two. Affect
will refer to the more primate form of emotion, unregulated by social norm or social value. A baby’s cry, smile, or laugh are not due to emotion, but affect. This is because a baby has not yet been taught the meaning of these feelings (another term for affect). Emotions are described as being the projection of affect, (citing the experiment by Paul Ekman). This aspect of emotion has been demonstrated through Japanese and American men who had different facial expressions, while watching a film depicting facial surgery when they were alone (affect) and when they watched the film in group (emotion).

Following this tradition, this paper will refer to “affect” as the primate mood or feeling, while “emotion” is regarded as the psychological equivalence of “language” used to project the personal affect into socially recognizable units, such as sadness, anger, or joy. Both the “affect” and “emotion” differ from the term “emotional variables” which will be used exclusively to refer to the variables used in the experiments conducted for this paper. In short, affect is a biological phenomenon, emotion is cultural, and emotional variables are variables which represent one of the emotional aspects of affect.

Core Affect and Prototypical Emotion

The theoretical concept of “core affect” significantly influenced the modern categorization of emotion and was first coined by Russel and Barette (1999). The term “core affect” was referred to as “the most elementary consciously accessible affective feelings (and their neuro-physiological counterparts) that need not be directed at anything; examples include: a sense of pleasure or displeasure, tension or relaxation, and depression or relation (Russel and Barette, 1999). It is similar to what Thayer (1989) called activation, what Watson and Tellegen (1985) called affect, what Morris (1989) called mood, and what is commonly called a feeling (Russel, 2003). One of the key elements of the core affect concept is that, it relies on the dichotomies of pleasant-unpleasant and activation-deactivation (Russel and Barette, 1999). Thus it can exist without objective or direction, as these are the most primate forms of emotion and are common across language and culture. An analogy describing this state of affairs is found in Russel (2003) who, “consider[s] [it to be like] felt body temperature. You can note it whenever you want. Extremes can become very salient. Felt temperature exists prior to such words as hot or cold, prior to the concept of temperature, either in folk or scientific theory, and prior to any attribution about what is making you hot or cold. The subjective experience is simple and primitive and therefore irreducible to anything else psychological. Science can seek its causes and consequences, but further analysis of felt temperature, it takes us, not to constituent psychological atoms, but to biology.”

Core affect’s function was described in Russel (2003) as one that is continuously determining the state of one’s current self and affects other psychological states accordingly. Specifically, core affect is part of the information used to determine affective quality; a change in core affect would prompt the human mental function to search for its cause or a valence material. Thus the core affect would be consistent with our cognitive function in the same way that a mid-congruence behavior was consistent to mood. The more positive core effect is, the more positive events encountered, remembered, or envisioned seem—provided that core affect is not attributed elsewhere (Schwarz &Clore, 1983). Cognitive function is not the only aspect that could influence or be influenced by core affect. The physical function of our body, such as changes in the autonomic nervous system, facial and vocal behavior, and instrumental behavior can be related to core affect as well (Russel, 2003). The latter demonstrated that the mood-congruency analogy was appropriate and, because of the similarity to mood-congruency, core affect could be considered to be related to the affective quality of perception. It is interesting to note that Russel (2003) had defined 8 of the theories that described the relationship of core affect to the perception of affective quality.
Prototypical Emotional Episodes

Prototypical emotional episodes were considered the most vivid and outright recognizable emotions (Russel and Barrette, 1999). The term prototypical emotional episodes resulted from the fact that (even at this stage) they were inner urges that the emotions were reflected upon (i.e. prototypical) and only activated for limited periods of time (i.e. episodic). They were distinct from core affect and, sometimes, were the result of a shift in the latter. While core affect could represent certain aspects of emotion (i.e. pleasure it was sometimes considered an emotion, and displeasure coupled with activation resulted in anxiety), it was incapable of distinguishing among aspects, such as jealousy, anger, and shame (Russel, 2003). A typical construct of the prototypical emotional episode typically consisted of the perception of an external event (antecedent event), followed by an appraisal, a shift in core affect, and the attribution of such event to the shift. The Prototypical emotional episodes were composed of the following components.

**Antecedent Event**
A psychological representation of external events, known to have a complex perceptual-cognitive constructs.

**Affective Quality**
The antecedent perceived in terms of its affective quality.

**Core Affect**
The antecedent dramatically shifted the core affect. Typically, an emotional episode began when the antecedent began to be registered by the subject’s consciousness; the core effect can begin to shift even before the antecedent is consciously perceived. In either case, core affect would continue to shift as the emotional episode developed and influenced the other components (See figure).

**Attribution**
Core affect would be attributed to the antecedent, resulting in an Object. The Object, in turn, resulted in the salient personal experience and conscious recognition that the Object was the cause of the current feeling.

**Appraisal**
The Object was assessed, through the perceptual-cognitive process, in terms of future prospects and relevance to goal areas. Judgement and mood congruent to core affect were more accessible.

**Instrumental Action**
The action is directed at the Object. Pleasure–displeasure quantifies the Object as a matter that needs resolution and may include a general preparation for approach, versus withdrawal. Activation is a general mobilization in preparation for vigorous action. The specific action taken depends on the current circumstances, resources, goal, and plan to achieve that goal.

**Physiological and Expressive Changes**
Facial, vocal, and other automatic physical reactions which accounted for the core affect and the instrumental action (including preparation for and recovery from such action). Physical reactions were not unique in any specific emotions.

**Subjective Conscious Experiences**
In addition to the conscious experiences (core affect and perception of the Object’s affective quality), there was also a meta-cognitive judgment: a sense of urgency, indecision, confusion, uncertainty, and incredulity; much of the episode seems beyond deliberate control. These meta-cognitive judgments are made hot by being accompanied by core affect.

**Emotional Meta-Experience**
The emotion meta-experience was the self-perception of one’s current state of emotions (i.e. you felt that you felt afraid). It was an additional and a separate subjective conscious experience which occurs as a person experiences a specific emotion. It is not like the name of an inner event (i.e. naming the frightening event as fear), but rather a categorization of one’s state in which the future of such category would be based on the other components of an emotional episode (See Figure). The categories established by this experience were the typically the concepts that underlined the word fear, anger, or jealousy (in English, and similarly in other languages). Each category is thought of as structured according to prototype theory (Fehr & Russell, 1984).

**Emotion Regulation**
Emotion regulation is the deliberate attempt at self-control based on so categorizing oneself. Categorizing oneself as at a certain stage of feeling (e.g. classifying oneself as feeling afraid) can help fit oneself into a broader context, like social norm and rules.

**A Final Note**
These explanations only apply to events typically happening in prototypical emotional episodes. In
other, non-prototypical cases, there could be many differences. For example, core affect can be extreme before rather than after the antecedent appears (as in displacement); one can enjoy what one appraises as dangerous (thrill seeking); the antecedent need not be the Object. That these combinations of components form the prototype of an emotional episode was Russel’s (2003) answer to basic evolutionary emotion theory (which argues emotions were inherited from past evolutionary process) and the social construct approach (also called the psychological construct) which appears in Figure 1.12.

Figure 1.12 Russel (2003) Psychological Construct

**Psychological Construct Features**

The psychological construct does not contain any indication of the relationships among its components of prototypical emotional episodes. Russel (2003) states that since the prototypes of specific emotion – such as fear, are not entities (a classic concept of emotion, as in James, 1884) and, therefore, not emotions in the sense that have been debated historically, regarding emotional episodic causes of certain expressions and/or actions. Emotional episodes could arise from any of these components (or in combination). They were only displayed as such when all occurred at once, resulting in the prototype of specific emotions. The psychological construct was, then, quite unique in comparison to other emotion theories. Russel (2003) noted several of the key differences, as discussed below.

**Categories of Emotion**

In previous theories of emotion, an emotion, as a variable, was obviously identified. However, that was not the case in this framework. There was not even a category of emotion in the diagram in Figure 3. This was because some of them were not biologically given categories; fear for example, was merely a linguistic category. There was not a neural circuit, peptide, or other biological marker unique to fear. Therefore, what was used to categorize prototypes of specific emotions was simply
an observed component and mental representation, which fit more or less into across categories rather than belonging to one and not the other (Figure 1).

Dissociation
In the previous perspective of emotion theories, each of the specific emotions were said to share the same cause, unless being specifically and individually forbidden from being so. Thus each of the emotions were predicted to be highly correlated. However, in this construct, the causes of prototypical emotions were entirely different and scattered across all the components of emotional episodes; and thus were much more dissociated.

Ecology to Emotional Life and Resemblance to Prototype
In previous emotional theories, there were strict lines of definition between emotion and non-emotion factors –emotions occurred or not. In this context, a prototypical emotion episode (i.e. all components were activated at once) rarely occurred, while non-prototypical cases (where only one or a handful of components were activated) occurred more often.

Accounting for a Component

No explanations were provided as to what component resulted in what emotion (prototypical or not). Non-prototypical emotional episodes were as real as prototypical ones and could contribute to emotion, just not as vividly. Therefore, to reflect this nature, no flow charts were provided for any of these components, capable of representing emotional episodes as in terms of their combination or simultaneous activation.

Mechanism
Psychological constructs did not require any particular mechanism to explain the origin of the prototypical emotional episode; rather, they relied on the folk concept: what other people observe and attributed to certain combinations of the components of prototypical emotion.

Conclusion on Affective Theory

The examination of the concept of core affect and the model of psychological constructs reveal much about the foundation of the use of core affect-based variables in modeling and how they interact with the other elements of these components. There are also several advantages and limitations that emerge from the current model. First, as an antecedent event was considered the strongest component with the potential to overcome all of the other factors –that news content is one form external factor, can most certainly be related to the core affect condition within our minds; leading to action, thus confirming the possible correlation between the stage of emotion and behavior. One drawback would be that such behavior would not necessarily be the sharing of content. Also, as prototypical emotion’s origin, was theorized to be classified based on the perception of the beholder; this paper theorized that emotional response to the shift in core affect across language and culture would be different, and perhaps even more so, with the increasing degree of difference among the two factors. As Russel notes, the Object is not the affect, and can be interpreted differently from culture to culture; especially when it is transformed into prototypical and non-prototypical emotions, which are the cultural interpretations of affect. Lastly, as within the context of this experiment, whatever emotions that had been identified by the coding process would be unlikely to be prototypical of emotional episodes (as the action would be automatically omitted, replaced by the numerical analysis of sharing data instead). The goal of this study was not to
determine the impact of prototypical emotional episodes on sharing behavior but rather focus on the shift in core affect (and its intercultural impact or lack), this paper remained confident that this model is valid.

**Hofstede Cultural Dimensions and Responses to Emotion**

The US Culture is typical within the English speaking world (e.g. New Zealand, Australia, and Canada) in terms of being: high in individualism and low in power distance, high masculine value, such as aggression (in career development sense) and/or strong orientation toward competitiveness, low uncertainty avoidance, and a relatively hedonistic, unrestrained culture. The only significant variable in this pattern was the relatively higher degree of long term orientation, which was less prevalent in the English-speaking world (average score at 36 for long term orientation) and more common in Latin-speaking Western European countries (France, Spain, and Italy had an average score of 57) low in power distance, strong individualistic culture, do not shy away from competition, and not a particularly strong culture of response.

Figure 1.2 Western European and Anglo World Score Average Distribution Based on Linguistic Characteristic (data from geert-Hofstede.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups Average</th>
<th>Power Distance</th>
<th>Individual Masculinity</th>
<th>Uncertainty avoidance</th>
<th>Long Term Orientation</th>
<th>Indulgent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglo Average</td>
<td>83.166667</td>
<td>61.166667</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31.83333333</td>
<td>69.3333333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanic Average</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>57.25</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance Average</td>
<td>58.33333333</td>
<td>51.666667</td>
<td>82.33333333</td>
<td>57.33333333</td>
<td>40.66666667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Average</td>
<td>71.33333333</td>
<td>9.6666667</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>67.66666667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western European Average</td>
<td>37.73</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>56.72727273</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As the name suggests, the Nordic Average did not include Finland. Finland was not included in the Romance Average as well.

* Average on this list did not include micro-states, like Monaco, Lichtenstein, or the Vatican. It also did not include minor nations such as Belgium and Luxembourg in the Romance Average (thus only Italy, Spain, and France were included). The Dutch, however, were included in Germanic Average.

* The Anglo Average did not include minor English-speaking countries like Singapore and South Africa. This parameter only represents the following countries US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Ireland.
Thai culture, as analyzed by the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions, was shown to be completely different from the Anglophone culture in almost every dimension. Thailand was shown as an overwhelmingly Buddhist nation within the Southeast Asia region. Thailand cultural dimension exhibited these traits which were the high power distance, collectivist, very strong femininity (strongest in Asia, in fact), high uncertainty avoidance, short term orientation, and an undetermined level of hedonistic culture; somewhat similar to the Anglo.

Figure 1.3. Thailand Compared to US and UK Culture Group (geert-Hofstede.com)

Because of this high level of diversity of cultural dimensions, comparing the US and Thai would be a viable way to determine the effect of cultural similarity and differences, to be translated into measurable behavior by social media virality. Certain emotional appeals that are more aggressive and assertive, such as anger, might be received better in a highly individualistic and masculine society, while a peaceful and harmonious event might be more accepted in a collectivist and more feminine society.

**Cross-Cultural Interpretation of Emotion**

The understanding of cultural differences and functions has been dominated by Hofstede’s concept of “Cultural Dimensions”. Despite theoretical controversy, the data available which measure Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are still very useful in establishing the background concept of how cultural differences can be conceptualized and compared across many rages of social phenomena. As one of the goals of this study is to discover how people of several cultures interpret various social phenomena into emotion and how they react to it; it is possible that Hofstede’s model will be useful in classifying cultures in terms of general similarity. Hofstede's original study is flawed regarding unequal sample sizes (with the western sample being several times larger than the rest of the word), and the range of social classes represented in the study (the original study was conducted on IBM employees, who would at most be considered a middle-class from the western world standard, and would be one of the most elite class from somewhere like China). However, I believe the study stills validates one of the core assumptions of this study – that culture is transmitted through language and countries with similar linguistic backgrounds should be more similar.
culturally. In short, I found that countries of the English-speaking world that use English as the primary language are much more similar in every cultural dimension than, say, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (despite sharing most cultural values) countries which are linguistically different (This concept will be elaborated more in Chapter 2. Hong Kongers speak Cantonese while Chinese and Taiwanese speak Mandarin; though China and Taiwan do not employ the same writing system). This assumption allowed an effective framework design for this experimental procedure by employing Thais and Americans as subjects; countries in which to observe the effect of cultural similarity and differences in the translation of the subject event into affects and from affects to emotions, which ultimately lead to actions - making them useful for successful prediction about communication campaigns involving audiences from multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

**Study 1**

**Data**

The data used in this study were taken from the New York Times and Thai Rath online list of most emailed/ shared articles (measured over a 7-day period; see figure). The top 5 articles from each of these two lists were collected for analysis. The data were collected automatically every hour using a program run on a private server. The period of data collection started at 15:00 ICT on 19th November 2015 and ended at 0:00 ICT on 16th December 2015. The total time spent on data collection was 25 days (3136 hours). During this period, however, there was a period when the data was not received by the program (the reason remains unclear, but possibly due to periodic server failure), resulting in slightly less data recorded; with 3126 articles taken from New York Times and 3086 from Thai Rath. These accounted for 36 (New York Times) and 38 (Thai Rath) unique articles. The New York Times and Thai Rath were selected due to the fact they are each one of the most circulated newspapers from their respective countries. Both of their websites share the same ranking mechanism which displayed their most viral articles in 7 day periods, which make them highly comparable for the purpose of this study. The New York Times and Thai Rath, however, differ greatly in the nature of their content offering. The Thai Rath newspaper is considered a tabloid newspaper, with highly sensationalized stories and local events. The New York Times is a serious paper with a global focus. However, as this study focuses on the emotional response of typical consumers from two different societies, the fact that both of these papers are highly circulated makes them comparable, despite the differences.

**Coding**

The unique articles taken from both of these news websites were sent to be rated by a team of raters across 4 emotional aspects and 2 additional control variables. The raters were recruited based on their linguistic skills and cultural awareness of their respective home countries as well as their extensive professional experience in the fields of journalism or communications. The aim of this approach was to substitute the sample of emotional experiences from large audiences for a few, highly qualified, expert opinions on the emotional aspects the news content represented. There were 3 raters involved in this coding the data, which were divided 2 teams of 2 raters each for the Thai Rath and New York Times data. The 3 raters were British, Thai, and Japanese nationals; with The Japanese expert being fluent in both Thai and English and was the secondary rater for the Thai Rath team and global audience team (New York Times). Full details, including the names and backgrounds of each rater can be found below, in figure 1.4.

**Figure 1.4 Raters Background and Identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The emotion variables included in this analysis relied heavily on core affect theory, especially the activation-deactivation and pleasant-unpleasant dimensions. The emotion variables were Anger (Activated-Unpleasant), Awe (Activated-Pleasant), Content (Deactivated-Pleasant), and Boring (Deactivated-Unpleasant). Raters were given instructions on how to rate the Anger, Awe, and Content (which revolved around the semantic definition of the respective variables). The rating was done using a 5-point scale to rank the appearance of emotion in each article from “Not at all” to “Extremely.” Boring was not available to the raters; instead, they were given the emotion variables of Sadness, the variable used in the previous study and cited as representative of the Deactivated-Unpleasant quadrant. However, the nature of Sadness does not fit very well into the concept of Core Affect deactivation (defined as the polar opposite to arousal). Intense Sadness, as in clinical depression, increases the degree of tension instead of the other way around (evidenced by the fact a depressed patient would sometimes need medication to sleep). Due to this reasoning, this paper does not believe Sadness would be an accurate variable to capture the state of unpleasant deactivation; instead, Boring, defined as the general lack of emotion, is a much better alternative to describe this state. Boring was therefore used as a dummy variable which produced values inverse to the maximum value of all other rated emotion variables. For instance, Boring, measured from an article with an Anger rating of 2 (which is also the highest among all other emotion variables) would be given a value of 4. On the other hand, Boring measured from an article with an Awe rating of 5 (which is the highest among all) would take a value of 1. Sadness was used as a decoy to encourage people to offer emotional dimensions.

Raters were also asked to measure the variety of Practical and Interest on the same 5-point scale (Not at all - Extreme), which was a non-emotional variable, but were described essential control variables in the experiment conducted by Berger and Milkman (2012). An example of the rating form and instructions can be found below.

Figure 1.5 Sample Rating Form

Please rate the following emotion variables that you believe the typical readers would feel about the content of this article (from 1 – not at all to 5 – extremely)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awe</th>
<th>Calmness</th>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Sadness</th>
<th>Practical Utility</th>
<th>Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*You may read only the headline of this article in order to answer this question and only go more in detail if you believe the headline is inadequate for your judgement.

*You may read more about the definition of these variables down below:

**Anger** to what extent you think the article would make the reader experience anger. At 1 (not at all) the article you are rating should not be able to provoke anybody whatsoever, at 5 (extremely) the article should be offensive to anyone or offer an extremely provocative subject. The mixed feeling of offensive, provocative, and hostility should be the key characteristic of Anger.

**Awe** to what extent you think the article would make the reader experience awe. At 1 (not at all) the article you are rating should not be able to inspire anybody whatsoever; at 5 (extremely) the article should be inspiring to nearly everyone. Awe is the emotion admiration and an elevation in the face of something greater than the self. It involves the opening or broadening of the mind and an experience of wow that makes you stop and think. Seeing the stunning natural scenery, standing in front of a beautiful piece of art, hearing a grand theory, or witness marvelous piece of technology is the feeling that aligned with awe. So may the revelation of something profound and important in something you may have once seen as ordinary or routine or seeing a causal connection between important things and seemingly remote causes.

**Sadness** to what extent would you believes these articles to make the readers experience sadness. At 1 (not at all) the article you are rating should not be able to depressing to anybody whatsoever, at 5 (extremely) the article should be depressing for nearly anyone.

**Content** to what extent would you believes these articles to make the readers' experience Content. At 1 (not at all) the article you are rating should be comfortably perceived by anybody at 5 (extremely) the article should be uncomfortable to nearly anyone. Content is the feeling of comfort and relaxation a reader should feel toward particular topic, a story of a successful governmental project, adorable animal (such as those of the animal celebrities), and a resolved conflict should bring about the feeling of content. Content should be pleasant, but relaxing rather than exciting, it should be satisfactory, but perhaps not enough to bring about laughter or a smile.

**Practical Utility**: Articles vary in how much practical utility they have. Some contain useful information that leads the reader to modify their behavior. For example, reading an article suggesting certain vegetables are good for you might cause a reader to eat more of those vegetables. Similarly, an article talking about a new Personal Digital The assistant may influence what the reader buys. Please code the articles based on how much practical utility they provide.” (Berger and Milkman, 2012).

**Interest**: Articles vary in how much interest they evoke. Certain articles are really interesting while others are not interesting at all. Please code the articles based on how much interest they evoke.” (Berger and Milkman, 2012).

**The Rank Variable**

The dependent variable in this experiment was a dummy variable called “Rank.” As this paper took data from the Thai Rath and New York Times top 5 most shared/emailed articles, each of these articles was already viral, relative to the rest of data from their respective websites. The Rank variable took value in reverse of the actual rank of the article in question: for example, an article
ranked 5th on the list would produce the value of 1 for the Rank. The use of a Rank-based system allowed this paper to more accurately measure the degree of virality and employ a more sophisticated linear regression analysis model, instead of a binary logistic regression approach as in the previous research (Berger and Milkman, 2012).

**Hypothesis**

**H1** Awe and Ager have a positive correlation to Rank while Content and Boring are negative in both New York Times, Thai Rath studies.

**H2** Awe and Ager have a positive correlation to Rank while Content and Boring are negative in New York Times, but Awe or Anger has a negative correlation to Rank while Content or Boring is positive in the Thai Rath study.

**H3** Awe and Ager have a positive correlation to Rank while Content and Boring are negative in New York Times, and both Awe and Anger have a negative correlation to Rank while both Content and Boring are positive in the Thai Rath study.

**H4** Awe or Ager or both have a negative correlation to Rank while Content or Boring or both are negative in New York Times, regardless of Thai Rath study.

The hypotheses test the assumption that activated emotions play a more important role in social media virality, which should be expressed in the form of a positive correlation and significant prediction of Rank. The assumptions included that this activated emotion might only be seen in online virality in western Anglophone culture and might not express itself in the same way in cultures with a high degree of difference.

**Analysis**

Linear regression analysis was employed to determine the relationships among all of the observed variables measuring the virality of each article. The rank of the articles in the most emailed/most shared list was chosen as the dependent variable, which the emotional and control variables were used to predict (independent variable). This method of analysis was one of the major changes that this paper introduced to the methodology of Berger and Milkman (2012). In the previous study, the method of analysis was logistic regression in which the articles that exist on the list in one particular day were chosen to be modeled after with dummy variables. Berger and Milkman (2012) theorized that as there were few changes in articles of the most emailed list of the New York Times, it was better to model the list of a particular day as a single event and create a binary dummy variable, having a value of 1 when if article appeared on that particular day and 0 if not.

However, this mode of analysis did not allow for the observation of the degree of popularity that each article had, relative to one another. For this reason, this paper employed linear regression instead, with Rank as the dependent variable. This value represents the actual rank of 1st to 5th within this top 5 list of most emailed/share articles (in reverse order - i.e. an article was 1st on the list would score a 5 in rank and an article that was 5th would score 1). The average value of the Rank variable was determined by dividing the sum of Rank values throughout the period of data collection by the highest frequency that appears in the entire sample (and not from the particular article). This procedure is to ensure that the article that appear on the list only once will not receive higher value than the article that appear most frequently on the list but decreased value over time.
This paper would employ a total of 2 studies to answer the stated research questions, with the same method of analysis being implemented across both studies. During Study 1, we would discover the effect of this new model of analysis on the same data set (New York Times) and Study 2 would demonstrate the effect of linguistic and cultural differences (Thai Rath) of audience emotional reaction and interpretation of online sharing behavior.

**Result and Discussion**

This study experienced a severe lack of inter-rater reliability and thus the final conclusion cannot be made as expected. The correlation between either activated or deactivated emotions and their significance in viral prediction varied greatly among raters. Therefore, they were considered highly unreliable. One pattern can be observed from the results of a specific rater, when the lack of rater reliability was discounted. For the most part, this paper had found that the Japanese rater who served as the secondary contributor for both the Thai Rath and New York Times rating system (due to his proficiency in the language and culture for both groups) had consistently higher in Boring scores. Boring had been much more significant for the Japanese rater than for both the Thai and British rater. Since Boring is a dummy variable calculated from a generally low on every emotional aspect, this high significance of the Boring score might suggest the Japanese rater feels less attached to the news content in either Thai Rath or The New York Times. Otherwise it might be, despite spending years in Thailand and having fluency in both Thai and English, the emotional appeal in the news might be more apparent to a native speaker.

There were also more noteworthy results of inter-rater reliability if the Japanese rater’s scores were discounted. The activated emotions Awe and Anger, presented in both the Thai Rath and New York Times data, were substantially more significant than the deactivated Content and Boring variables. The signs of both these variable matched the results of Berger and Milkman (2012). Both were more than 70 percent significant and produced a positive correlation to Rank. The deactivated emotion variables had lower significance results (less than 70 percent) and were mostly negatively correlated to Rank. The results from British rater were both negatively correlated to rank and insignificant for both the Boring and Content variables. The Thai rater produced results that show a negative correlation to Rank in the Boring variable, but produced a positive correlation to Content (both remain highly insignificant, however).

**Figure 1.6 Results of the Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coder</th>
<th>TR1</th>
<th>TR2</th>
<th>NYT1</th>
<th>NYT2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>sig</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awe</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.982</td>
<td>-0.272</td>
<td>0.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>0.205</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>-0.323</td>
<td>0.749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>-1.77</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calness</td>
<td>0.916</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>-1.931</td>
<td>0.062</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**
The result of this study is highly unreliable. Without a reliable secondary rater, there is no way this paper can be sure that the result of this study can be recreated, using similar methodology. However, with the issues of inter-rater reliability aside, the result of this study had confirmed some of the H1 hypothesis and some of the theory that came into consideration in this paper. With the absence of Japanese rater, both Thai and British raters had produced more significant and positive correlations to virality, represented by Rank, in activated emotion variables. Both produced insignificant and mostly negative correlations to deactivated emotions. The results for Content, a non-assertive, less competitive sentiment, were positively correlated in Thai (Feminine and Collective culture) and negative in British (highly Masculine and Individualistic culture). This might, of course, be simply chance. The result still seems promising and the hypothesis could be confirmed or denied with a much more efficient experimental method.

A non-native speaker and non-native resident might be the cause of inter-rater reliability issues. The fact emotion variables scored low in all dimensions might suggest the raters felt disengaged or did not truly comprehend the nature of the emotional appeal of the content. A simple solution to this issue is to employ two or more native raters for both Thai and global Anglophone content and assign them as secondary raters, instead of using experts who are foreign to culture of both groups. Furthermore, as the results from the native-speaker raters are proven to be highly significant on the activated emotional dimension. A further qualitative study could be made to document the nature of emotional perception for both of the raters. This information could be used in the development of a more efficient coding system, which might result in the reliable prediction of social media virality without the need for a secondary opinion in the future.

In conclusion, the result of this study cannot prove any of the research hypotheses. However, the lessons learned from this experiment could be used to benefit from the findings in this paper. A future experiment can be made more efficient and possibly more effective, based on the result presented in this study.

References


EKMAN, P. 1992. Are there basic emotions?


JAMES, W. 1884. II.—What is an emotion? Mind, 188-205.


PETERS, K. & KASHIMA, Y. 2007. From social talk to social action: shaping the social triad with emotion sharing. Journal of personality and social psychology, 93, 780.


GETTING READY FOR A GLOBALIZED WORKPLACE: LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL VIRTUAL STUDENT TEAMS, by Inka Stever and Gaelle Duthler, Ph.D. (Zayed University, Abu Dhabi)

Abstract

To overcome the constraints of time and distance, many multinationals and corporations commonly work in global virtual teams. To better prepare students, academics are beginning to emulate this trend by requiring students to participate in global virtual teamwork. Students participate in projects with other students from around the world using a variety of communication technologies. This experience exposes the students not only to the benefits but to the real-world challenges these teams face. In this context, the multiculturalism of virtual team participants is a vitally important consideration. With team members distributed across the globe, the teams represent an international blend of cultures, languages, attitudes, beliefs, and values. This mixture can present the teams with many challenges including team cohesiveness, trust, leadership emergence, language skills, work ethics and methods, as well as technology.

To illustrate the emerging trend and the challenges associated with global virtual teams, this paper examines virtual teams participating in an international public relations competition, organized by a consortium of fourteen universities located across five continents. The project has been running for the past thirteen years and has collected data from participants through an online evaluation survey for the past 4 years.

The paper provides a longitudinal analysis of global virtual team challenges. Specifically, it reviews challenges typically faced by global virtual teams, such as communication technology, leadership, team structure, and cultural differences, among others. It analyzes the annual evaluation survey filled out by each of the international team members from 2012 to 2015. The following research questions are answered:

RQ1: What are the most important challenges faced by Global Virtual Teams?
RQ2: What are the students’ communication tool preferences?
RQ3: How do Global Virtual Teams prefer to structure their work?
RQ4: How much do Global Virtual Teams contribute to greater multicultural understanding?

Introduction

Virtual teams have become a fixture of internationally operating organizations throughout the United States, Europe, and beyond, as a response to globalization. Multinational organizations (MNOs) operate globally and need to grasp the economic, political, and cultural intricacies of various parts of the world, as practices vary in different countries. Global virtual teams (GVT) allow for specialists in the respective countries to work across time, space, and culture to accommodate the needs of their multinational companies.

As work becomes increasingly international, there is a rising necessity for students to train accordingly – partaking of and engaging in international settings. However, it is rare that students have the opportunity to truly experience and practice at that level. Most of the time, they tend to work on case studies, listen to guest speakers who have traveled the world, and, when possible, they can participate in a study abroad program. These activities are limited in scope and do not allow
students to expose themselves to international competition. Organizing students in global virtual teams would allow them to practice their intercultural competencies, time management, organizational, and leadership skills. In 2003, VanSlyke Turk & Martin (2004) experimented with that model by grouping public relations students from six different universities and saw the benefits of students working at the international level. However, this was a one off project and was never replicated.

This research focuses on one project, ongoing since 2003, which provides students with the opportunity to work in global virtual teams. GlobCom is an international project that has grown to involve sixteen universities in sixteen countries on five continents. The students are grouped into global virtual teams (GVT). Each virtual team works on the same public relations brief and has to develop and submit an international public relations strategy. The students communicate and cooperate with each other through email, social media, or other electronic communication technologies. At the end of the project, the educators and students meet face to face in a symposium.

The purpose of this paper is to understand the challenges of these GVT in terms of leadership issues, time zone challenges, teamwork, and the importance of a common understanding of the topic and task at hand. This research used a longitudinal analysis of the participants’ evaluation of their experience over the four months’ period.

The first part of this paper will provide a review of the GVT literature. The second part of this chapter will present the methodology used. The results will be analyzed using SPSS. Finally, the authors conclude, with implications about the challenges of global virtual teams.

**Literature Review**

As virtual teams are common in the business world, education institutions need to prepare students accordingly. Some academic institutions emulate this by creating virtual teams. Students participate in projects with other students using a variety of communication technologies. Only a few projects incorporate a more international component by including students from various countries to create Global Virtual Teams (GVT).

Global Virtual Teams are of great use for multinational organizations, as they offer the responsiveness and expertise needed in certain situations. Jarvenpaa & Leidner (1999) define a Global Virtual Team as “temporary, culturally diverse, geographically dispersed, electronically communicating work group” (p. 792). This definition focuses on three important defining components. First, is whether the teams tend to be permanent or temporary. It does not provide a sense of time in terms of length, whether the team will be together one month or one year. However, GVT are usually formed with team members who have no common history and will not work together in the long term.

This definition emphasizes that GVT members are not only located in a variety of different countries, but need to be culturally diverse. This means if you have a group of American managers located in different countries working together on a project together, they would not be considered a GVT, as they are too similar culturally. The last component of the definition emphasizes that all communication is done electronically via technology, thus making the team virtual. There are many challenges for GVT to overcome in order to become effective and productive. Some of these challenges deal with team structure, soft skills (trust, leadership, and communication), cultural differences, and communication technology.

**Soft skills: Trust, leadership, and communication**
In general, there is a tendency for researchers to compare virtual teams to face-to-face teams (Krebs, Hobman, & Bordia, 2006; Polzer, Crisp, Jarvenpaa, & Kim, 2006; Staples & Zaho, 2006). Trust and leadership are two significant areas of research concerning GVT. Trust in an essential element of effective teamwork (Meyerson, Weick, & Kramer, 1996; Jarvenpaa, Knoll, & Leidner, 1998; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999, Paul & McDaniel, 2004) and is considered the one factor that bridges challenges, such as a lack of common history, unfamiliarity of team members and a lack of social context (Sarker et al., 2011). Leadership is another area of interest with regards to virtual teams (Carte, Chadambaram & Becker, 2006; Kayworth, Leidner, & Mora-Tavarez, 2000). The impact of communication breakdowns and the emergence of new technological tools to facilitate communication in virtual teams have also become an area of interest for Information System researchers (Shachaf, 2008; Daim et al, 2010).

Effective communication can determine the success of GVT – even more so than co-located working teams. Zaugg & Davies (2013) explain, while face-to-face communication enables clearer coding and decoding of messages by means of visual clues such as mimic, gesture, and intonation, GVT strongly rely on written and oral communication. Communication skills are considered soft-skills needed for the teams to effectively create a common understanding, manage the task, and facilitate the work process. However, the “hard” technical skills, such as architectural knowledge or business management, are needed for the actual completion of the task at hand (Zaugg & Davies, 2013). Most of this research focuses on the effective working mechanism of GVT and little emphasis has been put on the effects of different levels/sets or quality of technical skills. These technical skills have not been researched as much and there is little knowledge about what role they play in team effectiveness.

Cultural differences and diversity

The diversity of GVT outline the advantages, such as different time zones and geographical dispersion (Dafoulas & Macaulay, 2001). These become competitive advantages for companies, as they can decrease costs. However, diversity is about more than just times zones and geographical locations. There are many different types of diversity: 1) Demographic diversity (age, sex, race), 2) deep level diversity (attitudes, values, preferences), and 3) functional diversity (knowledge, expertise, resources). The most obvious type of diversity in GVT relates to the national and cultural background of team members, thus including diverse nationalities (demographic diversity) and diverse cultural values (deep level diversity). Shachaf (2008) defines cultural diversity as “the heterogeneity of national cultures of team members” (p. 132). Global Virtual Team members are different in terms of national culture and, thus, have different beliefs, values, attitudes, competencies, perceptions, and experiences, among others (Hofstede, 1991). However, the issue with cultural diversity is whether these differences are seen as strengths or weaknesses.

Some researchers perceive diversity as a source of conflict leading to lowered team performance, whereas others perceive it as a source of higher performance. VanSlyke Turk & Martin (2004) observed diversity stimulated creativity. When students worked together, they started understanding the different cultures better and eliminated the stereotypes. After these barriers are gone, students listened to each other’s contributions and ideas. The main advantage of having diversity in a team is to utilize the different opinions and a larger pool of skills. When companies use GVT, they need the understanding, knowledge, and experience of each member’s perspective.

When comparing virtual teams to face-to-face (FTF) teams, diversity is found to be advantageous in virtual teams. Diversity in FTF teams is found to lead to group dissatisfaction and below average performance, compared to virtual teams (Schoenecher, Martell, Michlitsch, 1997). Staples and Zhao (2006) compared heterogeneous and homogeneous teams in virtual and FTF team settings. They found the virtual heterogeneous teams performed better than the FTF heterogeneous teams.
Similarly, Krebs, Hobman, Bordia (2006) found virtual teams who were dissimilar in country of birth (i.e. diverse) reported a higher level of trust than FTF teams. Peters & Karren (2009) also found diversity in virtual teams was positively related to performance. More specifically, they found functional diversity was significantly related to team-rated performance. Interestingly, they also found that skill dissimilarity was positively related with helping behaviors. In other words, if team members do not possess the same level of skills, they will tend to help each other.

Overall, most research supports the claim that diversity is advantageous for GVT. The fact these teams are completely virtual (participants only communicate electronically) is the reason why diversity leads to more trust, helping behaviors, and performance. Many studies suggest cultural differences play a role in choice of communication technology in managing the GVT (Lee, 2002). These scholars found that team members select certain technology to accommodate cultural differences. More specifically, Shachaf (2008) found that communication technology mitigates the disadvantages of diversity. Specifically, the bridging of space and time differences as well as the coding and decoding abilities of certain technologies help overcome the differences in communication. In fact, Carte & Chidambaram (2004) advances a theoretical model proposing computer-mediated communication helps leverage the advantages of diversity, while reducing its concomitant disadvantages. However, their model has yet to be empirically tested.

Students in GVT

Virtual teams have also been widely studied in the educational environment, primarily looking at the learning outcomes of students (Ferris & Godar, 2006; Liu, Magjuka, Lee, 2008; Rutkowski, et al, 2008).

Researchers explored how universities try to prepare students for the working world by exposing them to international projects. This research is mostly based on case studies and how students learn the soft-skills needed for working in GVT, such as cultural competence, communication, trust and leadership skills (Zaugg & Davies 2013 and 2014; Piennar et al, 2016; Gonzales et al, 2014). The case studies are diverse in terms of countries involved, and types of tasks – i.e. business development, engineering, and building design. Zaugg et al (2015) explain the proficiency in the chosen common language is a key factor to the success of these international virtual teams. Non-native speakers might misunderstand assignments or approaches and are often more hesitant to state opinions or ask questions than native speakers. The authors observed, in their case study, that a second language can soften the communication gap. Zaugg et al (2015) also suggest off-topic social communications greatly contribute to building a stronger trust relationship between teammates of different cultures. Asking about cultural habits can create a better understanding of the other team members’ working methods and ethics and lessen frustrations on the other side.

Most of the research looks at the learning outcomes of short-term existing GVT on student ability to cope with the new working environment, the trust building process, cultural sensitivities, and communication skills. This paper goes beyond to look at the changes over time in the perception of GVT challenges. While the members of the GVT changed every year, the given framework remained the same.

RQ1: What are the most important challenges faced by Global Virtual Teams?

RQ2: What are the students’ communication tool preferences?

RQ3: How do Global Virtual Teams prefer to structure their work?

RQ4: How much do Global Virtual Teams contribute to greater multicultural understanding?
Methodology

To answer these research questions pertaining to GVT, this paper uses a quantitative analysis of student evaluations of their participation in the GlobCom project.

Sample and participants

At the end of each spring project, all students from the 15 universities are emailed the online evaluation. The sample size varies each year from 45 respondents in 2013 to 82 respondents in 2015, out of a total of approximately 250 participants. However, the response rate is low, since many participants have already started their summer holidays.

Table 1: Countries participating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile (joined in 2015)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (joined in 2015)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand (joined in 2015)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrument

Although the international project started in 2003, the evaluations did not start until 2009. Students were asked to answer 10 questions about how satisfied they were and how valuable they perceived the project to be (Appendix A, questions 1-3 and questions 10-12). In 2012, five questions were
Results

RQ1: What are the most important challenges faced by Global Virtual Teams?

For the past four years, participants in GVT have identified their top 2 challenges. As Table 1 indicates, these challenges have changed over time. The top three challenges in 2012 were: too much work (n=18, 19%), working with different nationalities (n=18, 17%), and weak leadership (n=16%).

Overall, in 2012, the challenges are more equally picked. However, in 2013, the majority of participants chose: working across different time zones (n=23, 59%) as the most challenging part for their team. The next three challenges are only chosen by about 1/5 of the participants and deal with lack of cooperation among team members (n=9, 23%), not enough advice on what to do (n=8, 20%), and having a different understanding of PR (n=8, 20%). In 2014, the top challenge for participant remains working across different time zones, (n=29, 47%). The next two challenges are the same as the previous year, having a different understanding of PR (n=18, 29%), and lack of cooperation among team members (n=6, 26%). Finally, in 2015, the results are identical to the previous year, with working across time zones being the top challenge (n=33, 40%), followed by having a different understanding of PR (n=27, 33%), and lack of cooperation among team members (n=27, 33%).

One noticeable trend is the less prevailing choice of the top challenge. In 2015, the top three choices are closer in range than any of the previous years. There is only 7% difference between the 1st and 2nd choice of challenge. However, in 2014, there was a 17% gap, and in 2013, there was a 36% difference between the 1st and 2nd choice.

Table 2: Global Virtual Team Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working across different time zones</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with different nationalities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much work</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak leadership</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough advice on what to do</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different understanding of public relations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of cooperation among team members  | 6  | 6.4 | 9  | 23.1 | 16 | 26.2 | 27 | 32.9  
Lack of defined roles             | 3  | 3.2 | 5  | 12.8 | 14 | 23.0 | 12 | 14.6  
Writing in English                | 10 | 10.6 | 1 | 2.6 | 4  | 6.6 | 0  | 0.0   
Time management                   | 4  | 4.3 | 7  | 17.9 | 5  | 8.2 | 12 | 14.6  

RQ2: What are the students’ communication tool preferences?

The results indicate that text-based technologies are being used less, with an increasing use of video and audio based technologies. In 2012, 88% of students reported using mostly text based technologies. The percentage dropped to 62% in 2015. In addition, the use of face-to-face/video chat has increased over the past four years (although it peaked in 2014).

Table 3: Communication Technology Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012 f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2013 f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2014 f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2015 f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly face-to-face/video chat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly voice based</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly text based</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2015, questions were added to specify the type of communication technology used. Students reported using Facebook the most (n=81, 99%), then Skype (n=70, 85%), Google sites (n=46, 56%), What’s app (n=41, 50%), email (n=31, 43%), and Google Hangout (n=9, 11%). A few mentioned using Dropbox and Doodle. Most students used a combination of these, between 3 and 4 different types.

RQ3: How do Global Virtual Teams prefer to structure their work?

Students’ preferences about how they structured their work seems to have changed over the past 4 years as well. Since 2012, over 2/3 of the students preferred for teams to have the opportunity to structure their work on their own. However, the proportion of students preferring that option has
diminished to a bit more than half of the students preferring to structure the work on their own in 2015. Correspondingly, the preference for having more structure given by lecturers has increased over the past four years.

Table 4: Team preferences for structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teams should have the opportunity to structure their work</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The structure should be given by the lecturers/professors</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ4: How much do Global Virtual Teams contribute to greater multicultural understanding?

Overall participants report they agree on the benefit of working in global virtual teams on all the variables. The concept with the lowest mean on the agreement scale is “International PR Understanding.”

Table 5: Outcomes of Working in GVT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GVT Skills</th>
<th>International PR Understanding</th>
<th>Overcome Barriers</th>
<th>Cross Cultural Literacy</th>
<th>Multicultural Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M S.D</td>
<td>Mean S.D</td>
<td>Mean S.D</td>
<td>Mean S.D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>1.80 0.74</td>
<td>1.66 0.83</td>
<td>1.55 0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The purpose of this research paper was to investigate the challenges of Global Virtual Teams over a longitudinal period. Findings indicated some changes in challenges faced by GVT members and preferences on how they structure their teams.

As results indicated, certain challenges are viewed as more important in 2015 than they were in 2012, while others remained unchanged or declined in importance. The 2012 results found that different time zones and English language skills were perceived equally in terms of GVT challenges. However, while working across time zones has been perceived increasingly as a challenge, English writing skills are no longer viewed as such. Globalization and technological advances are possible contributors to these changes.

Interestingly, certain challenges have remained consistent in the past four years. Working with different nationalities and weak leadership have remained consistent. These two challenges are not rated the highest but are consistent. Working with different nationalities is important as for most participants; it would be their first experience working closely and virtually with that many different
nationalities. Although they may not have problems with all the different nationalities, they may experience issues with some. Also, blaming the nationality is easier to do than blaming the personality.

The two challenges on the rise are lack of cooperation among team members and everyone having different understandings of public relations. At this point it is interesting to note that by rating the lack of common understanding of PR – a technical skill – as the second most prominent problem, one can conclude that not only good communication, intercultural understanding and organizational skills, but also and maybe most importantly the expertise in the respective professional field is equally important for the teams to be able to cooperate successfully.

Interestingly, participants’ responses regarding their preferences toward the team structure indicate a declining preference for teams to structure themselves and the increase in preference in having the lecturer/professor structure the team. It seems that the GVT would like better cooperation and more common ground and that one way to achieve this would be to have their supervisor (lecturer/professor) help them with the needed structure.

The teams used a variety of communication tools. While text based technology use dropped from 88% in 2012 to 62.2% in 2015 it remains by far the preferred way of communicating. The drop can be explained with improved and easier accessible video and audio applications such as Skype and GoogleHangout. Facebook (n=81, 99%) and Skype (n=70, 85%) have become the most popular tools to use. The multimedia-based nature of Facebook makes it the most modifiable and flexible communication tool, while Skype is mostly restrained to video chats.

However, the sheer size of the teams (up to 30 members) did not allow for all members to communicate simultaneously in videoconferences. Text based technology proves to be more manageable and allows for better organization. It also enables students to work on the project irrespective of time-zone differences and the availability of their international team members. The final product being a written document is another reason why text based technology lends itself best for effective collaboration. Drafts of the final submission are constantly being written and revised throughout the project phase.

With technology advancing and new communication tools being developed almost on a daily base it can be predicted that challenges such as time-zone differences and even the lack of cooperation amongst team members will most likely decrease.

Overall GlobCom participants definitely benefit from the experience in virtual teams. The survey results show students learn to overcome communication barriers, gain cross-cultural literacy and learn how to work with team members from multiple nationalities and countries. The benefit of gaining a better understanding of Global Public Relations was rated the lowest. Other than the previous three questions, which referred to the soft-skills, this one is asking about the professional expertise of the particular GVT’s participants. The predominant purpose of exposing students to this global way of collaboration is to strengthen exactly the aforementioned soft-skills. The gained expertise in their respective profession is an added value that is a lot more difficult to convey in the course of the project than communication skills.

*Strengths and weaknesses of study*

This study is the only longitudinal study on Global Virtual Teams organized in a similar framework and that has been operational for the past 13 years. Although the data analyzed only includes the past four years, it found some interesting trends. Another unique attribute of this study is the inclusion of so many countries. Many studies on GVT include only a few countries (from 2-6
countries). However, this study reflects the perceptions of participants from 13-15 countries, representing all five continents, as global as teams can be.

However, as mentioned above, although the project is 13 years old, the data analyzed in this report only includes the past four years. The evaluation questions asked before 2012 were focusing mainly on their satisfaction level and not about their experience in their global virtual teams. By only including four years, it is difficult to comprehend the trends in the GVT. However, as the project continues in is 14th year, data will continue to be collected and analyzed. Another weakness is the sample size and response rate. Although, most years there are about 250 students involved in the project, only a minority fill in the evaluation. In 2013, there were only 45 respondents, compared to 143 in 2009.

Conclusion

This is the first research attempt at analyzing GVT challenges over a certain number of years. Results indicate that changes are occurring probably due to communication technology advances and more emphasis on globalization in the world of education. The need for less self-structured but more guided structure might also be a sign of the new generation, Generation Z. This generation was born with the internet and widespread reliance on technology.

References


Appendix A

1. First, please rate your overall satisfaction with the Global Communications Project.
   Very satisfied
   Satisfied
   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   Somewhat dissatisfied
   Very dissatisfied

2. Please specify your satisfaction level with regard to each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The initial client brief provided at the beginning of the project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Information and assistance provided by the client throughout the project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Information and assistance provided by your lecturer/professor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Your teams ability to resolve problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Frequency of contact with GVT members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Public Relations knowledge of GVT members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Overall professionalism of GVT members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Based on your experience, how likely are you to recommend participation in future GlobCom projects?
   Very likely
   Somewhat likely
Somewhat unlikely

Very unlikely

4. In general, would you recommend that teams have the opportunity to structure their work themselves, including the final presentation, or would you recommend that structure and direction are given by the lecturers/professors?

Teams have the opportunity to structure their work themselves

Structure and direction are given by the lecturers/professors

5. Would you have like the team to have more structure?

Definitely 1 2 3 4 5 Absolutely not

6. Please state if your communication tools were mostly face-to-face, voice or text based:

Mostly face-to-face/videochat

Mostly voice based

Mostly text based

7. Please choose two of the following answers which describe your team’s challenges the most:

Working across different time zones

Working with different nationalities

Too much work

Weak leadership

Not enough advice on what to do

Everyone having different understanding of PR

Lack of cooperation among team members

Lack of defined roles

Writing in English

Time management

8. Participation in the Global Communication Project…
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased my cross cultural literacy (i.e. my ability to understand and appreciate similarities and differences in the customs, values, and beliefs of different cultures)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved my ability to collaborate in multicultural teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipped me with the skills to overcome cultural differences and barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased my understanding of public relations and communications in a global context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided me with the skills to collaborate in dispersed virtual teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Did you attend the symposium?
- yes
- no

10. How valuable was the symposium for you?
- Very valuable
- Above average
- Average
- Not very valuable

11. What is your team number?

12. What is your university?
SIGNIFICANCE OF ETHICS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATIONS IN ETHICS EDUCATION: MIDDLE EASTERN PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION AS A CASE, by Serra Gorpe Ph.D., Noela Michael, Ph.D. (Zayed University, UAE)

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to discover what the Middle Eastern Public Relations Association (MEPRA) has done in public relations ethics in this region and the opportunities/challenges they are facing. The paper will discuss the significance of public relations ethics both from a professional and educational perspective. Its main focus is on professional public relations associations’ role in helping to establish public relations ethics and MEPRA will be analyzed in this perspective.

Methodology: Website analysis of the association will be done to understand how public relations ethics (codes, cases, etc) is communicated to the stakeholder groups. An email interview with the director/president of the association will be done for the background of ethical code establishment and its education.

Findings: The findings will center around certain themes. For example, an analysis of their professional codes will be done. Their process of establishing professional codes of conduct will be summarized: this will include dates, revisions, and the benchmark they had for their code of ethics, including the ethical leadership structure of the association. Moreover, as it had been accomplished previously by the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management Ethics Research team, it will look at the similarities and differences of its code of ethics with other professional associations around the world. Finally, the paper will discuss how public relations ethics education is done by MEPRA.

Implications: The study will provide a better understanding of the ethical issues in public relations in the professional world covering this region. It will help public relations educators to relate their ethics material to this context. The professional association will be revisiting its role specifically relating to their code of ethics.

Originality of the Study: There are not many studies of public relations in the Gulf Region where ethics and public relations have been studied. This study will specifically look at the role of an important professional association from this region. It will contribute the work of Global Alliance Ethics study. This study is an extension of the research Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management contributed to the ethics research where they have compared ethical codes of professional associations around the world.

(http://www.globalalliancepr.org/website/sites/default/files/globalalliance/ethics-Benchmarking.pdf)

Introduction

The research claims public relations ethics is one of the areas where more attention needs to be allocated both by practitioners and academics. Public relations academics’ research on ethics, experiences of the professionals, public relations associations’ involvement with ethics education, and ethics education in public relations programs are four related components for having a comprehensive approach for public relations ethics.
The paper discusses public relations ethics by concentrating on one aspect of the components, which is the role of professional public relations in ethics establishment and education. The paper initially looks at the role of public relations professional associations and their role in public relations ethics. It discusses their role in public relations ethics and summarizes the findings of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Association’s study with the national public relations associations on ethics.

The purpose of the study is to discover what the Middle Eastern Public Relations Association (MEPRA) has done in public relations ethics in this region and the opportunities/challenges they are facing. There are not many studies of public relations in this region, nor have ethics and public relations have been studied comprehensively. The paper also provides some background about MEPRA, the region’s public relations association, by summarizing what they do for the public relations profession.

The importance of public relations ethics shows itself in different ways. We may become aware of it, for example, when a scandal or crisis hits an organization. The way that situation gets handled by the company indicates the strategic and practical way of how responsibly it is take care of. There are many ethics situations that turn into cases as good sources to show ethical decision-making. The *Professional Bond* (November, 2006), the report of the Commission on Public Relations Education, states that public relations ethics should be one of the core courses included in the public relations undergraduate curriculum. The report states that public relations ethics is one of the five courses foundation that need to be included in the undergraduate curriculum. A recent report by the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE), titled *Industry-Educator Summit on Public Relations Education* 2015, describes integrity and ethics as the top personality traits of entry-level practitioners who are willing to hold themselves accountable “(Commission on Public Relations Education. *Industry-Educator Summit on Public Relations Education*, May 2015).

Crucial to professional conduct is “ethics.” Public relations has developed from an occupation to a profession; and public relations associations have supported this development (Gorpe, 2013). The umbrella body for the industry, the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA), shares the characteristics of a profession through their Declaration of Principles:

- Mastery of a particular intellectual skill through education and training
- Acceptance of duties to a broader society than merely one’s clients/employers
- Objectivity
- High standards of conduct and performance (“Code of Ethics”)

Professionalism, professionalization, and ethics are interrelated; ethics has a role to play in promoting the status of public relations. One way is through uniting professionals through a code of ethics, which provides credibility and helps to enhance the industry’s reputation. The history of public relations is replete with examples of unethical behavior. For example, the Press Agency period (19th century) in the “Public Relations Model” is a period that is rich with manipulation, spin, exaggeration, and half-truths (Wilcox and Cameron, 2012, p. 52).

Ethics was first discussed in the context of today’s public relations models in 1906 by Ivy Lee, who issued his “Declaration of Principles.” That was the start of a new model of public relations called the public information model. The core aspect of this declaration was the dissemination of accurate
and true information, rather than distortions and exaggerations. Edwards Bernays, the proponent of the “Two Way Asymmetric Model”, contributed to public relations ethics. While he initially implemented campaigns to encourage American women to smoke, he spent rest of his life taking part in anti-smoking campaigns (http://www.prmuseum.org/video-and-audio/). Moreover, his strong commitment to the licensing of public relations practitioners aimed at protecting the industry from unethical practitioners.

Public relations is often considered to be the “conscience” of management. This role dictates that public relations has a social responsibility to all of the organization’s stakeholder groups (Newsom et al., 2004 p. 146). However, as various scandals have shown, there are situations where public relations did not act as the organization’s “conscience.” Grunig (2009, p.2) states that “at an abstract level, there are a set of generic principles that could be applied universally…..” Almost all the mentioned generic principles have an ethical component. Some of these are “involved in strategic management,” “two-way and symmetrical communication,” and “empowerment of public relations.” Public relations professionals should be part of the top management and function not tactically, but strategically. Public relations should be part of the decision-making group within organizations. We can also interpret such principles as being the basis for public relations practitioners to direct their employers and lead when an ethical condition is violated. Finally, an “ethical” generic principle assigns a role to public relations departments: to practice ethically and promote organizational decisions and behaviors that are socially responsible and ethical.

The discussion on public relations ethics is related to the laws and regulations covering ethical decision makings. In general, the fundamentals of professional codes are based on legal principles, but there are conditions that go beyond these. Therefore, it is not enough just to look at ethics-based laws. Ethics has a voluntary component whereas laws dictate what needs to be done. Fitzpatrick (2006, p. 2) explains this dimension: “Yet, there is a fine line between law and ethics. Societal norms informs the laws and regulations by which democratic societies function. Certainly moral principles are inherent in American jurisprudence. And, as PRSA code illustrates, the reverse is also true: legal principles inform ethics. In many respects, legal standards define minimal expectations for ethical performance.”

Public relations practitioners are faced with various ethical dilemmas. Dilemmas occur when responsibilities and loyalties conflict (Guth and Marsh, 2012 p. 165). Not all ethical situations include dilemmas, but when we look at the many stakeholders which public relations has responsibility towards, in most of the situations, it seems inevitable that a public relations practitioner will face certain ethical dilemmas. In such cases, the distinction between right and wrong is not always obvious. Three principles could be of help in these situations. One is the comparison of harms and benefits: harms should be minimized or avoided. Benefits should be promoted. The second is respect for persons. Third is “distributive justice” – the cost and benefit of any policy/action should be distributed as fairly as it could (Fitzpatrick and Gauthier, 2001 p. 207).

Another aspect related to ethics is the influence of culture on ethical decisions. Society is the body which draws the boundaries on what is right and wrong. For example, giving gifts to journalists can be an accepted practice in certain parts of the world, but could also be considered bribery in other parts. Kruckeberg (1996) looks at this issue from the “values” aspect and states that in societies that have dominant values other than Western values, one should not expect the Western concept of public relations to be practiced. He states: “While the debate must continue regarding the desirability and possibility of ethical universalism in public relations, public relations practices in much of the Middle East would not preclude such ethical universalism” (Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 188).
Public Relations Associations: What do they stand for?

The Criteria for professions also attribute a role to professional associations. Sociologists see the key processes of professionalization as being: 1) emergence of sufficient practitioners to form a critical mass, 2) establishment of training, 3) founding of professional organizations, 4) protection by law, and 5) adoption of a code of ethics (L’Etang, 2008, p. 39). Public relations professional associations can contribute to a better understanding of the public relations profession in society and help its development in several ways. Establishing ethics codes, standards of professional conduct, organizing trainings and other means to help develop their members, cooperation with other national and international associations, accreditation/licensing projects, are their main areas of focus (Gorpe, 2013). Behind all these activities, the goal is simple: to help the recognition of public relations as a profession, and to support its development.

Public relations associations around the world may aim to achieve the same goals, but the associations could be at different stages of development. They reflect this in their priorities. It would not be wrong to say that the professionalism of the association also reflects upon the development of public relations within that country. Although, the primary target of many professional associations is professionals, many associations have added other stakeholder groups, such as public relations students and academics, recognizing their importance in the equation (Gorpe, 2012).

Ethics, Codes and Public Relations Associations

As stated previously, public relations ethics today is largely based on the ethics codes of professional organizations. Membership in these professional organizations is voluntary and those working in the field of public relations do not need to be a member of such an association.

A code of ethics is a guide to both present and future behavior. It specifies the organization’s ethical values and employee responsibilities to various stakeholders (Han et al, 2012, p. 555). Ethics codes show the core values of a profession and suggest means to achieve these.

Industry codes of ethics are general guidelines. Some codes are written to forbid certain types of action and some codes list the ethics principles that one needs to conform to. Industry codes of ethics are criticized for providing little guidance about specific situations, and making the practitioner rely on individual interpretation (Bowen, 2004, p. 75). Public relations professionals could have guidance from different codes of ethics including international, societal, professional, organizational, and personal (Guth and Marsh, 2012 p. 162). For example, the Global Alliance (GA) and International Public Relations Association (IPRA) are the two international professional associations with international ethics codes.

Over time, several codes have been prepared and suggested by professional associations and they have been adopted by others. Information on the date and scope of a sampling of ethics codes can be found below:

Code of Venice (http://www.ipra.org/images/Code%20of%20Venice.pdf)

IPRA Code of Athens, the first international code of public relations (Watson, 2014 and http://www.ipra.org/images/Code%20of%20Athens.pdf)

Code of Lisbon- European Code of Professional Conduct
Aspects of Codes and Ethical conduct.

Tehran, 1968

Stockholm Charter replacing Rome Charter

Helsinki Charter

Ethical codes also go through revisions. For example, IPRA revised its code in 2011. The IPRA Code of Conduct is an affirmation of professional and ethical conduct by its members. It consolidates the 1961 Code of Venice, the 1965 Code of Athens, and the 2007 Code of Brussels.

In addition to these general codes, public relations has specific codes. For example, in recent years, the web and social media have become an area where specific guidelines have been focused. The Chartered Institute of Public Relations has the “Social Media Best Practice Guide” core principles - practical and legal considerations to take into account when designing and implementing a social media campaign.

The codes of professional associations have similarities. Although these codes serve as a binding factor for the profession, when it comes to public relations there is not one comprehensive and binding code, since public relations is not licensed like other professions (i.e. law).

Global Alliance and Their Ethics Research

The Global Alliance developed a global ethical code, the “GA Global Code of Ethics,” in 2003. This code is a benchmark for the national associations, for use in their own codes. Enforcement of the Code of Ethics is left to each member organization. The GA “Global Code of Ethics” can be found on its website.

GA and its ethics research team conducted several studies with its member national public relations associations. One of the outcomes of such work was a comparative analysis of the various codes in use by public relations associations. It covers the various types of codes, their dates of adoption, and their last update. A total of 16 associations participated in this study.

A quick analysis shows that some of the associations use more than one code in their national ethics codes. The code that has been mentioned is the IPRA Code of Athens. The others are the Venice, Tehran, and Lisbon codes. Also, USA and IPRA have been mentioned as well. GA also looked at the similarities in codes of ethics in terms of: “values,” “honesty,” “transparency,” “loyalty,” and “conduct.” It can be concluded that the codes are similar to each other and they all encompass these aspects except that “conduct” is missing from some codes of ethics of national associations.
The GA study also included comparisons of select codes of ethics. “Honesty,” “advocacy/expertise”, “independence,” “loyalty,” “fairness,” “free flow of information,” “competition,” “disclosure of information,” “confidentiality,” “conflict of interest,” “enhancing the profession,” “obligation to code,” and “enforcement of the code” are the parameters of the analysis (http://www.globalalliancepr.org/website/sites/default/files/globalalliance/ethics_codes_comparison.pdf).

The second phase of their research is on enforcement of these existing codes. GA looked at the process of complaints made to the association, the types of complaints/numbers, the action taken, and whether the code is enforced or not by the association. The Code Enforcement research includes 7 participating associations (http://www.globalalliancepr.org/website/sites/default/files/globalalliance/c-annex-june03.pdf).

A general overview of the findings tells us that in these national organizations, a committee deals with the complaint process. The committee’s responsibilities, its nomination processes, service time, and the complaint process vary across associations. Another important finding is that almost all the associations that participated indicated that the numbers of complaints they get are minimal. The GA website provides detailed information on the types of complaints, if enforcement actions were taken or not, and include comments from the national public relations associations.

**Middle Eastern Public Relations Association: Background**

The Middle East Public Relations Association (MEPRA) was founded in 2001. It is the region’s leading body for public relations and communication professionals, including public relations students. On the website, they state that “MEPRA is the voice of the public relations profession in the Middle East. It is an association committed to setting standards of excellence in the communication industry. It is a community where professionals can get industry insights, network with peers and further their professional skills” (http://www.mepra.org/about-us/). MEPRA has a very clear mission statement, stating: “We seek to raise awareness and build understanding of public relations in the Middle East, both as a profession and as a driver of organizational reputation. We do so by promoting industry standards, sharing knowledge and thought leadership and building the capabilities of professionals in the region.” Their values are “advocacy,” “growth,” “intelligence,” and “professionalism.” (http://www.mepra.org/about-us/our-vision/).

MEPRA requires all its members to sign their Code of Conduct (Appendix A: MEPRA Code of Conduct), when inducted as members. Moreover, they are required to abide by the code (http://www.mepra.org/about-us/standards-and-governance/).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a unique case in the development of public relations for a couple of reasons. Due to the country’s rapid socio-economic, educational, and cultural development, public relations has played an increasingly prominent role in government, in response to the challenging demands of the country’s various publics. Public relations has emerged rapidly since the formation of the Federation of the Seven Emirates in 1971- from a profession that did not exist at all to having professional associations, international public relations firms, establishing PR programs, and majors in departments and colleges of communication in universities. Also with two-thirds of the population of the UAE being expatriates of over 160 nationalities and thousands of foreign and international companies, efficient relations between various bodies and organizations in the country are necessary (Kirat, 2006).

Although the UAE have a short history, today’s public relations and advertising industry includes
global players and local agencies. Although it was stated by MEPRA that most local and regional consultancies enjoy a high level of professionalism, there is a perceived difference between the professionalism found in the private and public sectors, between the two urban cities, and the rest of the country. Several issues have been mentioned, of which, one is price cutting. Another issue is managing accounts for two or more competitors. There is “anecdotal” evidence of offers of expensive items as ‘gifts’ to reporters and editors in the UAE (Badran et al, 2009, p. 203).

Method

This study the includes analysis and comparison of MEPRA’s Code of Conduct (See Appendix A) on its website. In addition, questions about the original GA ethics study have been addressed to the Vice-Chair, seeking information about ethics code establishment, education, and enforcement. The replies were received via email. Below are the questions asked:

- Which international Code has MEPRA integrated in its own Code of Conduct? When is it adopted, last updated and if any revisions were made?
- What is the process of making a complaint to the association?
- What is the action/s taken for the complaints?
- What types of complaints does the association receive and the number of complaints received?
- Does the association enforce the Code? If so, how?
- Other comments

The MEPRA Code of Conduct has been analyzed by the researchers the same way other national association codes have been analyzed by the GA. This analysis shows the similarities/differences among national codes of conduct. MEPRA’s code has been analyzed thusly.

Findings:

The findings are presented in three parts. Firstly, an analysis of MEPRA Code of Conduct is made. Appendix A shows MEPRA’s Code of Conduct. Based on this code, an analysis has been done to indicate what is covered in the code. Secondly, the establishment date of the MEPRA Code of Conduct, revisions made and benchmarks for it are shared. Thirdly, the enforcement of the code and other related topics are presented and discussed, based on the data received from the association.

The MEPRA Code of Conduct and Comparison

The MEPRA Code of Conduct has nine items: honesty, advocacy/expertise, independence, loyalty, fairness, free flow of information, competition, disclosure of information, confidentiality, conflict of interest, and enhancing the profession (Table 1). These dimensions/values are taken from the “Comparison of Selected Ethics Codes” done by the GA for 6 national PR associations (http://www.globalalliancepr.org/website/sites/default/files/globalalliance/ethics_codes_comparison.pdf).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Related item from the MEPRA Code of Conduct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honesty</th>
<th>Members should always provide honest and accurate information in all communications with the media, the public or their employer, and work to correct false or erroneous communications if they occur. At no time should a member knowingly use deceptive communications tactics on behalf of their client or employer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy/expertise</td>
<td>Members shall actively pursue professional development and support the learning of others through the sharing of knowledge and experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>A member should always behave in an ethical and legally compliant manner when counseling their clients or employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free flow of information</td>
<td>Members should always provide honest and accurate information in all communications with the media, the public or their employer, and work to correct false or erroneous communications if they occur. At no time should a member knowingly use deceptive communications tactics on behalf of their client or employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>No members shall intentionally harm the profession or other public relations professional’s reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure of information</td>
<td>Members shall not represent conflicting interests without the consent of affected clients or employers. They must also disclose to their client or employer if they are representing any interests where their judgment could be impaired by reason of financial or personal interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>Members should safeguard the privacy of all past, current or prospective future clients and employers, including information about their business affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of interest</td>
<td>Members shall not represent conflicting interests without the consent of affected clients or employers. They must also disclose to their client or employer if they are representing any interests where their judgment could be impaired by reason of financial or personal interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing the profession</td>
<td>Members shall actively pursue professional development and support the learning of others through the sharing of knowledge and experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation to Code</td>
<td>Members shall always act in line with the aims of MEPRA to improve the professionalism of public relations in the Middle East. Members shall always abide by the MEPRA Code of Conduct and the laws and regulations binding their client or employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: An Analysis of MEPRA Ethics Codes

**MEPRA Code of Conduct: Code /when adopted/last updated? (any revisions?)**

The Vice-Chair of MEPRA stated that the association has had a code of conduct since its foundation. The code of conduct was last updated two years ago to make it simpler and more straightforward for the members of the association to understand. At the beginning, the association’s code of conduct was designed for individuals and agency members, distinguishing between the two. The current one integrates both types of membership. The MEPRA Code of Conduct has been influenced by the Code of Venice.

**MEPRA Code of Conduct and Enforcement**

The Association does not enforce the code. It is voluntary. All members should abide by the code. However, no sanctions or punishments are enforced on those who break it. The maximum punishment for violation of the code is to ask the offending member to leave MEPRA.

Anyone who believes that the code has been broken can approach MEPRA to lodge a complaint. The complaint is first studied by the Board. There is no special body within the association to handle complaints. After the complaint is studied by the board, the Chair or Vice-Chair reaches out to the parties involved to talk further. MEPRA’s role is “one of mediation.” Action is “to essentially mediate between the various parties. The only action would be to ask those breaking the code to leave MEPRA.”

Making complaints to MEPRA is “very unusual;” at the most, one or two complaints are received by the Association. The types of complaints mostly revolve around issues of poor service, or, more rarely, defamation (A. Malouf, personal communication. 17 and 27 January 2016).

In the comments received, the reason why the Code has not been enforced are clarified in these words:

“The code of conduct is voluntary and we ask all members to abide by the code. To be a member of good standing with MEPRA, one must follow our code of conduct. However, we cannot enforce the code as we are a voluntary association. We believe that education and dialogue is best to promote good practices in the region (A. Malouf, personal communication, 17 January 2016).

**Concluding Remarks**

The MEPRA Code of Conduct is simple and straightforward. It is written as a set of dos and don’ts. There are two clear statements on the importance of accurate information and to correct false information published by the media, agencies, or clients. Refraining from deceptive communication is mentioned. Protection of privacy covers clients and employers in both the present and future. Conflicting interests and disclosures of information are mentioned in one statement. Ethical and legal compliance is mentioned when working with clients or employers. Damaging the reputation of the profession and other practitioners is covered. One statement is related with abiding by the MEPRA Code of Conduct. Also professional development of the member and knowledge and experience sharing have been mentioned.

MEPRA’s Code of Ethics include: “values,” “honesty,” “transparency,” and “conduct.” “Loyalty” and “fairness” are not clearly noted in the Code. Also the “public interest” has not been mentioned.
It addresses clients, employers, profession, professionalism, media, but does not address the public interest in a direct statement. Expertise exists (“members shall actively pursue professional development and support the learning of others through the sharing of knowledge and experience”), but advocacy is not included.

Few complaints come to the association. This is not surprising; other associations face the same situation (Global Alliance, 2015). However, it would be good to have an independent Ethics Committee structure, where complaints could be studied. The Board should not handle complaints.

It would be good if the association turns public relations ethics into an issue that can be collaborated upon by academics and professionals. Original research papers, professional experiences, and stakeholder groups input (e.g. from the media) can provide guidance on public relations ethics.

This paper is a beginning for the future of collaboration between the association and stakeholder groups. There needs to be a dialogue between these parties to study ethical dilemmas faced in the region. This dialogue will help public relations educators to relate their ethics material to this context. The professional association will be revisiting its role, in relation to its code of ethics.

MEPRA predominantly consists of non-local members. The Board and its members do have an educational and professional background in Western public relations practices. However, they are sensitive and respectful to the practices of the region and have to operate accordingly. Therefore, case studies originating from actual practices in the region would be more relevant to communication/public relations students and the industry. An extension of it could be on ethics and ethics cases. The data produced from this region can also make discussions on global public relations meaningful.

The MEPRA Code of Ethics is similar to other associations’ ethics codes. However, public relations in the UAE has grown quickly in a short time and the status of public relations and its issues need to be clarified and discussed. MEPRA, as the voice of public relations in the region, should be the voice of ethical public relations. Abiding by universal codes is necessary, but it also needs integration with the region’s media and geographical cultures where the profession is practiced.

References


Gorpe, S. (4-5 March 2012). ‘Public Relations Associations: Where are they in the Academia?’ Paper presented at the 2nd Middle East Public Relations Conference, organized by Zayed University-MEPRA. Dubai, UAE.


Online Sources


http://www.cipr.co.uk/content/policy-resources/toolkits-and-best-practice-guides/social-media

http://www.globalalliancepr.org/website/sites/default/files/globalalliance/a-annex-june03.pdf

http://www.globalalliancepr.org/website/sites/default/files/globalalliance/ethics_codes_comparison.pdf

http://www.globalalliancepr.org/website/sites/default/files/globalalliance/c-annex-june03.pdf


http://www.mepra.org/about-us/

http://www.mepra.org/about-us/our-vision/


http://www.prmuseum.org/video-and-audio/

Appendix A: The MEPRA Code of Conduct

1) A member should always behave in an ethical and legally compliant manner when counseling their clients or employers.

2) Members should always provide honest and accurate information in all communications with the media, the public or their employer, and work to correct false or erroneous communications if they occur.

3) At no time should a member knowingly use deceptive communications tactics on behalf of their client or employer.

4) Members should safeguard the privacy of all past, current or prospective future clients and employers, including information about their business affairs.

5) Members shall not represent conflicting interests without the consent of affected clients or employers. They must also disclose to their client or employer if they are representing any interests where their judgment could be impaired by reason of financial or personal interest.

6) No members shall intentionally harm the profession or other public relations professional’s reputation.

7) Members shall actively pursue professional development and support the learning of others through the sharing of knowledge and experience.

8) Members shall always act in line with the aims of MEPRA to improve the professionalism of public relations in the Middle East.

9) Members shall always abide by the MEPRA Code of Conduct and the laws and regulations binding their client or employer (http://www.mepra.org/about-us/standards-and-governance/)
THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON PERSONALITY PREFERENCES FOR WORLD LEADERS: SEASONAL MARKERS OF CHRONOBIOLOGY EFFECTS, by Mark A. Hamilton (University of Connecticut, Chulalongkorn University)

Abstract

The effect of cultural traits on personality preferences for world leaders was examined in two studies. In the first study (N = 118), six dimensions of organizational culture (Hofstede, 2001) were used to predict preferences for leader personality, as marked by the chronobiological aspects of ecliptic longitude (self-worth), wetness of season (schizotypic anxiety), brightness of sign (extraversion), and depth of season (egocentric rigidity). Syntality theory (Cattell, 1948) was used to extend Belief Systems Theory (Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton & Hample, 2011; Hamilton & Mineo, 1996, 1999; Hamilton & Tafoya, 2012; Rokeach, 1956, 1958, 1960; Tafoya & Hamilton, 2012) to countries, predicting the relationships among the six cultural dimensions. Causal modeling largely confirmed the predicted effects across countries. In the second study (N = 365), wetness of season (schizotypic anxiety), brightness of sign (extraversion), and depth of season (egocentric rigidity) all increased the likelihood of being a world leader. Both studies confirmed earlier findings showing that relative age in school increases ecliptic longitude (self-worth) and depth of season (egocentric rigidity) but decreases brightness of sign (extraversion). In turn, the more depressive component of self-worth (ecliptic longitude) increased wetness of season (schizotypic anxiety) and depth of season (egocentric rigidity) while decreasing brightness of sign (extraversion).

Introduction

Recent research has found strong correlations between astrological aspects and particular accomplishments, such as becoming a celebrity (Adel et al, 2014; Hamilton, 2015). Distant star clusters exert insignificant light and gravitational force on earth, leaving a limited number of explanations for the substantial covariation between sun sign and fame. Modern astrophysicists cannot muster any mechanism by which star clusters millions of light years away -- that happen to be visible at the time when a person was born -- could possibly influence subsequent human behavior. Mystics argue distant star clusters exert supernatural effects on earthly events; yet these hypothetical forces fall beyond the scope of science and rely on tautological concepts, such as destiny. Social scientists have suggested the observed patterns of correlation between astrological aspects and occupational choice are spurious but curious. These spurious correlations are a consequence of common causal antecedent variables (CCAs) tied to personality. That is, astrological aspects are actually markers of seasonality that correlate with both (1) the movement of stars across the celestial sphere and (2) patterns in nature that vary by season. This is where biology comes into play, or more specifically chronobiology. Initial conditions for personality development from conception to infancy are tied to biological factors that vary with the season. Consider the known celestial correlates of terrestrial fame. Four astrological aspects at birth appear to influence celebrity: ecliptic longitude sequence (ELS), wetness of sign, depth of sign, and brightness of sign.

Modern evolutionary theories originating with Sewall Wright (1921, 1934) differentiate between causal relationships and spurious relationships between variables that have a CCA variable. Figure 1 shows how experience with one's environment influences personality development. The model describes how stressors in the ecosystem and parental biology impact natal factors. In the model, stressors in the ecosystem influence genetic and maternal conditions. Inclement weather (such as cold season or meteorological events) decreases egg-sperm quality (nuclear DNA) and can degrade maternal hormonal balance (e.g., human chorionic gonadotropin) and diet (Watson & MacDonald, 2007). Inclement weather can also lead to seasonal epidemics which in turn can decrease egg
quality (mitochondrial DNA and cellular machinery) and sperm quality (volume or density), which further reduce maternal hormonal balance and diet. The model also posits that genetic and maternal conditions directly influence natal health. Egg and sperm quality improve the fitness of the fetus, as does maternal hormonal balance and optimal diet. During pregnancy, natal factors improve the health of the newborn. Optimal maternal hormones and diet improve post-birth fitness. Biological factors continue to influence the personality of the child. Natal factors influence the development of the self-concept, with self-concept influencing temperament. Natal fitness decreases depression, partly by increasing self-esteem. Self-esteem increases bonding, partly by decreasing hostility (Tafaya & Hamilton, 2012). The temperament of neuroticism operates within the individualistic affect system, linking depression to hostility and aggression, whereas the temperament of extraversion operates within the cooperative affect system, linking self-esteem to empathy and bonding (Hamilton, 2015). The operation of these two affect systems has a biological basis (see Hamilton, Buck, Chory-Assad, Beatty & Patrylak, 2008; Hamilton & Vekslser, 2014).

![Diagram](125)

The chronobiological patterns described in Figure 1 coincide with celestial patterns and this coincidence gives rise to spurious correlations between a given astrological aspect and a personality consequence of a biological condition. Astrological aspects are markers of biological effects, so an astrological “effect” is an indicator of an underlying biological effect. The ELS divides the zodiac into 12 signs of 30 degrees each. The ELS begins with Aries and is tied to the March equinox in the northern hemisphere. Those born under later signs within the ELS such as Aquarius or Pisces are more likely to achieve notoriety (Adel et al, 2014). This ELS effect occurs even after controlling for other astrological aspects (Hamilton, 2015). ELS would seem to directly influence celebrity.

ELS has a strong correlation with relative age in school such that those who are comparatively older have a greater ecliptic longitude (Hamilton, 2015). In fact, ELS largely mediates the effect of comparative maturity on becoming famous, where this pattern of relationships is very similar to the role of self-worth (Hamilton, 2015). That is, comparative maturity increases achievement within a child’s school cohort, with achievement increasing self-esteem. In turn, elevated self-esteem results in greater self-worth, facilitating celebrity. But not all comparative age effects are linear. Students who suffer from comparative youth within their school cohort are more likely to experience stress, with accumulated stress triggering trauma that begets depression. The effect of comparative youth
on self-worth takes the form of a depressed cubic function (see Hamilton, 2015 Figure 1). Those who are relatively average in age within their cohort glide along with neither the burden of stressors nor the thrill of achievements. According to Belief Systems Theory (Hamilton, 2015), the various relative age effects are one of several biological factors that influence personality development. Attitude toward self and depression are the two supposed mediating variables (see Figure 1) – both of which are tethered to brain chemistry. A greater sense of self-worth may help people in some professions but not others. For instance, actual self-worth may be important for scientists but be less important for politicians.

The 12 signs of the zodiac are associated with four different elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Aristotle described the elements of air and water as “wet,” which has led to the characterization of air signs and water signs as having “wetness.” Recent research (Hamilton, 2015) suggests wetness of signs is associated with fame. A number of studies have associated wetness of sign, birth in January or February in particular, with schizophrenia and neuroticism. If wetness of sign is a proxy for these variables or anxiety, then this could explain the correlations between wetness of sign and fame. Why do those born in January or February have greater schizotypy? It might be that those people conceived in April or May are exposed to particular environmental stressors. It is also possible that those who are born in January or February are more likely to catch influenza or other infectious diseases that shape neuro-physical fitness.

Three different positions within the seasons describe the 12 signs of the zodiac. Cardinal signs are associated with the beginning of each season. Astrologers believe that those born under Cardinal signs are initiators, more inclined to start than finish their work. Fixed signs are associated with the middle of each season. Astrologers claim those born under fixed signs show more single-minded purpose. Mutable signs are associated with the end of each season. Astrologers hold that those born under mutable signs are more adaptable and conforming. Recent research suggests signs associated with the middle of the seasons are more likely to become celebrities. If depth of season is a proxy for self-focus or narcissism, this would explain why depth of season would foster certain types of celebrity. This raises the question as to why those born (and conceived) in the depth of season are more single-minded or egocentric. Reproductive parameters have been found to vary by depth of season across species. Four-month cycles have been reported in humans that suggest a link with prenatal infection rather than childhood infections (Doblhammer, 2004; Knox & Cummins, 1985).

The 12 signs of the zodiac are associated with either bright signs (odd numbered) or dark signs (even numbered). ‘Those born under bright signs are supposed to be more extraverted, whereas those born under dark signs are supposed to be more introverted. If brightness of sign is proxy for extraversion, this would explain why bright sign births might enable an individual to become famous. This begs the question of why those born under a bright sign would be more extraverted. Two-month cycles have been observed in humans (Kinlen & Willows, 1987; Prener & Carstensen, 1990), although the root causes of these patterns require further study.

Belief Systems Theory

Belief Systems Theory (Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton & Hample, 2011; Hamilton & Mineo, 1996, 1999; Hamilton & Tafoya, 2012; Rokeach, 1956, 1958, 1960; Tafoya & Hamilton, 2012) was used to explain the effect of life events, including relative age, on personality and its social consequences. According to the theory, life events shape personality, with personality influencing social attitudes, language, and behavior via ethnologics (informal logics that are used in everyday life). The impact of life events on personality and derived beliefs is structured by affect systems (Hamilton, 2012). These affect systems are shown in Figure 1. Stressors, such as the costs associated with relative age disadvantage, influence personality through the individualistic affect system. Achievements, such as the benefits accrued from a relative age advantage, influence
personality through the cooperative affect system. Life events that are relatively neutral contribute to the background of daily life that establishes the reference point against which stressors and achievements are evaluated within elaborations on the homeostatic affect system.

**Structuring by Affect System**

Selfish emotions within the individualistic affect system supply the neurophysiological substrate for a 4-step causal chain (Hamilton, 2015). Social undermining is a major trigger for the chain, which begins with depression (see Figure 1). Establishing the first link in the chain, serotonin deficits associated with depression reduce reality testing, which encourages schizotypy (schizoid perceptual tendencies characterized by denial). Second, schizotypy fuels hostility through resentment. Third, hostility foments verbal expressions of aggression, representing a positive attitude toward using language to attack others (Hamilton, et al, 2004). Fourth, aggressive attitudes increase assault (Hamilton, et al, 2008), with mass homicide as the most extreme case.

Prosocial emotions within the cooperative affect system supply the neurophysiological substrate for a 4-step causal chain (Hamilton & Tafoya, 2012). First, pride promotes reality testing, fostering empathy (taking the perspective of others). Second, empathy cements bonding by extending a person’s social network to include a greater number of contacts. Third, bonding encourages verbal immediacy and general expressions of positive attitude toward others (Hamilton, et al, 2004). Fourth, verbal immediacy increases physical affection (Hamilton, et al, 2008). The chain of prosocial emotions shown in Figure 1 is triggered by achievement.

As stress triggers the individualistic affect system, it indirectly activates compensation by the homeostatic affect system. Thus, in the chain of emotions beginning with neuroticism (see Figure 1), individualistic affect is buffered by homeostatic processes. Neuroticism can be seen as both a temperament that is a response to selfish emotions (Eysenck, 1988) and fluctuation in attitude toward self (Rosenberg, 1964). Neuroticism is a function of both depression and self-esteem (Hamilton, 2015, Figure 2). Neuroticism increases egocentrism as a person invests more attention to self in an effort to stabilize a wavering self-concept, often resulting in a more fictive reality. In turn, egocentrism heightens anxiety as concerns about preserving a fictive reality increases cognitive elaboration on fear. Consequently, cognitive elaboration on fear increases emotional ambivalence, equivocation, and avoidance.

As achievement triggers the cooperative affect system, it indirectly activates compensation by the homeostatic affect system. Thus, in the chain of emotions that begins with guilt (see Figure 1), cooperative affect is buffered by homeostatic processes. Self-esteem drives up narcissism, as a supercharged attitude toward self. Narcissism, in turn, contributes to contentment, and an extraverted temperament -- a predisposition toward emotional expressiveness. Extraversion increases verbal collaboration (Infante & Wigley, 1986), such as speech accommodation. Finally, verbal collaboration increases collective action.

**Study 1: The Cultural Dimensions as Country Syntality**

If Cattell (1948) is correct, then cultures that represent collectives of those with personality features will show differences that operate much like personality dimensions. These syntality (synthesized personality) features should be present in the well-known Hofstede (2001) dimensions of culture. The present study used the Hofstede online data base consisting of 118 countries to map out culture by personality. Masculinity (femininity) was hypothesized to be a more exogenous dimension to culture, just as sex and gender is relatively exogenous with belief systems (Hamilton et al., 2015). Two of the culture dimensions correspond to indicators of a person’s self-concept, what might be called a “country concept” that includes beliefs about the worth of the country and reality-testing. The two country concept dimensions are individual (collectivism) and indulgence (restraint).
Individualism within culture maps onto the individualistic affect system for people, measured as egocentrism. Indulgence within culture maps onto the cooperative affect system for people, measured as narcissism.

Three of the country concept dimensions correspond to indicators of a person’s temperament, what might be called a “country temperament” that includes generalized beliefs about others. The three country temperament dimensions are the degree of resentment over power and distance in the culture, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. The power distance index within culture maps onto the individualistic affect system for people, measured as resentment (low). Uncertainty avoidance within culture maps onto the individualistic affect system for people, measured as anxiety (low). Long-term orientation within culture maps onto the cooperative affect system for people, measured as social bonding.

Method

Scores for 118 countries on the six culture dimensions listed in the Hofstede online database were used for the analysis. Not all countries are listed in the database. Scores on the six dimensions were correlated and then analyzed with causal modeling to test the syntality predictions shown in Figure 1.

Results

Masculinity (competitiveness, or a lack of femininity) increased individualism (or a lack of collectivism), to a modest degree (\(\rho = .22\)). Individualism decreased power distance (tolerance of status differences in society indicating low resentment), to a very large degree (\(\rho = - .56\)). Indulgence (or a lack of restraint, indicating cultural narcissism) decreased power distance (\(\rho = - .32\)). Indulgence also decreased long-term orientation (addressing present and future challenges for society, indicating social bonding), an effect that was somewhat small (\(\rho = - 018\)). In turn, power distance decreased long-term orientation (\(\rho = - .32\)) but increased uncertainty avoidance (\(\rho = .25\)), which increased long-term orientation (\(\rho = .13\)).

Next, the six culture dimensions were correlated with five chronobiological aspects (relative age plus four astrological aspects) for the leaders of the 118 countries in the Hofstede database. The
correlation matrix for the 11 variables used to test the extended causal model is shown in Figure 2. A causal model based on the predictions from Figure 1 showed good fit: \( RMSE = .069; \chi^2(36) = 9.34, p = .9999; RMSEA = 0 \). The positive effect of relative age on ELS sequence (\( \rho = .51 \)) was slightly lower than expected from Figure 1: \( \rho = .57 \). In turn, the positive effect of ELS on wetness of season was (\( \rho = .35 \)) was somewhat larger than expected from Figure 1: \( \rho = .28 \). Conversely, the negative effect of ELS on brightness of sign was (\( \rho = -.08 \)) was somewhat smaller than expected from Figure 1: \( \rho = -.15 \). Three tenuous effects were replicated among the chronobiological indicators. First, there was one weak effect within the astrological aspects: ELS increased depth of season to .12; this effect was expected to be .09 (from Figure 1). Second, relative age decreased wetness of season to -.13; this was effect expected to be -.11 (from Figure 1). Third, relative age decreased depth of season to -.19; this effect was expected to be -.09 from (Figure 1).

There were three key findings about the influence of the culture dimensions on the aspects of world leaders. First, power distance (low resentment) decreased leader depth of season (egocentric rigidity): \( \rho = -.16 \). Second, long-term orientation (bonding) decreased leader depth of season (egocentric rigidity): \( \rho = -.26 \). Third, long-term orientation increased leader wetness of season (schizotypic anxiety): \( \rho = .16 \).

References


THE EFFECT OF LIFE EVENTS ON PERSONALITY, AUTHORITARIANISM, CONSERVATISM, AND VERBAL AGGRESSION: DEVELOPING A MODEL OF BELIEFS ACROSS CULTURES, by Mark A. Hamilton (University of Connecticut, USA and Chulalongkorn University, Thailand), Jirayudh Sinthuphan (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand) and Shaw Hong Ser, (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand)

Abstract

Meta-analysis is used to model the effect of positive and negative life events on the self-concept and temperament, emotionalism and authoritarianism, and conservatism and language attitudes. Belief Systems Theory (Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton & Hample, 2011; Hamilton & Mineo, 1996, 1999; Hamilton & Tafoya, 2012; Rokeach, 1956, 1958, 1960; Tafoya & Hamilton, 2012) was used as a framework for estimating effects. Belief Systems Theory (BST) proposes a hierarchy of life event effects. Positive life events included triumph, need facilitation, and social support. Negative life events included trauma, need hindrance, and social undermining. BST predicts the impact of life events on conservatism and language attitudes will be mediated by personality (self-concept variables and temperament) and justification processes (emotionalism and authoritarianism). Within the self-concept, self-worth variables included depression, neuroticism, guilt, and self-esteem; reality testing variables included schizotypy, egocentrism, narcissism, and empathy. The temperament variables included hostility, anxiety, extraversion, and bonding. Justification processes included emotionalism, authoritarian submission, and authoritarian aggression. Five facets of conservatism were examined: ethnocentrism, sexual conservatism, religious conservatism, political conservatism, and economic conservatism. A separate model was constructed to test the cultural conservatism thesis which holds that beliefs based on direct personal experience (ethnocentrism and sexual conservatism) serve as the basis for beliefs about social groups (religious and political conservatism); with social group beliefs influencing more abstract policy beliefs (e.g., economic conservatism). The cultural conservatism thesis was tested using causal modeling. Comparing across four cultures (United States, England, The Netherlands, and New Zealand), the relationship between sexual and religious conservatism, and their impact on political conservatism, appeared to vary.

Introduction

In the West and, particularly, in the United States, conservatives are known for their verbal aggressiveness. Right-wing media such as Fox News, NewsMax, and WorldNetDaily, are populated by personalities like Rush Limbaugh, Morning Joe, Imus in the Morning, and Glenn Beck. These personalities often go beyond stating their traditionalist views on issues to zealously savaging their political opponents. Such conservative media attacks fit the definition of verbal aggression (Infante & Wigley, 1986). Campaign positioning by Republican candidates for President in this year’s primary race are rife with aggressive rhetoric against minorities - most notably Donald Trump’s invectives against Mexicans, Muslims, and the disabled. The consequences of the broadcast mauling of centrist and left-wing political opponents, not just for their targets, but for society at large, are ominous: verbal aggression has been shown to lead directly to physical aggression (Hamilton & Hample, 2011). Across the West, there has been a rise in rampage killings (Hamilton, 2016) driven by, what appears to be, a conservative agenda. A majority of states in America host militia movements. Armed militias have become a menace in Oregon, Texas, and other states, leading to armed standoffs or even violent confrontations with the government. The Oklahoma City bombings were carried out by perpetrators with a conservative agenda. The Breivik massacres in Norway are another prime example of right-driven violence.

Assaults by arch-traditionalists are not, however, confined to the West. Islamic extremist groups,
with an eye toward instituting sharia law or even establishing a sharia caliphate, present a real and present danger to the West. Attacks by Islamic State militants have targeted France, Belgium, England, and the United States. Yet the campaign of terror by Islamic militants is even more ferocious in the East. Daily bombings and attacks occur throughout the Middle-East—in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, and Libya. Such bombings or rampage killings have also occurred further south and east—in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, and Thailand. Authoritarianism correlates positively with verbal and physical aggression across studies (Hastings, 2000; Rodrigues, 2010; Steininger, 1975). What remains to be established, however, is the extent to which conservatism mediates the positive effect of authoritarianism on aggression. Given that authoritarianism increases both conservatism and aggression, the most parsimonious explanation is that two consequent variables are spuriously correlated, due to a common causal antecedent. A more likely explanation is that authoritarianism increases conservatism, with conservatism fueling aggression.

On the Democratic side of the 2016 Presidential race, supporters of Bernie Sanders, the most liberal of the candidates, have been accused of verbally battering supporters of Hilary Clinton on social media (Alter, 2016; Karni, 2015). If taking an extreme position on the right or the left is correlated with verbal aggression, then it would be the rigid structure of beliefs rather than the content of beliefs that drives evaluative, opinionated, language directed at others (Rokeach, 1956, 1958). That is, closed-minded or dogmatic thinking is responsible for both verbal aggression and conservatism (Rokeach, 1960). If this rigidity hypothesis is indeed true, then conservatism and aggression are spuriously correlated because both are increased by the authoritarian justification of beliefs. Alternatively, political conservatism emphasizes the acceptance inequality and resistance to change (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sullaway, 2003) -- an emphasis that can legitimize a domineering verbal and even physical response to less powerful individuals and groups. Thus, the rigidity and predation hypotheses provide different answers to the question of what causes verbal aggression.

The present study probes the predation-rigidity question further by examining the structure of conservative beliefs. The cultural conservatism thesis holds that people form their beliefs based on interpersonal interaction with others first, and then, extend those beliefs to groups of others, finally extending those beliefs to more general policies for organizations, cultures, and nations. These formative beliefs may directly influence aggression as much or more than political conservatism. Within the proposed model, formative conservative beliefs depend most proximately on authoritarianism and, more distally, on temperament. The model explores these indirect temperament effects by tracing the impact of temperament back to the self-concept, and ultimately to the life events that shape self-worth.

A Confluence Model of Life Events

The confluence model describes the impact of life events and personality on attitudes, relational messages, and overt social behavior. The proposed model is based on Belief Systems Theory (Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton & Hample, 2011; Hamilton & Mineo, 1996, 1999; Hamilton & Tafoya, 2012; Rokeach, 1956, 1958, 1960; Tafoya & Hamilton, 2012). The model predicts how stressors and achievements in people’s lives shape their personality, which in turn influence how they justify their attitudes, including their social conservatism: these attitudes guide their subsequent verbal and nonverbal behaviors. At the aggregate level, the model predicts how life events common within a society can lead to verbal aggression and assault. The analysis that follows helps to frame the predation-rigidity question without providing a definitive answer. The analysis also considers the cultural conservatism thesis, which predicts that self-concept beliefs and temperament both directly and indirectly influence ethnic, sexual, religious, political, and abstract policy beliefs.
Stressors have an impact on a person’s self-concept and temperament, with these personality antecedents influencing attitudes and behaviors as social consequences (Hamilton & Veksler, 2014). Self-concept and temperament justify attitudes through ethnologics (subjective logical forms) such as authoritarianism. These effects are conveyed through affect systems (Hamilton, 2012). The individualistic affect system is populated by selfish emotions, while the cooperative affect system is populated by prosocial emotions (Hamilton, Buck, Chory-Assad, 2004; Hamilton, Buck, Chory-Assad, & Patrylak, 2008). The individualistic and cooperative affect systems tend to inhibit one another through the operation of the homeostatic affect system (see Figure 1,) as the person seeks to main equilibrium. Stressors initiate a causal flow of physiological processes within the individualistic affect system (Hamilton & Veksler, 2014). In parallel, achievements initiate a causal flow of physiological processes within the cooperative affect system. Due to the affective balancing processes of the homeostatic emotion system (Watt, 2004), stressors inhibit prosocial emotions, whereas achievements inhibit selfish emotions.

Chronobiology effects indicate that life events tend to be hierarchical (Hamilton, 2015) in that events producing chronic arousal have the most impetus; these arousing events influence a person’s ability to meet survival needs and thrive which ultimately effects meaningful social interaction. Among stressors, personal trauma generates chronic arousal, either due to a single devastating event (with enduring physical or emotional suffering) or to a lingering condition that generates negative outcomes. Such major stressors include crises within the family, in relationships, or with close friends (including pets), such as threats to health and wellbeing or extreme loss (e.g., death or being fired from a job).
Trauma directly leads to the two types of stress shown in Figure 1: (1) it hinders the ability to meet basic needs by incapacitating the individual; and (2) it is responsible for stigma, which is reinforced through social undermining. Figure 1 shows a secondary effect of trauma, with hindered needs leading to further social undermining, as people make negative character attributions about those who appear unmotivated to survive. Indeed, there is a positive correlation between hindered attainment of instrumental goals and social undermining (Vinokur & Van Ryn, 1993). The model proposes that verbal aggression (threats, criticism, bullying and cyberbullying, and sarcasm) from others increases subsequent physical aggression and social distancing, such as avoidance.

The hierarchical pattern of life events holds among achievements as well (Hamilton, 2015), with personal triumph producing chronic arousal -- either due to a single propitious event with enduring gratification or to a lasting condition that generates positive outcomes. Such major achievements include accomplishments within the family, in relationships, or with close friends (including pets), such as athletic or sexual feats, as well as extreme enrichment (births or being hired for a new job).

Triumph directly leads to the two types of achievement shown in Figure 1: (1) it facilitates the ability to attain needs through a gain in status or by contributing to future success; and (2) it is responsible for acclaim that is reinforced through social support. Figure 1 shows a secondary effect of triumph, with need facilitation leading to added social support as people make positive character attributions about those who appear to excel at life. The model proposes that verbal affection, praise, and nurturance from others decreases aggression.

Life events often overwhelm those affected by stress and achievement. A difficult environment may yield a spate of traumas and a paucity of triumphs. As a consequence, a person’s needs may be more hindered than facilitated. Conversely, an amenable environment may yield a succession of triumphs and a dearth of traumas. As a consequence, a person’s needs may be more facilitated than hindered. Hence, Figure 1 predicts an inverse relationship between stressors and achievements.

**Belief Systems Theory**

Selfish emotions within the individualistic affect system supply the neurophysiological substrate for a 4-step causal chain (Hamilton, 2015). Social undermining is a major trigger for the chain, which
begins with depression (see Figure 1). Data from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) suggested that more than 10% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 suffered from a major depressive episode (MDE) within the last year and more than 7% of adolescents became severely impaired because of a MDE. Establishing the first link in the chain, serotonin deficits associated with depression reduce reality testing, which encourages schizotypy (schizoid perceptual tendencies characterized by denial). Second, schizotypy fuels hostility through resentment. Third, hostility foments verbal expressions of aggression, representing a positive attitude toward using language to attack others (Hamilton, et al, 2004). Fourth, aggressive attitudes increase assault (Hamilton, et al, 2008), with mass homicide as the most extreme case.

Prosocial emotions within the cooperative affect system supply the neurophysiological substrate for a 4-step causal chain (Hamilton & Tafoya, 2012). First, pride promotes reality testing, fostering empathy (taking the perspective of others). Second, empathy cements bonding by extending a person’s social network to include a greater number of contacts. Third, bonding encourages verbal immediacy and general expressions of positive attitude toward others (Hamilton, et al, 2004). Fourth, verbal immediacy increases physical affection (Hamilton, et al, 2008). The chain of prosocial emotions shown in Figure 1 is triggered by achievement.

As stress triggers the individualistic affect system, it indirectly activates compensation by the homeostatic affect system. Thus in the chain of emotions that begins with neuroticism (see Figure 1), individualistic affect is buffered by homeostatic processes. Neuroticism can be seen as both a temperament that is a response to selfish emotions (Eysenck, 1958) and fluctuation in attitude toward self (Rosenberg, 1964). Neuroticism is a function of both depression and self-esteem (Hamilton, 2015, Figure 2). Neuroticism increases egocentrism as a person invests more attention to self in an effort to stabilize a wavering self-concept, often resulting in a more fictive reality. In turn, egocentrism heightens anxiety as concerns about preserving a fictive reality increase cognitive elaboration on fear. Consequently, cognitive elaboration on fear increases emotional ambivalence, equivocation, and avoidance.

As achievement triggers the cooperative affect system, it indirectly activates compensation by the homeostatic affect system. Thus in the chain of emotions that begins with guilt (see Figure 1), cooperative affect is buffered by homeostatic processes. Self-esteem drives up narcissism, as a supercharged attitude toward self. Narcissism, in turn, contributes to contentment and an extraverted temperament -- a predisposition toward emotional expressiveness. Extraversion increases verbal collaboration (Infante & Wigley, 1986), such as speech accommodation. Finally, verbal collaboration increases collective action.

**Dynamics of the Proposed Confluence Model**

Effect sizes and details of the dynamics of the confluence model shown in Figure 1 can be estimated from prior research. Men are less likely to be subjected to social undermining than women (Auerbach et al, 2010), although this negative effect is small (-.12). Society imposes more stress on women than men, so the negative effect of male sex on stressors should extend to traumas and need hindrances as well (Hamilton & Veksler, 2014). Research on the three forms of stress described in Figure 1 (Hamilton & Veksler, 2014) suggests the effect of trauma on need hindrance is modest (.20), with a larger effect on social undermining (.42); whereas the effect of need hindrance on social undermining is more of a medium-sized impact (.29). For example, drug use (including smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and substance abuse) hinders need satisfaction and is positively correlated with social undermining (French & Conrad, 2001; Radliff, et al, 2012, Tharp-Taylor et al., 2009). The direct effect of trauma on social undermining should be greater than indirect effect through need hindrance (.06). This prediction is consistent with dual-processing accounts of observer evaluations (see Chaiken & Eagly, 1993): the direct effect reflects shallow
processing whereby those suffering trauma are stigmatized and subjected to observer criticism; by contrast, the indirect effect reflects deeper processing, whereby inferences are made about the personalities of those suffering trauma – observations of incapacitation lead to character attribution.

Research has yet to establish whether a dual-processing account of achievement effects holds as well. For achievements, the direct effect of triumph on social support reflects shallow processing, whereby those experiencing triumph are honored and heaped with praise; by contrast, the indirect effect reflects deeper processing whereby inferences are made about the personalities of those experiencing triumph -- observations of empowerment lead to character attribution. The dual-processing account for achievement has not be tested.

**The Effect of Stress on the Individualistic Affect System**

Social undermining substantially increases depression. One of the most important factors that affect young people’s attitudes and behavior is their social relationship; especially peer relationship (e.g., Hecht, Inderbitzen, &Bukowski, 1998; Vernberg, 1990). During adolescence, peer networks form and develop (La Greca & Prinstein, 1999). Friends, rather than parents, become the primary source of support and have huge impacts on adolescent’s mental and physical health condition (Carver, Joyner, & Udry, 2003). Some peer relationships can result in positive feelings and attitudes, whereas others lead to negative mental health conditions. Considerable research has accumulated to establish the relationship between undermining and mental health problems among school youth. Peer victimization is the strongest predictor of depression, compared to other maladjustments (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). The effect of need hindrance on depression may be mediated by social undermining. Trauma causes people to self-medicate with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs in order to cope (Ford & Schroeder, 2009; Sullivan et al., 2006). Drug dependence would lead to social undermining, which increases depression. This would explain the positive correlation between substance abuse and depression (Eisenberg et al., 2007).

Within the individualistic affect system, depression increases hostility (by amplifying schizotypy), with hostility increasing verbal aggressiveness (.54), and verbal aggressiveness leading to physical aggression (.38). Male sex also contributes to verbal aggression (.15). This causal chain explains the link between depression and assault, including homicide or even mass homicide. Paralleling this depression-driven chain of effects is the parallel chain generated by the interaction between the individualistic and homeostatic affect systems. Male sex has a negative effect (-.19) on neuroticism (Kessler et al, 2008). The fluctuations in self-esteem that give rise to neuroticism (Rosenberg, 1964) appear greater for women than men - likely because they are more dependent on external validation. Neuroticism heightens anxiety (by exacerbating egocentrism), with anxiety increasing equivocation, which, in turn, leads to avoidance.

As the individualistic affect system blends with homeostatic regulation, the depression-driven chain interacts with the neuroticism-driven chain. Within the structure of the self-concept, depression increases neuroticism (.40) and schizotypy should increase egocentrism. Temperament covers a person’s generalized beliefs about others. Within the structure of temperament beliefs, anxiety increases hostility (.35). Finally, there should be a positive correlation between social consequences that are aggressive and those that are avoidant. That is, overt aggression, more often than not, is compensated for by social distancing (Hamilton et al, 2008). The model in Figure 1 predicts verbal aggression will increase equivocation with a similar effect of assault on avoidance. The model makes a more provocative prediction – that equivocation will increase assault. Thus, the confluence model predicts, by increasing depression and then anxiety, verbal aggression from others foments both assault and equivocation.
The Effect of Achievement on the Cooperative Affect System

Age increases the opportunities for achievement up to a point at middle age, then has a negative effect on outcomes. That is, age should have a quadratic effect on achievement, in the form of an inverted-U. For those in the adolescent to young adult range, age should increase personal triumphs and need facilitation, such as increased income. Together, triumph, need facilitation, and social support bolster a person’s attitude toward self as shown in Figure 1. Within the cooperative affect system, pride increases bonding by encouraging empathy. The positive effect of empathy on bonding is enormous (.82, Tafoya & Hamilton, 2012). Bonding, in turn, increases verbal immediacy (.30), with immediacy leading to affection displays (.78). In addition, affection appears to be directly increased by empathy (.49) and social bonding (.16). By contrast, male sex has a direct negative effect on affection displays (-.09). Paralleling the chain driven by pride is the chain generated by the interaction between the cooperative and homeostatic affect systems. The aggregate effect of achievement generates a modest bump in self-esteem (.21). Self-esteem serves as the engine that drives narcissism. As the chain continues, narcissism should enable contentment - so the person should feel more comfortable engaging others, resulting in extraversion. However, narcissism also has a substantial positive on verbal aggressiveness (Hamilton et al, 2008). This effect provides a path by which self-esteem can fuel verbal aggression. Conversely, achievements should increase extraversion, with contentment and extraversion increasing verbal collaboration (Infante & Wigley, 1986). Finally, verbal collaboration increases the likelihood of collective action.

As the cooperative affect system blends with the homeostatic affect system, the pride-driven chain interacts with the chain driven by self-esteem. Self-esteem should be positively correlated with pride. Verbal immediacy should facilitate collective action (.38).

Mutual Inhibition of Affect Systems

Social undermining should have a large negative effect on self-esteem (-.57). Conversely, achievement should lessen depression (-.16). Extraversion should dampen neuroticism (-.54) and anxiety (-.50). Self-esteem should decrease depression (-.55), neuroticism (-.47), and anxiety (-.44). Empathy should lower hostility (-.36). Note, it is the negative effect of empathy on hostility that allows achievements to indirectly reduce aggression. That is, achievement increases empathy, with empathy decreasing hostility and subsequent aggression.

As in the earlier reversal of flow within the temperament structure, hostility should decrease bonding (-.20). In addition, verbal aggression decreases verbal collaboration (-.64) and assault decreases collaborative acts (-.43). Finally, social distancing should increase verbal collaboration as a way to mitigate concerns about becoming isolated.

Testing the Cultural Conservatism Hypothesis

Building on Belief Systems Theory, the self-concept should influence temperament, with both shaping justification processes used; where temperament and justification influence attitudes – most notably conservatism or an adherence to convention. The cultural conservatism thesis (see Hamilton & Mineo, 1999) holds that beliefs develop from direct experience with individuals and are extended to social groups and, ultimately, to more abstract policies within a larger organization, culture, or nation. Meta-analysis indicates that authoritarianism increases political conservatism in two ways (Hamilton & Mineo, 1999). First, authoritarianism increases ethnocentrism (.67), with ethnocentrism increasing political conservatism (.36). Second, authoritarianism increases political conservatism through a second path (.40), one that is not mediated by ethnocentrism. More recent evidence indicates the second way authoritarianism influences political conservatism is through sexual conservatism and probably ethnocentrism.
Authoritarianism increases sexual conservatism (Lambe, 2004). The tendency to reject minorities and those who appear to be physically different should encourage sexual conservatism, particularly a distain for hedonism (Lewis & Maltby, 2000); although this effect may not extend to beliefs about traditional sex roles, gender norms, and behavior (Ray, 1973). In turn, sexual conservatism can influence religious conservatism, as people who are averse to sensual sensation and lack the capacity for intimacy seek a Puritanical foundation for their feelings (Lewis & Maltby, 2000; Stewart & Webster, 1970; Wilson & Brazendale, 1973). Conversely, strict interpretation of some religious doctrines may lead to more negative attitude toward same-sex relationships (Jonathan, 2008) and appears to promote sexually conservative legislation (McCann, 2011). Hence, the extent to which sexual conservatism increases religious conservatism and vice versa remains to be determined, given the possible reciprocal swirl of sexual morality shown in Figure 2. Nonetheless, these three belief components (ethnocentrism, sexual conservatism, and religious conservatism) constitute pillars of political conservatism. In turn, political conservatism is the foundation of more abstract policy beliefs for society at large, such as those concerned with economic conservatism (and its behavioral extension to militarism), environmental conservatism (challenging global warming, advocating for fossil fuels and against renewable energy sources), and health conservatism (advocating against government run patient care).

Study 1

The first study examined the effect of authoritarian justification on belief rigidity and political conservatism. Correlational data from Crano (1970) were used to test three predictions from the model in Figure 1. The first prediction was dogmatism would increase authoritarianism by .84. Hamilton and Mineo (1999) constructed two causal models using correlations corrected for attenuation. For the causal model based on data from Rokeach and Fruchter, they found the effect of dogmatism on authoritarianism was .87. For the causal model based on data from Plant, they found the effect of dogmatism on authoritarianism was .84. The effect of dogmatism on authoritarianism was .84, which is easily within sampling error of the values from the two other data sets.

The second prediction was authoritarianism would increase belief rigidity by .69. That is, those who are high in authoritarianism are more likely to possess beliefs that are resistant to change than those who are low in authoritarianism. The size of this effect can be corrected for attenuation due to measurement error. Corrected for attenuation, the effect of authoritarianism on belief rigidity in the Rokeach and Fruchter data was .83.

The third prediction was authoritarianism would increase political conservatism. The average correlation between the authoritarianism and political conservatism obtained from the Rokeach studies was .57 (Hamilton & Mineo, 1999). Corrected for attenuation, the effect of authoritarianism on political conservatism in that study rises to .65.

Method

The 100 respondents in the study by Crano (1970) completed the dogmatism scale (Rokeach, 1960), the authoritarianism scale (Sanford, et al, 1950), the belief rigidity scale (Gough & Sanford, 1952), and the political conservatism scale (Rokeach, 1954). The reliabilities of these scales were estimated from the literature as .85 for the dogmatism scale, .90 for the authoritarianism scale, .83 for the rigidity scale, and .86 for the political conservatism scale. The correlations among the variables were corrected for attenuation and a causal model constructed.

Results

The model based on BST appears in Figure 3. The model had excellent fit: RMSE = .052, $\chi^2(3,100)$
Dogmatism increased authoritarianism, \(\rho = .69\), although the value is somewhat smaller than expected. Authoritarianism increased rigidity, \(\rho = .74\). The size of this effect was slightly smaller than the predicted value of .83. Finally, authoritarianism increased political conservatism, \(\rho = .78\). The size of this effect was slightly larger than the predicted value of .65. The difference between the results obtained from the Crano data and the results from previous studies are well within what would be expected from sampling error, given that the size of the Crano sample is only 100.

Conclusions

The findings from Study 1 suggest that authoritarianism renders behaviors more rigid and enhances political conservatism. Just as in the Rokeach and Fruchter data, there was no effect of belief rigidity on political conservatism nor an effect of political conservatism on belief rigidity. That is, the correlation between the two variables was equal to the product of the effect of authoritarianism on rigidity and the effect of authoritarianism on political conservatism. These findings are consistent with the model shown in Figure 1.

Prior research indicated there are at least two ways in which authoritarianism increases political conservatism. First, authoritarianism increases ethnocentrism, with ethnocentrism increasing political conservatism. Second, other variables, such as sexual conservatism and religious conservatism, may mediate the effect of authoritarianism on political conservatism.

Study 2

The second study examined authoritarianism as an antecedent to sexual, religious, and political conservatism. As part of the cultural conservatism hypothesis, the model in Figure 1 proposes conservatism based on personal experience, such as ethnocentrism and sexual conservatism, leads to conservative beliefs about institutions, such as church and state. Institutional conservatism, in turn, leads to conservative beliefs about abstract public policies, such as economics, the environment, and health. The data for this analysis was collected in three countries: England (Wilson, 1970), The Netherlands, and New Zealand (Wilson & Patterson, 1970). Responses to a 50-item belief inventory were subjected to an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), using the Principal
Components method. For each of the three countries, Wilson (1970, p. 75-76) settled on a four-factor solution. His four EFA factors were: rules (conventionalism), ethnocentrism, religious conservatism, and sexual conservatism.

### Method

Wilson (1970) presented factor loading matrices for the data from The Netherlands ($n = 279$), England ($n = 200$), and New Zealand ($n = 357$). The factor loading matrices were used to regenerate the correlation matrices (see Hamilton & Mineo, 1996 for a description of this procedure). The 50 items on the belief inventory were subjected to a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), one country at a time. Item quality was assessed using the criteria of homogeneity of content, internal consistency, and external consistency.

The three CFAs confirmed four latent factors existed, although the indicators for the four factors differed from those obtained from the EFA. This difference is not surprising given that Wilson (1970) acknowledged the four factors were substantially correlated. The EFA rules factor was interpreted as an authoritarianism factor in the CFA. Similarly, the EFA ethnocentrism factor was interpreted as a political conservatism factor in the CFA. Two of the factors had the same content in the EFA and CFA – sexual conservatism and religious conservatism.

### Results

The correlations among the four factors for each of the three countries were computed, along with the coefficient alpha reliabilities for each of the four scales. The correlations among the four variables, authoritarianism, sexual conservatism, religious conservatism, and political conservatism, were corrected for attenuation based on the reliabilities obtained for each country. The models based on BST appear in Figure 3.

**The Netherlands sample.** The model for the data from The Netherlands had adequate fit: $RMSE = .08$, $\chi^2(1,279) = .61, p = .44$. Authoritarianism increased sexual conservatism ($\rho = .69$), sexual conservatism increased religious conservatism ($\rho = .41$), and religious conservatism increased political conservatism ($\rho = .29$). This was the 3-step sequence predicted by the cultural conservatism hypothesis, although its indirect effect on political conservatism was slight (.08).

Authoritarianism increased religious conservatism ($\rho = .46$). Sexual conservatism did not mediate this effect, but ethnocentrism might - assuming authoritarianism increases ethnocentrism $\rho = .67$ as proposed in Figure 2. If ethnocentrism increased religious conservatism $\rho \approx .69$, this would yield an indirect effect of authoritarianism on religious conservatism of .46. This model assumes ethnocentrism and sexual conservatism operate independently of one another. Finally, authoritarianism increased political conservatism ($\rho = .46$) without mediation from religious conservatism. We suspect this effect is mediated by rationality, although the indirect effect of authoritarianism on political conservatism mediated by rationality is predicted to be a mere .22. For the indirect effect to be twice as large, either authoritarianism must have a much larger negative impact on rationality (the rejection of impiety effect), or rationality must have a larger negative effect on political conservatism.

**England sample.** The model for the data from England closely resembled that for The Netherlands sample, although it had the less impressive fit: $RMSE = .12$, $\chi^2(1,200) = .88, p = .35$. Authoritarianism increased sexual conservatism ($\rho = .41$), sexual conservatism increased religious conservatism ($\rho = .17$), and religious conservatism increased political conservatism ($\rho = .20$). This was the 3-step sequence predicted by the cultural conservatism hypothesis, although its indirect effect on political conservatism was approximately zero (.01).
Authoritarianism increased religious conservatism ($\rho = .42$). Again, although sexual conservatism did not mediate this effect, ethnocentrism might - assuming authoritarianism increases ethnocentrism $\rho = .67$ as proposed in Figure 1. If ethnocentrism increased religious conservatism $\rho = .63$, this would yield an indirect effect of authoritarianism on religious conservatism of .42. Finally, authoritarianism increased political conservatism ($\rho = .52$) without mediation from religious conservatism. As with The Netherlands sample, we suspect this effect is mediated by rationality, although, as we noted, the indirect effect of authoritarianism on political conservatism mediated by rationality is predicted to be a mere .22. For the indirect effect to be over twice as large, either authoritarianism must have a much larger negative impact on rationality, or rationality must have a larger negative effect on political conservatism.

**New Zealand sample.** The model for the data from New Zealand differed from that of the other two samples. The model had a marginally good fit: $RMSE = .11$, $\chi^2(1,357) = 2.06$ $p = .36$. Authoritarianism increased sexual conservatism ($\rho = .73$), but sexual conservatism had no effect on religious conservatism, yet religious conservatism did increase political conservatism ($\rho = .56$). The cultural conservatism hypothesis predicts a 3-step sequence that did not apply to the New Zealand data.

Authoritarianism increased religious conservatism ($\rho = .61$). Again, although sexual conservatism did not mediate this effect, ethnocentrism might, given authoritarianism increases ethnocentrism $\rho = .67$. If ethnocentrism increased religious conservatism, $\rho = .91$, this would yield an indirect effect of authoritarianism on religious conservatism of .61. The size of this effect is somewhat implausible. Hence it may be for the New Zealanders, authoritarianism has a larger effect on ethnocentrism than for people from other countries. Finally, authoritarianism increased political conservatism ($\rho = .15$) without mediation from religious conservatism. As we noted, the indirect effect of authoritarianism on political conservatism mediated by rationality is predicted to be a mere .22. Thus, the predicted effect from Figure 1 is only .07 larger than the observed effect of .15 for the New Zealanders.

**Conclusions**

The indirect effect of authoritarianism on political conservatism, jointly mediated by sexual conservatism and religious conservatism, was approximately zero across the three studies (.03 on average). The lack of any appreciable indirect effect, beyond those shown in Figure 1, suggests religious conservatism, and perhaps sexual conservatism, may mediate the effect of ethnocentrism on political conservatism. We speculated ethnocentrism substantially increased religious conservatism for the Dutch and English, and less so for the New Zealanders. Authoritarianism increased sexual conservatism more for the Dutch and New Zealanders than for the English. The positive effect of authoritarianism on religious conservatism and the positive effect of religious conservatism on political conservatism were stronger for the New Zealanders than for the English or the Dutch.

The positive effect authoritarianism has on political conservatism, which is supposed to be mediated by rationality and not religious conservatism, was much stronger for the English and the Dutch, than for the New Zealanders. In fact, the size of the effect for the New Zealanders was very close to that predicted in Figure 1. The large effects observed for the Dutch and English suggest either (1) the negative effect of authoritarianism on rationality may be underestimated for members of these two countries; or (2) the negative effect of rationality on political conservatism may be underestimated for members of these two countries.

**Discussion**

The two studies provide general support for the confluence model proposed in Figure 1 and the
cultural conservatism thesis featured in Figure 2. The results do not answer the predation-rigidity question directly, so further research is required to determine the extent to which political conservatism mediates the effect of authoritarianism on verbal and physical aggression. The literature suggests the three types of conservatism that drive political conservatism have differential effects on verbal aggression: ethnocentrism and sexual conservatism appear to increase it, whereas religious conservatism appears to decrease it.

The findings also have implications for the cultural conservatism thesis. It seems ethnocentrism does increase sexual conservatism, with sexual conservatism increasing religious conservatism by a small amount. It is unclear whether religious conservatism also exerts a positive influence on sexual conservatism, forming a reciprocal loop that might be best labeled as “sexual morality.” All three pillars of conservatism show evidence of increasing political conservatism.

Across the four cultures, the findings for the United States and England, presented as the first and second panels in Figure 3, are consistent with the predicted effects proposed in Figure 1 and, more specifically, in Figure 2. The results for New Zealand, presented in the third panel, are also consistent with the proposed model, although they do not show sexual conservatism increasing religious conservatism; this finding is due in large part to the strong impact authoritarianism has on religious conservatism in the New Zealand sample. The Dutch sample showed a stronger effect of sexual conservatism on religious conservatism than the other cultures.

References


SAVING THE WORLD, ONE COUNTRY AT A TIME: THE IMPACTS OF CULTURE IN INTERNATIONAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, by Alexandra Howard (Emerson College, USA)

Abstract

Crossing international boarders is a large step for any corporation; but when a nonprofit organization steps out into the world, there is a plethora of new challenges and opportunities awaiting it. Nonprofit organizations can cross borders in two ways: either through the actual work they do or by expanding their organization to have international locations. Through reviewing the processes that organizations, such as the Make A Wish Foundation and the Ford Foundation, underwent while globally expanding, other nonprofits can learn successful methodologies and practices for going global.

With organizations that cross borders in order to move into new locations, such as Make A Wish, the process of expansion would closely resemble the same process in the for-profit world. It would begin with the construction of an international communication and marketing campaign. However, with nonprofits, the campaign would sell the idea and the mission as opposed to a product. This is where potential difficulty may arise. Making large changes in nonprofits is always a precarious move due to the instability of their financial state. As a result, bringing the cause outside of their country and to other parts of the world might deter investors; Therefore resulting in the necessity of finding international donors and people who whole-heartedly believe in the mission’s ability to work in a different country. The differences between cultures can impact the acceptance of the nonprofit as a whole, as well as its ability to actually find success. Although a certain group of people may be in dire need in a certain part of the world, there may be overarching intergovernmental conversations that prevent intervention. The extensive research and planning that must go into an international move must also cover the ways in which the country functions politically and financially.

On the other hand, should a nonprofit be expanding globally in order to achieve their mission, it will face an entirely different set of barriers. These organizations will not face the same type of potential backlash from going abroad because that is what their mission states they will do. Many donors are more focused on helping the world as a whole and may be excited by the opportunity to help citizens around the world. These organizations will however have to do just as much, if not more, research into how the country’s government functions. Certain leaders may not be accepting of foreigners coming into their country and helping their people in ways they can’t or choose not to. The Ford Foundation is currently experiencing this cultural backlash firsthand in India. Furthermore, these organizations also have to worry more about where their funding will go through these international missions; transportation, housing, and food for their employees all become new factors.

Introduction

Nonprofit organizations face an entirely unique set of challenges and opportunities in the case of international expansion, especially in the case of East-West cultural clashes. Although, it is undeniable there are some considerable cultural differences between the Eastern and Western peoples, the global expansion of the nonprofit sector has allowed an innovative and creative way of saving the world to begin to take shape. Given that business has been conducted between these sides of the world for almost as long as trade and business have existed, companies are continuing to learn the importance of cultural knowledge and respect in order to regulate commerce. This is
still relatively new territory for non-profit organizations. Due to the nature in which non-profits form and function, they rarely have the financial stability and capability to bring their mission to nation-states outside their own. Fortunately, non-profit organizations are beginning to understand the benefits of following in the international footsteps of for-profit businesses; not only in their business models, but in their future plans and expansionary goals. The examples set by international for-profit organizations have subsequently led more nonprofits to attempt to expand into other countries or even to create organizations strictly built to work abroad. Through the assessment of cultural differences and analysis of the success levels of international nonprofits, I hope to show how important it is for nonprofit organizations to have well-developed cultural knowledge and to make use of culture as a tactic towards their success. Without extensive cultural compatibility and understanding, a nonprofit cannot function in a country outside of its own.

On the surface, the culture and daily lives of Eastern and Western nations exist in opposition of one another. “[T]he Western style of thought is characterized as embodying the value of 'individual distinctiveness' or 'independence,' whereas ‘the Eastern style of thought embodies the value of 'harmonious social relations' or 'interdependence’” (Ortner, 2003). The ways in which people go about their lives, make decisions, and solve problems is especially important to the ability of a nonprofit organization to succeed within a given nation. Numerous cultural characteristics have the potential to interfere with the methods and actions implemented by a given nonprofit. Perhaps, the most important factor, in determining whether or not a nonprofit has the ability to succeed, is the analysis of the thinking mode of a particular culture. Thinking mode is the way a person goes about making a decision or working through a problem (Luo, 2009). Due to differences in culture, the thinking modes of Eastern and Western nations are thought to be almost exact opposites: “The east culture emphasizes deduction and it is accustomed to reason from common to specific, i.e. deducting common principle to specific conclusion. But west culture emphasizes induction and it is accustomed to reason from specific to common, i.e. finding out common essential of the same sort of thing from the characters of many specific things” (Luo, 2009). Divergent thinking modes signify that people have alternative ways of looking at problems and potential solutions. Although, everyone across the board may agree poverty is an issue, Eastern and Western nations would likely diagnose the root cause of the problem through opposing methodologies - i.e. deductive verses inductive reasoning processes, and arriving at differing sets of alternative solutions. Therefore, the solution(s) a given nonprofit organization is built around may not be effective or seem reasonable to within a national context with an alternative way of addressing the issue, despite addressing an “indisputable issue”, such as hunger or poverty. For example, a nonprofit addressing ending childhood hunger in the West may decide the best possible solution is to give food to families directly to help parents feed their children. However, a nonprofit in the East (looking to solve the same problem) may believe going straight to the families will prove ineffective, possibly resulting in the children not getting their share of the food. Therefore, they may decide to give food to school lunch programs in order to ensure children are fed in a more supervised environment. These opposing thinking patterns can ultimately lead to a nonprofit organization being unsuccessful within particular cultures.

The ways people within Eastern and Western cultures break down a problem and discover a solution, contradict each other. People of Eastern cultures tend to be more holistic - looking at the entirety of a problem and seeking to find a long-term solution (Tokonaga, 2014). People of Western cultures, conversely, tend to break down a problem into subcategories - being likely to diagnose each subcategory in a linear fashion that will ultimately lead to the entire problem having a multitude of solutions (Tokonaga, 2014). When breaking down the root cause of a problem, “[t]he east culture favors comprehensive thinking, i.e. uniting various parts of the object as one entity. English and American cultures favor analysis thinking, i.e. decomposing one complete object into various composing parts and aspects from idea” (Luo, 2009). Hence, a nonprofit from the East
would be more likely to have a broad mission that aims to solve the entirety of an issue; whereas nonprofit from the West (given a similar domain) would likely have a very specific mission that looks directly at a part of the overarching issue. Therefore, even if two nonprofits across the globe have ultimately chosen to address the same issue, they may likely decide upon different routes for achieving their respective goals, which may contradict one another. Concerning the issue of poverty, for instance, nonprofit organizations in the Eastern world would presumably attempt to combat this issue by providing a multitude of services in response to the numerous effects of poverty. For example, the organization Asha in India “tackle[s] all the issues that keep slum dwellers trapped in poverty” (Asha India, 2016). They provide services and training to help people with healthcare, financial services, education, and empowerment. Their mission statement reads, “[t]o work with the urban poor to bring about long-term and sustainable transformation to their quality of life. Through a practical expression of the Christian values of faith, hope and love, we aim to provide holistic community-based healthcare, empowerment, financial inclusion, education and environmental improvements by training, resourcing and encouraging slum communities to receive and enjoy their basic human rights” (Asha India, 2016). Asha attempts to tackle a portion of every single issue ailing the poor in Delhi. However, it is incredibly difficult to find an organization in the Western world that would be quite so daring in their goals. In the search for poverty nonprofits, one would, in all likelihood, come across an organization that aims to provide food to the poor or to provide one type of financial support. In a list on MSWOnlineprograms.org of ninety-nine organizations tackling poverty-related issues, sixty-six dealt with hunger (MSWOnlineprograms.org, 2016). Western nonprofits are more likely to choose a specific aspect of poverty, such as hunger, to focus on before even considering grappling the other issues. These alternative methods of problem solving therefore become a cultural barrier to the potential success of any nonprofit.

Regardless of the intent behind most nonprofits, there is the potential for any organization to be incompatible with a given nation’s cultural background. Also, there is a possibility the potential host nation does not want international interference in the lives of its people. In recent years, China and India have become warier of allowing international nonprofits to work within their borders and have expressed interest in domestically performing the same services. At the end of May 2015, the Ford Foundation a nonprofit, based in New York City, that strives to advance human welfare around the world, was put on India’s “watch list” of international nonprofit organizations, including Mercy Corps and the Sierra Club, that have had their funds restricted by the Indian government (Chandrashekhar, 2015). It has been assumed “[t]he action has been linked to Ford’s funding of a trust led by human rights activist Teesta Setalvad, who has championed the cause of riot victims in Gujarat where Modi (India’s Prime Minister) previously served as chief minister. The Gujarat government in March accused Ford of interfering in the ‘internal affairs’ of India and ‘of abetting communal disharmony’” (Chandrashekhar, 2015). Although the Indian people may have benefited greatly from the financial support provided by the Ford Foundation, the political standing of the organization with the Indian government ultimately inhibited the ability of the Ford Foundation to work towards its mission. Modi implied that foreign organizations were using non-for-profit missions to achieve industrial work in an attempt to westernize the Indian economy (Firstpost, 2015). The Indian government has begun to propose new laws, altering the ways in which international nonprofit organizations will be permitted to function within the nation: “Under a proposed law, foreign-funded NGOs face more regulatory hurdles and must agree their work will not be ‘detrimental to the national interest’” (Firstpost, 2015). Although the Indian government is not negating the issues of poverty, the Prime Minister ultimately decided the specific way the Ford Foundation was going about their mission did not align with the Indian way of life and threatened Indian cultural identity.
Similarly, the Chinese government has begun to view foreign nonprofits as potential security threats and as impeding the Chinese government’s ability to provide for its citizens (Chin, 2015). A United Kingdom-based nonprofit called Rights Practice, that works to advance the respect and protection of human rights around the world, had been partnering with the Yirenping Center in Beijing (Rights-practice.org, 2016). An employee of this organization, and British citizen, named Tim Miller, had been working in Beijing for Rights Practice for about three years, was asked to leave China early last year, after it was disclosed he was working for an international nonprofit. With an expanding Chinese economy, more and more nonprofit organizations have begun to surface throughout the country and people from all over the world are eager to get involved; however, existing regulations do not permit foreign nonprofits (Chin, 2015). As in India, the Chinese government is wary of allowing foreign nonprofits to interfere with domestic affairs. Although both the Ford Foundation and Rights Practice were in foreign nations, intending to assist the citizens of those nations to achieve their highest potential, they have ultimately been limited in their ability to do so, based on the fact that they may not be culturally compatible with the nations in which they work. No matter how much good a nonprofit may aim to do, the nonprofit sector is still within the realm of business and cannot help someone purely of necessity. When entering a foreign country, it is impossible to succeed without the knowledge of and support from that nation’s government and people.

Though sometimes, nonprofit organizations have failed to find a working relationship to serve a nation in need, there are plenty of organizations that have found harmonious business relationships all over the world. The Make A Wish Foundation is one of the largest wish granting nonprofit organizations in the world and has “collectively granted approximately more than 350,000 wishes worldwide since 1980” (Worldwish.org, 2016). The Make A Wish Foundation began expanding internationally in 1993 and has since established thirty nine affiliates around the world, including: China, Thailand, Israel, Pakistan, Turkey, United Kingdom, among others (Worldwish.org, 2016). The Make A Wish Foundation has grown to be an incredibly successful business and operates as such. Subsequently, the organization is able to function internationally with great ease. However, it has been incredibly thoughtful about what types of nations to form relationships with and found affiliates in. They have chosen countries that, not only see the merit behind the mission, but can appreciate the methods it implements. Although some may believe it would a better use of resources to scientifically and medically help these dying children, people around the world, regardless of culture, are able to understand and appreciate the necessity of giving any form happiness to a dying child. Additionally, due to the medical limitations of deathy ill children and related expenses thereof, the nations it has chosen to work within tend to be relatively financially stable and have well-developed medical resources. This is perhaps seen most clearly by the fact Make A Wish has no affiliates in Africa, despite having affiliates on every other continent, excluding Antarctica. Africa is typically perceived as an incredibly poor set of nations with a variety of deadly diseases taking their toll on its citizens. The Make A Wish Foundation, has chosen not to enter Africa, as of yet - most likely due to the lack of medical advancement as well as the number of children who would be eligible for wish granting. The Foundation’s goal is to grant the wish of every eligible child and it may be aware that taking on Africa is, at the moment, more than they can handle and their business would likely suffer. The Make A Wish Foundation, highlights the importance of fully understanding the cultural and economic workings of the nations in which they wish to operate. Make A Wish utilizes culture as a way of enhancing the wish experience, while moving beyond culture to find a very necessary goal.

In addition to the Make A Wish Foundation, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the largest conservation organization in the world, has been helping protect wildlife and the environment, around the world, since 1961. The organization has eighteen priority places which are the focus its efforts in North America, South America, Asia, and Africa; though it was originally founded in
Sweden (World Wildlife Fund, 2016). The WWF, like the Make A Wish Foundation, has shaped their mission and methods to easily appeal to all people, regardless of cultural implications. The organization, although aiming to conserve nature and wildlife, is centered around people. The WWF works to educate people about the importance of these priority places as well as help and promote the people who live in and around these critical environmental regions. The organization focuses on the importance of one coexisting ecosystem that all people and all things are a part of. Furthermore, it relates the issues of nature back to culture. For example, in explaining the issue of climate change facing the Arctic, the WWF says “Alaska and Chukotka (Russia) have a lot in common, from indigenous cultures and languages to plant species, seabirds, and marine mammals such as the polar bear, bowhead whale, and walrus. These species and the hundreds of indigenous communities who depend on them share another trait: centuries of tradition are being transformed by climate change” (World Wildlife Fund, 2016). The WWF almost disregards culture in favor of showing the gravity of the underlying environmental issue that impacts every person on Earth; yet, the WWF thrives within and upholds culture, in that they aim to protect indigenous peoples and their ways of life. The World Wildlife Fund rises above culture while simultaneously using it as an essential part of their tactical mission.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), is yet another international nonprofit organization that has grappled with cultural clashes in an attempt to bring much needed medical care to those who need it. The organization brjan in France, in response to the war and accompanying famine that took place in Biafra, Nigeria, and the floods in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1971 (MSF USA, 2016). Unlike the Make A Wish Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund, MSF purposefully goes into areas of intense turmoil and need in order to provide people with medical aid. It seeks out nations experiencing war, epidemic, population displacement, and other emergencies (MSF USA, 2016). MSF “provides emergency medical care to millions of people caught in crises in more than 60 countries around the world. MSF provides assistance when catastrophic events—such as armed conflict, epidemics, malnutrition, or natural disasters—overwhelm local health systems. MSF also assists people who face discrimination or neglect from their local health systems or when populations are otherwise excluded from health care” (MSF USA, 2016). MSF is often caught in the middle of intense cultural battles and serious domestic conflicts, and therefore constantly stresses its neutrality. In the way that WWF uses culture to bring people together, MSF lives almost above culture. They claim to work purely in the scientific and medical realm with no cultural agenda behind their actions: “MSF is a neutral and impartial humanitarian organization that aims first and foremost to provide high-quality medical care to the people who need it the most. It does not promote the agenda of any country, political party, or religious faith, and, as such, endeavors to communicate its history, background, and capabilities to all parties in a given situation so that it may gain the necessary access to populations in need” (MSF USA, 2016). MSF knows how damaging culture can be to a nonprofit and how much power a foreign nation can have over an international nonprofit. This organization highlights the importance of respecting the cultural limitations of nations throughout the world and accepting there are only certain jobs a nonprofit can do when a nation is under intense pressure.

The international nonprofit organizations that find the most success are ultimately the ones who take note of the cultural communities they are entering, learn to use culture as an asset, and do not let it limit their global impact. The organizations that have proved to be truly successful when it comes to international business are the ones that have found ways to fully address the culture of a given nation and to deduce the proper way to use cultural differences or similarities to find global success. However, cultures around the world are constantly growing and changing as they make new discoveries and move into new eras. Nonprofit organizations have, therefore, had to learn to adapt to the ever-changing cultural world, while still moving forward with one mission. Nonprofits are attempting to, quite literally, save the world and what they often do not take into account is that
they are saving a multitude of worlds. These organizations are attempting to solve one problem that may have many different roots and are all closely linked to the political, economic, and cultural standings of each nation. An international nonprofit must be compatible with and conscious of a nation’s culture, and yet ultimately defy it in order to find global solutions. Nonprofit organizations similarly have to be aware of when they may not be compatible or of when it is simply not their time to succeed. In the same way that for-profit companies have to decide whether or not certain countries make financial sense to expand into, nonprofit organizations must deduce the nations in which they will be most effective. Although people all over the world would benefit from the services provided by international nonprofits, because these organizations are working outside the realm of their own nation, they are limited to only providing services where they are wanted. International nonprofit organizations must continue to adapt and grow in the ever-changing cultures around them and utilize the diversity of the world encompassing them to thrive.

Bibliography:


CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY IN BUSINESS INTERACTION: A THEORETICAL STUDY, by Dorien Kartikawangi (School of Communication, Atma Jaya Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia), Yohanes Temaluru (School of Business Administration, Atma Jaya Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia) and Dominikus D. Unaradjan (School of Business Administration, Atma Jaya Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia)

Abstract

The heightening of business globalization provides pressure, by itself, for organizations to be enabled to compete. One of the main supports in winning against the competition is the ability to communicate cross-culturally, which members of the organization must possess. This paper theoretically studies the conceptual competence of cross-cultural communication in business interactions. The main study from the perspective of communication is supported by the human resources management perspective. The result of the study shows that cross-cultural communication competency is a competitive advantage for an organization in global business competition. Therefore, human resources management needs to pay attention to the cross-cultural communication competency of its members in developing strategic organization management. Based on the research findings, a model of the interrelated concepts of human resource management and cross culture communication is proposed.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, human resource, communication psychology.

A. Introduction

It cannot be denied that the development of business presently provides for opportunity and challenge for inter-cultural communication. The domestic as well as global economy gives a significant picture concerning this. The development of multinational businesses in Indonesia develops happened rapidly. Business Monitors (2014) have noted that as many as 2390 multinational companies from America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (with more or less 8340 senior executives from the various countries) are operating in Indonesia. Meanwhile Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) entering Indonesia (based on statistical data from UNCTAD, 2004) reached US$ 1.023 billion and the value of the FDI is increasing. At the end of 2012, total FDI for Indonesia reached US$ 23 billion, the highest FDI recorded in Indonesian history.

Various issues surfaced in connection with cross-cultural business, be it domestic business with a work scope that is multi-cultural, as well within the international context. Matters concerning cross-cultural communication involve all stakeholders: in the relations with superiors, subordinates, peers in the company, consumers, society, government, and others outside the company. Leaders of companies that are doing business in various parts of the world will understand/comprehend that differences and variety are not simple matters in managing a company.

Since a working group in an organization has many members whose national origin and cultural background differ, it will probably have certain consequences to the working group’s effectiveness. Previous research connected with this issue can be seen from the perspective of human resources, as Smith, Hecker, Chua, Feng, Herb, Jackson, Mogaji, Thomson & Yanchuk (2004) mentioned that a few problems often surface due to different cultures in one working place. Those problems usually are tied to: (1) language; (2) directness/ assertiveness; (3) rules & flexibility; (4) treated as stranger/out group; (5) hierarchy & power; (6) personal/task centered; and (7) universalistic (individual/collective). Meanwhile, based on the data from the Ministry of Labor and Transmigration, it is known that the highest proportion of foreign workers in Indonesia are from the Asia Pacific region, that is 61.45% (12.024 persons), followed by Europe, 20.16% (3.945 persons),
Sweeney and Twomey in Hoed (1998) conducted a study, leading to their paper titled “Employer’s Tracking of Graduate and Skill,” of a company in America. Their research sought the level of requirements for hard (academic ability) and soft skills (personality) for candidates. This research has been replicated by the Coordinating Planning Team for the Efficient Use of Foreign Funds for Education and Training for research on the need of employees in companies in Indonesia that are affiliated in the Cooperative Education Program of 1998. The result of the two researches does not differ far. Principally, companies do not only regard the importance of hard skills, but demand their employees have an equilibrium between hard and soft skills.

The above mentioned research was deepened through the research conducted by the Faculty of Business Administration and the Office for Student Affairs, Alumni, and Guidance for Student Career in 2002, by digging deeper through exploration on the Knowledge, Skill, Ability, Others (KSAOs) that are based on the selected theory of Spector (1996, 2008). The result of the research shows that the requirements which have a basic nature on par with KSAO must be possessed by the human resources for the various kinds of companies. Nevertheless, mapping shows that the requirements of companies tend to bend toward the characteristics of Ability and Others, which are aspects of personality. The same research was repeated, after 10 years, in 2011. The research combined quantitative and qualitative data; and the results supported each other. Thereby, confirming that the human resources which are required must not only possess intellectual capability but also must have practical skills and, especially, a personality that is supportive. Supportive personality traits (from most to least important) are honesty, communication, and leadership. (Kartikawangi and Temaluru 2002, 2011: Kartikawangi and Sarinastiti, 2014). Skills and the ability to communicate are considered important by the company and encompass cross-cultural communication skills, which are very much needed in the era of globalization.

Research from the perspective of communication, among others, was conducted by Milburn (1997) and published in a Management Review article which expressed that communication is not only a cultural background expression, but also is one that shapes cultural identity. Halsall (2005), researched about cosmopolitan rhetoric in a global company using a postmodern approach. It revealed the necessity for global company managers and employees to transform themselves from “local” to “cosmopolitan.” Meanwhile, multinational companies need to have personnel that are able to communicate with cross-cultural sensitivity if they desire to guard the continuity and development of the company outside the country where the company originated (Kartikawangi 2013).

From research that was conducted, where cross-cultural communication appeared in various forms of business, it appeared that cross-cultural communication demanded the attention of various aspects of business and interdisciplinary study. This working paper studies, theoretically, the conceptual competence of cross-cultural communication in business interaction. The main study in the communication perspective is supported by the management perspective, human resources, and psychological communication. The aim of this study is to find a conceptual model that is relevant for academic development, as well as implementation in business management.

B. Literature Study


According to Noe, Hollenbeck, Garhart, Wright (2010), human resource management, refers to the policies, practices, and systems that influence employee behavior, attitude, and performance.
Meanwhile, according to Fisher, Schoenfeldt, and Shaw (1996), human resource management involves all management decisions and practices that directly affect or influence the people, or human resources, who work for the organization. Therefore, human resource management, as seen from the side of the one performing it, can be divided into two kinds: (1) Human Resource Management of the personal self - the ability of the personal self or person by person in leading, developing, and digging the human resource that is in himself; and (2) Human Resource Management of another person - the ability of a leader in digging, taking advantage, and organizing the human resource potential of another person in an organization or company for a specific purpose in accordance with the aim of the organization. In this development of human resources, organizational/corporate culture is also a matter to be considered.

The quality value of the human resource is appraised from the mental aspect of man. In this discussion, the main measurement used to measure the quality of a worker is the praiseful controlled mental attitude. This can be seen from the desire and effort to provide the best- be it in the development of itself as well as in developing the organization, especially related to the cross-cultural mental attitude that is demanded of business development at present.

Cox (1994; 2001) said that there are several inclinations that are related to the variations of the work force of an organization in the 1990s. First, the work force in various countries has become more heterogenous in various dimensions, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and in nationality. Second, another fact that is surprising is the demography of the world population. Third, in connection with the variations within an organization, it is said that its increase is in the direction of global marketing and operations of multinational businesses. This indicates that a good understanding about the influence of culture on the behavior of man is a crucial issue on the business success of multinational companies.

A question that can be put forth is: what kind of competency is required to compete within the interactions of global business? The logical answer is cross-cultural communication competency. The understanding of cross-cultural psychology will further affirm how cross-cultural communication competency can act effectively. To become a communicator who is competent means to have the capability to interact effectively with members from different cultures.

Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2009), quoting many researchers concerning cross-cultural communication competency, said that there are five important competencies that enables a person to interact effectively and properly in another culture. The five components are: (1) motivation to communicate, (2) sufficient knowledge about culture; (3) capacity to communicate accordingly; (4) sensitivity; and (5) character.

The ability to communicate between cultures is an important factor in determining success in international business. The ability to recognize one’s self and various prejudices within oneself is an important element in becoming a competent communicator. Samovar et al (2009) said that to be able to enter into an interaction between cultures, a person needs to learn: (1) to know their own culture; (2) to know their own perceptions; (3) to know how to carry out the said perception; and (4) monitor oneself.

B.2. Cross-Cultural Communication Competency

Human resource strategy and the importance of understanding cross-cultural psychological communication provide a picture of the importance for an organization to develop a worldwide communication network – be it within the company, or with external stakeholders (i.e. suppliers, customers, governments, and others). These phenomena also involve the development of technology that provides the ability to send messages in large volume and high speed, to be exchanged in a short span of time and across distance. The capacity of communications that bridge
across cultures becomes important for the effectivity of workers as well the organization. The organizational implication is that individuals that originate from different cultures and have a level of language competency that is different will need a special strategy that can assist in achieving effective communication in their business interactions. This is needed because of their role in increasing the value of the global business network that is interconnected. Literature concerning variation provide a picture that is not very positive about the impact of cross-cultural interaction, like what was done by Miliken and Martins (1996). Specifically, their study made a comparison between a working team that is homogenous with one that is heterogeneous. The result is that the working team that is varied has a larger conflict problem - more often having to replace team members, higher levels of stress, more absenteeism, more communication problems, less trust, lower levels of work satisfaction, lower unity, and less social integration. When those difficulties surfaced, there were not many studies in the field of communication to provide information concerning practical management. Meanwhile, culture has been researched widely in the area of cross-cultural management and pointing out the symbolic dimensions of man’s action. From the various definitions available it can be concluded that culture is a collection of values, certainty, attitudes, and habits of groups that are being studied and which are brought down from one generation to another. Gudykunst and Kim (1984) expressed that “culture is a historically derived system of shared symbolic ideas and meanings that community uses to interpret and give meaning to their experience.” Meanwhile, studies on communication indicate that there is a relationship between culture and communication (Gudykunst, 1997). Culture, prepares the structure for the communication process, be it verbal or nonverbal. Therefore, it can be deduced that the way people communicate is influenced by culture, and culture is influenced by communication.

Within the context of organizational communication, there is skill and competence that facilitates cross-cultural communication. Members of an organization that have communication competence are certain to have the knowledge of the proper communication design for a specific situation and have the capacity to apply said knowledge. Jablin et al (1994) and Jablin and Putnam (2001) identified two competencies: strategic and tactical. Strategic communication is connected with the knowledge concerning the reality of organizations, organizational/corporate culture, how this matter is significant in the context of the organization, and differs from other organizations. Whereas, tactical communication competency is the ability of a person to follow and manipulate rules, including communication skill and performance capability, to achieve personal, group, and organizational aims. It can be understood that business communication is a translation process that is dynamic, two-way, multiple influenced, and can be transformed. This complexity and variation surfaces when a person communicates in several languages and cultures in various business as well as social environments. Therefore, the ability of organization members to be open to differences in interaction preferences is a critical matter in obtaining a positive output in a cross-cultural business interaction.

**Accommodation Communication in Cross-Cultural Communication**

The theory of accommodation communication (Giles, 1973) explains the attitude, motivation, intention, and identity that bridges social aims and contextual variables, and the language behavior of an individual. It is designed to explain the fundamental cognition process and affection for convergent or divergent discussion. Accommodation communication explains and shows communicative behavior that surfaces in interactions and after-effects. The theory of accommodation communication is based on the premise that the aims and interactions of groups are pushed by interpersonal history between the parties that are interacting and the inclination of individual behavior at seeing matters that are inside a group. Therefore, the perceptions of members, speaking behavior, the use of language, and following response that is happening in
group communication, are meanings being negotiated. Through this means, group members develop and evaluate other members to modify perception and orientation for further interaction.

The theory of Accommodation Communication (CAT) explores the different ways people who interact accommodate their communication, the motivation to do it, and its consequences. CAT which is directed for matters of interpersonal communication, in turn can spread as far as communication between groups. This means that communication between individuals often is based on personal identity as a member of an organization or group of a specific society. In their writings, Giles and Ogay (2007), explained the principles that are basis for CAT systematically. Those basic principles are:

- Communication is influenced not only by features of the immediate situation and participant’s initial orientation to it, but also by the socio-historical context in which the interaction is embedded.

- Communication is not only a matter of merely and only exchanging information about facts, ideas, and emotions, but salient social category membership are often negotiated during interaction through process of accommodation.

- Interactants have expectations regarding optimal levels of accommodation. This expectation re based on stereotypes about out-group members as well as on the prevailing social and situational norms.

- Interactants use specific communication strategy (in particular, convergence and divergence) to signal their attitudes towards each other and their respective social group.

The strategy, that is most studied and became CAT’s core, is convergence. Convergence is defined as a strategy whereby individuals adapt their communication behavior, connected with their wide choice of language (e.g. dialect), paralinguistic (e.g. respite), and nonverbal pictures (e.g. smile). This adaptation is done in a specific a manner so as to resemble the behavior of one’s counterpart. On the other hand, a divergence strategy focuses on the differences in dialect as well as the nonverbal (Giles and Ogay, 2007).

Why do people perform convergence and divergence strategies in their interactions with other people? It can be explained by the various motives of convergence. One of them is to come to an agreement. Byrne (1971) put forth a premise that the more a person is identical to his speaking counterpart, the higher the respect is emanated by his counterpart, and more social respect can be expected. Equalizing the language style will also increase the affectivity of communication that later is also associated with the heightening of prediction, lessening of uncertainty, and the creation a common understanding. However, convergence can also be harmful. For example, the probability of losing personal as well as social identity when interacting.

Whereas, the motives of divergence emphasize the differences or distance among participants in their interaction. It is usually based on membership of the group. Following the premise of social identity theory this usually surfaces when participants in an interaction define the situation more as “intergroup” rather than “inter-individual”. Intergroup interaction is when each individual treat one another within the context of social membership category. Inter-individual interaction is when participants in the interaction communicate with one another based on individual differences in nature and character. Ethnic differences, gender differences, and differences in age are not primary issues.
Motives in reaching convergence are a matter of great importance in obtaining positive and negative reactions. Convergence as well as divergence can be mutual, when in an interaction the communicators are moving toward unity or separation. However, it can also be non-mutual, when one communicator and another have different directions. Meanwhile, convergence can be partial or complete.

This paper concerns communication skills and interventions required for cultural heterogeneity in contemporary business interactions. Multilevel analysis on cross-cultural business interactions developed by Ayoko, Hartel, Fisher, Fujimoto (2004) pointed out three level of interaction:

- Level 1. In an organization: co-worker relationship
- Level 2. Organization and local culture: service provision
- Level 3. Organization and other culture outside of the organization

This study focuses on level 1, that is, the relation between employees in an organization from the point of view human resource management, psychological communication, and cross-cultural communication.

C. Discussion

Randaall Schuler (1994) defines human resource strategy as: “…getting the strategy of the business implemented effectively…getting everybody from the top of the human organization to the bottom doing things that make business successful”.

The human resource strategy needs to pay attention and to consider the corporate culture, vision, mission, goals, and strategy. It also needs to formulate logically and clearly, and applicable. Human resource strategy supports the implementation of corporate strategy. Human resource strategy needs to be translated in all organizational activities, policies, and programs, that are in-line with the corporate strategy. The non-conformity between human resource and corporate strategy will influence the achievement of the company’s targets. It is better that an effort should be made to conform the strategy of the company and that of human resources to push employee creativity, innovation, and to reach the company’s target.

In determining human resource strategy, external factors should be considered. Those factors are: future trends and needs, demand and supply, government regulations, general needs of man, and employee needs. Aside from that, potential competitors, social changes, demographics, values, and technology should be considered. Every rapid change can be a setback for the company. Therefore, a company must have the right business strategy to take advantage of business opportunities and anticipate any setbacks. One of the most important keys to gaining competitive advantage is the effective management of human resources.

From a psychological perspective, study concerning cross-cultural communication becomes an important factor in understanding the dynamic relations between individuals in global interactions. In a global business interaction, communication must be constructed as well as possible so that it does not create misunderstanding. Some phenomena that characterize the development of globalization, particularly in the business world, are: (1) changes of meaning in the concept of space and time: this change pushes the movement of man in global interaction faster and is not limited by space and time. This movement of change gets faster when the dimensions of space and time can be overcome by the development of mobile phone technology, internet, and satellite television, that reaches all corners of the Earth. The Triple-T movement (telecommunication, transportation, tourism) asserts that global change cannot be stopped. The flow of cross-cultural interactions
among nations is accelerating without end; (2) the dynamic of the interdependence of international markets and the economies. This is due to the development of international trade, the increasing influence of multinational companies, and international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO); (3) increasing cross-cultural interactions through the development of mass media, especially television, film, and the transmission of international news. With this interaction, we can consume and experience various matters and new ideas that cross the local boundaries of culture and nations, such as fashion, food, art, and various creative products; (4) The increase in common problems, such as the environment, multinational crisis, inflation, and world safety. It can be deducted that this transformation brings us to globalism - awareness and new understanding that the world is one.

Dynamic of Global Interaction

Facing the current of globalization, an attitude of openness is required about the information received; and actively and selectively filtering the information has positive impact. The consequence of globalization for business organizations must be understood well. It can act as a barrier in preventing the fall of the organization in global interaction in its aspiration to prosper and heighten the progress of the organization.

Change as an impact of globalization in the organization can be observed from the situation in the working place. There is a change in the demographic composition of the firm, with the entrance of foreign workers. The presence of foreign workers is not without problems, especially in matters of communication. Obstacles in communication are not limited to communication, in terms of linguistic proficiency language, but more than that, it is communication in the sense of cultural understanding. Therefore, employees and managers need to study so as to adapt to the working culture, habits (custom), and traditions, where they are and where they are working. Globalization enables an organization the ability to operate anywhere in the world. The need for raw material can originate from wherever, and their production can be distributed to various parts of the world. Therefore, we can work and interact with whomever. We can work in our own country or abroad where the organization and company we work for operate.

The place of work in an organization where meetings of culture occur. Relations and working interactions are marked by the meeting of individuals of different nationalities (culture) in a working group to achieve a target together. This, of course, is a challenge. Cooperating with people of different cultures is not an easy matter, although we may come from a country with a society that is multi-cultural. This condition requires cross-cultural competency or intercultural competency - that is, all the capacity that causes individual to adapt effectively in an intercultural environment.

A person who is interculturally competent can comprehend other cultures; can communicate and interact with other cultures because he can understand the specific concepts as to how individuals in another culture think and feel, and choose the action that he is taking. In a world that is getting more global, we need to increase our cultural intelligence and become inter-culturally competent. Furthermore, Chen and Starosta (1996, 1998, 2000) suggest three dimensions of cross-cultural competencies, which are sensitivity, awareness, and skills.

Cross-Cultural Communication and Variation in an Organization

Cross-cultural Communication refers to communication issues that occur in organizational interactions which involve individuals from various beliefs, social, ethnic, and education backgrounds. Each individual brings experience and values that are unique into the environment where they work. Organizations or companies that endeavor to accommodate various differences
by developing effective communication, (verbal or written) between members of various different
cultural groups, will likely succeed as compared to organizations that allow conflict because of
those differences. The failure to overcome conflict based on culture will have an impact on the
lowering of work performance and organizational productivity.

Milburn (1997) said that communication is not only an expression of cultural background, but also
the formation of cultural identity. He wrote, “Cultural identities, like meaning, are socially
negotiated.” Further, he said:

“Ethnic identities, class identities, and professional identities are formed and enacted through the
process of communication. What it means to be white, Jewish, or gay is based on a communication
process that constructs those identities. It is more than just how one label oneself, but how one acts
in the presence of like and different others, that constructs a sense of identity and membership.”

Cultural difference shows itself in a variety of ways. This depends on perception and significance of
a conceptions coming from a specific culture; for example, differences in conception about time or
a perception about body language and personal distance in conversation. Many researchers,
company owners, and cross-cultural workers are in the opinion that the most important element in
effective cross-cultural communication is language. Fernandez (1991) in Managing a Diverse
Work Force: Regaining the Competitive Edge, said that “A great deal of ethnocentrism is centered
around language.”

“Language issues are becoming a considerable source of conflict and inefficiency in the
increasingly diverse work force throughout the world.... No corporation can be competitive if co-
workers avoid, don’t listen to, perceive as incompetent, or are intolerant of employees who have
problem with the language. In addition, these attitudes could be carried over into their
interactions with customers who speak English as a second language, resulting in disastrous effects
on customer relation and, thus, the corporate bottom line.”

Company owners Sare expected to avoid making assumptions about abilities of other people based
on ethnocentric assumption that shows their cultural superiority in the communication style they
have developed.

Murphy and Hildebrandt (1994) in Effective Business Communication, said that, “Withhold
evaluative statements on foreign communication styles until you recognize that different cultures
use different communication methods.” Further, they give an example that significant matters which
happen in cross-cultural communication are capability and the practice of listening. A lot of tips
and methods are suggested in developing verbal cultural sensitivity and written communication
practices in an organization. But that which is often forgotten is the difference in the culture of
listening. In American business, eye contact while communicating shows full attention to the
speaker. In other cultures, this act probably is considered an attitude of animosity.

Diversity in Organization and Aspect of Personality

Various companies of various scales have constructed and prepared cross-cultural programs by
pushing communication between individuals and groups from different backgrounds. According to
Milburn (1997), “diversity is one concept that is closely tied up with the context. It does not have a
single meaning for all persons.” Companies that try to execute programs without understanding the
diversity of culture will encounter difficulties in implementing those programs. Many companies
believe, in sharing, they can promote cultural values that are different from their members.
However, difficulties can arise when companies define “sharing” according to their own
understanding and practical experience.
Many company owners admit they probably will succeed better if they are able to build a communication system that is effective between different workers (religious, social, and ethnic differences). Difference can also occur in the style of communication that is found in the functional area of the company. As an example, workers that are working in the technical field (computer, machinery, and so forth) have an education background that is different from workers involved in the creative works of the company (marketing, public relations, and so forth). These differences appear in the style of communication that is specific for each area. An engineer is prone to be more introverted, analytical, and logical in problem solving; as compared to those working in the field of marketing and public relations who are assumed to be extroverted and intuitive. It is these differences that are the source of classical controversies between individuals in a company because the different styles are caused by basic differences in personality.

The very dynamic business world requires companies to have a high technology base to move fast and good communications capability to serve customers or to communicate with their own workers. Monson (1997) said, failure in communication can cause workers to lose their working spirit, plumbing down of production, and probably the company’s experience in failure to develop. Trenholm and Jensen (1992) said:

“one thing that is most important is to remind oneself to pay attention to the emotion of other people that is spontaneously happening.” Samovar and friends, wrote that “to succeed in becoming a communicator between cultures, one must empathize, and that skill can only developed when sensitive toward cultural values and customs of people that are interacting.”

It is necessary to identify some characteristics that can impede the growth of empathy. Samovar and friends (2010) suggested the following: 1) Cultural background that is different; 2) Constant focus on oneself; 3) Stereotypes about gender, race, and culture; 4) attitudes of defending oneself.

The first obstacle, when communicating with a person from a different cultural background, is when each person sees the situation and individuals from the perspective of culture itself. Other obstacles are too much to focus on by oneself when interacting with another person from a different culture. Focus on oneself will result in less attention given to the other person when interacting with them. Other mistakes which also happen when one is inclined to stereotype gender, race, and culture. Stereotyping blocks the way to understanding other people in accordance with the actual condition of that person. Another characteristic that obstructs the growth of empathy is the attitude of defending oneself. When interacting with another person, we tend to judge the other person based on what we say or do. This tendency causes them to feel the need to defend themselves. On the other hand, if feeling that the other person is passing judgement, we would hesitate to share information that produces empathy.

The psychological communication perspective supports the competence of accommodation communication which must be possessed by the human resource in cross-cultural interactions. The ability to apply convergence as well as divergence strategies require the support of empathy. As it is known, convergence strategy is defined as a strategy where the individual adapts his communication behavior in connection with the larger choice of languages (e.g. dialect), paralinguistic (e.g. respite), and nonverbal picture (e.g. smile). This adaptation is done in a specific way, so as it become more similar with the behavior of his counterpart in speaking. On the other hand, divergence strategy is employing a different manner of speaking and nonverbal signals. The ability to empathize will end by the occurrence of accommodation communication which will benefit the individual as well as the team. Below is the model that is designed to provide an understanding that is more comprehensive.
Based on the above discussion, it is possible to comprehend that members of the organization need to possess cross-cultural competency. The core competence that is required involves individual competence, cultural awareness, and emotional competency. These are much required when working in a team to achieve the aim of the organization - that is, openness to dissimilarity and conflict management skill. As explained in the literature study, the main analytical perspective of this paper is in the context of level 1 - co-worker relationships in an organization. The relations between fellow workers is important because it becomes the key to good external relationships. Starting with individual competency and followed by team competency, it is hoped that external competency is obtained to achieve the aim(s) of the organization. This study is the basis for the writer to suggest cross-cultural communication competency within the scope of the organization, as a part that cannot be disassociated from the organization of human resource strategic management. This model also considers the importance of understanding psychological communication in cross-cultural communication.

D. Conclusion

As a conclusion, based on the study that is done, it can be understood that in deciding on a strategy and implementation of human resource management, the organization needs to consider cross-cultural communication competency. This competency is needed internally in business interactions between individuals as well teams, which in turn will support external interactions. This study also produces a Cross-Cultural Competency Model, suggested for further studies. Based on this, the writer gives a scientific recommendation so that further research uses this model in empirical research to test the truth and solidify this model as a scientific model.

References


Kartikawangi, Dorien dan Nia Sarinastiti, 2015, Mosaik Kompetensi Dalam Dunia Kerja Bidang Komunikasi, hasil penelitian, dipresentasikan pada Atma Jaya Award, 18 Desember 2015


Monson, Megan, 1997, Talking to Techweenies, Oregon Business. February, Vol. 20, issue 2, p64


Multinational Companies in Indonesia Online Database viewed 13 Agustus 2014, http://store.businessmonitor.com/multinational-companies-in-indonesia...


Tourish, Dennis and Owen Hargie, 2004, Key Issues in Organizational Communication, London: Roulelde


Unaradjan, Dolet 2013, Analysis of Dangerous Behavior in Industrial Organisation PT. Krakatau Steel, Cilegon, Banten Province, Jakarta: FIABIKOM Unika Atma Jaya (unpublished research)
THE PROGRAM PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES OF NHK WORLD RADIO JAPAN, THAI SECTION, by Anencha Klinkesorn (University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand)

Abstract

In 2015, Radio Japan celebrated 80 years of international broadcasting. The program, which first aired in 1935, was originally broadcast in both Japanese and English. The Thai language program has been broadcast since 1940 and 2015 marked its 62th year in operation since re-commencing in 1953. This paper aims to explore the program’s production techniques in order to understand how Japanese broadcasters produce Thai language programs. The methods employed in this study are: 1) content analysis - listening to and duplicating scripts of Thai language programs aired between April and September 2015; 2) analyzing the presentation techniques and content of news and additional 14 programs; and 3) in situ observations and interviews of NHK WORLD Radio Japan’s Thai section office personnel. This paper focuses on: production processes, presentation techniques, and work practices of Japanese producers and Thai staff in the preparation, rehearsal, and on-air/recording phases of production. This paper also describes presentation techniques in terms of: language and style, music, and sound. Further research is required to gain a clearer picture of the production techniques of the Japanese language lesson program, ‘Easy Japanese,’ and the Japanese food cooking program, ‘Let’s Cook Japanese’.

Background

The Thai language program is one of 18 languages used by NHK WORLD Radio Japan. These include Japanese, Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Urdu, and Vietnamese (NHK WORLD Department, 2015, p.75). These language sections are divided into 3 groups and the Thai section is found in group 2, with Bengali, Burmese, Hindi, Indonesia, Urdu and Vietnamese (Ueda, interviewed, November 4th, 2015). Radio Japan broadcasts on shortwave, medium wave, AM, FM, satellite radio or over the Internet. Airtimes and frequencies differ depending on the listener’s location (NHK Department, 2015, p.72).

Thai language program broadcasts are of 30 minutes’ duration and played 4 times per day - with the first live broadcast at 20:30 JST (18:30 THT). They are rebroadcast at 21:30 (19:30), 08:00 (06:00) [No news at this time], and 10:00 (08:00) on the following day. The program starts with station identification, followed by news for 14 minutes on week-days (9 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays), a feature program aired daily as scheduled; and ends with the station’s closing announcement.


In addition, there are a few special programs that every language section produces through translation from English master scripts, such as ‘We love Japanese Songs!,’ ‘Music Journey Worldwide,’ and ‘Passing on Memories of War.’

---

2 This paper is a part of research on “The Uniqueness of Program production of NHK WORLD RADIO JAPAN, Thai Section”, financially supported by University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce.
The only program, for which each language section designs its own program content and makes its scripts separately (but under a common theme), is ‘Friends around the World.’ This program “is designed to connect more of Radio Japan listeners around the world.” (NHK WORLD Radio Japan. [Homepage on the internet]. Friends around the World. 2015; [cited 2015 Dec 24]. Available from: www.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/radio).

The Thai staff working in Radio Japan’s Thai language section consist of 2 specialists who are experienced media workers and 10 announcers who are Tokyo residents. Thai staff members work with a Japanese senior producer and producers who experts in Thai, English, and Japanese.

The process of making a program: How does the Thai section make a program?

Eighteen languages are spoken in a room of approximately 400 square meters in Radio Japan’s production unit (NHK WORLD, [Homepage on the internet] Available from http://www.nhk.or.jp/intl80th/en/chronology/service/radio01.html). News and the main language programs contain the same content. To ensure uniformity, an English master script is translated from the original Japanese script, then Thai staff translate this into Thai. This approach is replicated by the other 15 language sections, except for the Japanese and English sections.

I. The process of news production:

Radio Japan News is a live program. Even though it only lasts 9 to 14 minutes, the preparations before going on air on a daily basis take many hours of the staff’s time. As ‘Radio lacks space,’ McLeish (1999) stated that “[a] newspaper may carry 30 or 40 columns of news copy – a 10-minute radio bulletin is equivalent to a mere column and a half… the selection and shaping of the spoken material has to be tighter and more logical” (Robert McLeish, 1999, p.6).

Crisell (1994) emphasizes this characteristic’s effect on the editorship saying that “Thus even an hour of radio news and current affairs cannot equal the coverage of a newspaper and since it has to be much more selective and summative than a newspaper, listeners get the impression that radio news is much more highly edited. This has led to the view that radio (and television) really offers a different kind of news from the press.” (Andrew Crisell, 1994, p.83-84).

“But it’s important every day to choose stories that are interesting and affect your audience in some way. Pick items that connect listeners to what is happening in the community, what is new, interesting, or absurd. Give audience [talk-able] topics and entertain them with information” (Valerie Geller, 2007, p.138).

Radio Japan’s news production begins at the “RS News Desk”, [RS is derived from ‘Regional Service’]. The news editor selects news items from the NHK News Center which contains a huge quantity of news items from NHK’s correspondents who are located all over Japan and other countries. Approximately 15 items are selected and listed in order by news priority and transferred onto the news wall.

Generally, the news editor selects and arranges the news order based on significance. The three main pillars of Radio Japan’s news coverage are: news about Japan, global issues, and Asian issues.

The preparation step consists of a brief meeting held by the editor to explain, to the sub-editors of all languages, which items are essential for every language section. Group 2 sub-editors, in consultation with the editor, select some interesting items from the news wall that are pertinent to Southeast Asia and Thailand in particular.
The number of news items varies for each language. Within a 14-minute news block, about 150 lines of English language news bulletins are translated (and read) into Thai; while they can contain 180 lines in Vietnamese (Mari Xu Kitaizumi, lectured, November 6th 2015).

In a way similar to the other language sections, the Thai section sub-editor submits English news scripts to Thai specialists and announcers who translate them into Thai. A discussion takes place between the sub-editor (producer), Thai announcers, and specialists who read the scripts together to proofread the translation and use a stopwatch to check the timing. In some cases, the Japanese producer, who is an expert in the language of the news content, (which is Thai in this case) joins the session to ensure the issue and its context are transcribed accurately, as well as screening the text for grammar and word choice.

Clearly Radio Japan news spends a lot of time on preparation, particularly translation. The discussion session is an effective technique since rehearsal, correction and improvement, and timing can be done simultaneously. This approach ensures an optimal solution to balancing the airtime available with delivery of succinct news content.

Then the news goes live on-air.

By quantitative content analysis and coding of news items aired between July 6th 2015 and September 30th 2015, and compared with news aired on December 31st, 2015, an insignificant proportion of news items were found to be from the 3 main categories (pillars) which frame the editor’s decision making, as outlined above.

It is believed that the current affairs and social context of Radio Japan’s target audiences are the essential factors influencing editors’ and sub-editors’ decisions.

For example: News aired Friday, August 21st, 2015, the headlines of 9 news items and ‘Insight’ were aired as follows:³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Headlines</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W=3</td>
<td>A=5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. N.Korea orders troops to be ready for war (Top stories)</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. N.Korea seeks UN meeting on US-S.Korea drills</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nikkei falls below 20,000</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Thai police: Suspect went to blast site by taxi</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Memorial held for Bangkok bomb victims</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tsipras resigns, calls early election (Top stories)</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Insight</strong>: Consequence of Turkey political chaos to Syria attack</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Scholars decry Joint Staff papers</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sendai nuclear plant halts output increase</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. July was hottest month on record [NOAA, USA scientists say…]</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ News headlines in English derived from NHK WORLD ENGLISH website as compared to the Thai language news headlines and content on the same broadcast date.
Below are the same for the news aired on Thursday, December 31st, 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Headlines</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W=4 A=4 J=3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Seoul seeks understanding for 'comfort women'</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deal (Top stories)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ASEAN launches its economic community (Top stories)</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. US-ASEAN summit set for February</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Militant: Fleeing ISIL fighters may launch attacks</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Iraq urges Turkey to withdraw troops from north</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ISIL militants detained in Turkey for terror plot</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. TSE marks 2nd largest annual turnover in 2015</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Leaders agree to extend Ukraine ceasefire</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Chinese inquiry team's conclusion on boat disaster</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. People in Japan enjoy New Year noodles</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Huge rice cake offered to Atsuta Jingu</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


II. The presentation techniques of news:

Whereas “a newspaper is able to give an important item additional impact simply by using more space. The big story is run using large headlines – the picture is blown up and splashed across the front page. The equivalent in radio bulletin is to lead with the story and to illustrate it with a voice report or interview” (McLeish, 1999, p.9).

After a discussion and rehearsal session, the Japanese producers run the program by following cues marked on the scripts. Theme music, jingles, and voice clips of interviews in the ‘Insight’ component [A special report on news background and analysis] are also faded live.

Commonly three announcers read the news on the week-day program, whilst only two announcers work on Saturday and Sunday. To avoid confusing the listener, announcers read each item alternately. As each announcer has a different tone of voice and style and/or a male or female voice, this helps listeners avoid confusion.

The style of news reading is formal. There is no ad-libbing or any off-script conversation.

To keep the program running on time, each announcer has to adjust his or her reading speed and include specific phrases, such as “Another news item,” or “You are listening to NHK WORLD Radio Japan from Tokyo.”

This pattern of accurate translation and formal style of news reading ties all the various news content, voices and sounds together. The announcing style also conveys a sense of unity to Radio Japan’s news listeners.
Radio Japan is an international radio broadcaster with a multilingual and multicultural workforce located in its Japanese workspace. This gives it an advantage. For example, the news is read in 18 different languages. There are 200 translators and announcers, many of whom are native speakers (of Radio Japan’s 18 broadcasting languages), who are available to ensure the accurate pronunciation of any specific words, names, places, and traditional events.

III. The production process of feature programs:

Radio Japan’s feature programs are mostly pre-recorded. [Some programs of some languages are live broadcast. (Ueda, Comment and correction, January 19th 2016)]

Carl Hausman et al (2007) explain that there are three elements a radio producer should consider before deciding whether a production will be done live or pre-recorded: complexity, scheduled airtime, and convenience.

Complexity is the key attribute of Radio Japan’s feature programs, as each program contains a variety of sounds. One Japanese producer manages several programs and has to plan each of them in advance.

Similar to news, feature program proposals are prepared in Japanese and are open to discussion between directors and producers. Scripts are written in Japanese, translated into English, and then distributed to the foreign language sections. Browne (1982) states, “Many of the features are prepared centrally and translated by various language desks, but most of the translations are reasonably idiomatic. The picture that emerges is one of highly purposeful society, a diverse society, a society with strong sense of its cultural past” (Donald R. Browne, 1982, p.208).

The production process starts with a Japanese director who creates an idea, makes a program plan, and proposes the plan to the director. They then negotiate for approval. The approved proposal is then made into an operational plan, whereby the Japanese producer and Thai announcers of the program cover the story, conduct interviews, record actual sounds or commentary, as appropriate.

By using sticky notes attached to a paper board, which list news topics, (along with pictures) the story line is arranged. Columns and rows of sticky notes represent the agreed program sequence, parts of script writing, presentation techniques, and materials to be prepared including manpower and announcers.

“There are few rules when it comes to deciding the program sequence. What matters is that the end result makes sense. Not simply to the producer, who is thoroughly immersed in the subject and knows every nuance of what has been left out as well as what was put in, but to the listener who is hearing it all for the first time. The most consistent fault with documentaries is not with their content but in their structure” (Robert McLeish, 1999, p.265).

According to this principle, the sticky-note technique to help design program sequence is a best practice of the Thai language section and Radio Japan’s producers. Ueda (2016) says that other language sections are using this technique as well.

After the decision-making process is finished, a Japanese producer writes the script in Japanese, then translates it into English. The Thai specialists and announcers of the program translate the English manuscripts into Thai. A discussion meeting is held for all of the program’s production staff who discuss, read the script, check the translation, and rehearse timings. Feature programs and news programs are equally important, to the producers. But when making the latter, the staff is required to concentrate on making the stories as accurate as possible, in limited time.
Even though most of Radio Japan’s feature programs are pre-recorded, the program (at the time of recording in the studio) is practically recorded live, without retakes.

The recorded file is automatically registered and goes on air at its scheduled airtime. The program seldom requires editing so the session of discussion and rehearsal is considered important.

IV. The presentation techniques of Radio Japan’s feature programs

In this paper, ‘Feature programs’ refer to programs that are not ‘News.’ Radio Japan’s music programs are included in the feature programs grouping as well because they also present Japanese contemporary lifestyle and ideas that are inspiring when the lyrics are translated.

NHK WORLD aims to present broadcasts with great accuracy and speed about many aspects of Japanese culture and lifestyle, recent developments in society, politics, the latest scientific and industrial trends, and Japan’s role in and Japanese opinions about important global issues. It also serves to foster mutual understanding between Japan and other countries by promoting friendship via cultural exchange. (NHK WORLD, [Homepage on the internet]. About NHK WORLD. 2015; [cited 2015 Dec 12]. Available from: www.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/about). Radio Japan has been an essential tool to achieve these aspirations over the last 80 years.

“Radio Japan offers new types of programs in addition to its traditional line-up featuring business trends, the latest topics, and the attractions of various areas. Among them is “Japanese Pop Culture Magazine,” which introduces pop culture that is a source of fascination for young people the world over…. “Let’s Cook Japanese” is a challenge to feature on radio.” “The Magic of Japanese Masterpieces” introduces enchanting stories behind the fine arts that represent Japan, and “Making It in Japan,” where a Radio Japan reporter visits people from abroad who are actively pursuing careers in Japan and are successful” (NHK WORLD Department, 2015, p.66).

Why not ‘Documentary programs’?

McLeish (1999) stated that “A documentary programme is wholly fact, based on documentary evidence-written records, attributable sources, contemporary interviews and the like. Its purpose is essentially to inform, to present a story or situation with a local regard for honest, balanced reporting. The feature programme, on the other hand, need not be wholly true in the factual sense, it may include folk song, poetry or fictional drama to help illustrate its theme.

The feature is a very free form where the emphasis is often on portraying rather more indefinable human qualities, atmosphere or mood” (Robert McLeish, 1999, p.257).

Why does Radio Japan use many techniques for a 15-minute program?

Radio is restricted to communication by sound only, hence the expression ‘Radio is a blind medium.’ This makes it a challenge to embellish messages, as they rely only on reading descriptive documents or literature. Radio Japan’s producers have to work harder to access listeners abroad in their preferred language. So the use of all strategies and presentation techniques is essential.

Because “Presentation is radio’s packaging. It hardly matters how good a programme’s content, how well written or how excellent its interviews; it comes to nothing if it is poorly presented.” (Robert McLeish, 1999, p.109)

“Radio’s codes are purely auditory, consisting of speech, music, sounds and silence, and since, as we shall see, the ear is not the most ‘intelligent’ of our sense organs their deployment has to be relatively simple. The risks of ambiguity or complete communication failure are high, and so in all kinds of radio, much effort is expanded on overcoming the limitations of the medium, on
establishing the different kinds of context which we would generally be able to see for ourselves.” (Andrew Crissell, 1994, p.5) Radio Japan divides its content into 10 groups containing 14 named programs. Some groups outside the ‘Culture’ group also contain cultural content such as; Japanese language lessons, Technology & Business, Food & Health; as in the examples below:

- **Easy Japanese**: A year-long course of 10-minute beginner-level Japanese language lessons. You can learn basic grammar and useful expressions through the story of Anna, a university student from Thailand. You can also learn onomatopoeia - words that contain sounds that remind people of particular noises, voices or behaviors.

- **Technology & Business and Radio Japan Focus**: Information, on various themes currently drawing attention in Japan. The topics will include advanced technologies, business trends and current affairs capturing moves in society, traditional culture and international cultural exchanges.

- **Let’s cook Japanese**: Home cuisines that are not only delicious but represent Japanese culture and traditions.


Presentation techniques begin by giving Thai names to programs. For example; the Thai name for ‘Easy Japanese’ is literally translated as “Come on, Let’s Learn Japanese Language” in Thai, ‘Let’s Cook Japanese’ is literally translated as “Getting into Japanese Cuisine,” and for “Japanese Pop Culture Magazine”, the literal Thai translation is “Open the Window of Japanese Pop Culture.” The Thai names for Thai language programs guide listeners’ expectations and help listeners imagine the program contents. Thus aligning it with the producer’s aspirations.

Radio Japan’s feature programs use simple presentation techniques such as talk, conversational questions and answers, interviews or voice clips of interviewees, and music. In practice, it is complicated because there are many voices and actuality sounds. ‘Easy Japanese’ is the program that uses ‘recorded sounds’ most frequently and they occur about 52-60 times per program.

“The purpose of using actuality sounds is to help create an appropriate atmosphere. Moreover, for those listeners who are familiar with the subject, recognition of authentic backgrounds and specific noises increase the program’s authority. It may be possible to add atmosphere by using material from sound effects discs. These should be used with great care since a sound only has to be identified as ‘not the genuine article’ for the program’s whole credibility to suffer” (Robert McLeish, 1999, p. 262).

For the recording phase, where a complicated script must run smoothly without retakes, the precision of the director, announcers, and assistant is invaluable.

After the on-site observation and analysis of feature programs aired between April and September 2015, the findings are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs names in English</th>
<th>Voices</th>
<th>Presentation Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Easy Japanese | 2 announcers, Male and Female  
1 Japanese Male  
1 Japanese teacher Female  
Some Japanese Female characters and/or  
Some Japanese Male characters in dialogue | Conversation, question & answer, lecture  
Dialogue, Japanese word pronunciation  
Talk, answer, lecture  
Radio play (with sound effects and actuality) |
| 2. Technology & Business | 2 announcers, Male or Male and Female | Talk, Actuality, Music |
| 3. Japan through Season Words *(Haiku)* | 2 announcers, Male or Male and Female  
1 Japanese Female (reads *Haiku*) | Talk, Japanese classical Music (Mood music)  
*Haiku* reading clips |
| 4. RJ Manual | 2 announcers, Male or Male and Female | Talk |
| 5. Radio Japan Focus | 2 announcers, Male and Female (Interviewee(s)) | Talk, Actuality, Interview (Clips) |
| 6. The Magic of Japanese Masterpieces | 2 announcers, Male and Female  
1 Japanese Male or Female (Curator) | Talk, Conversation, Question & Answer, Interview (clips)  
Music (Japanese classical music)  
Actuality/Sounds |
| 7. Making it in Japan | 2 announcers, Male and Female  
1 Foreign interviewee (Interviewee(s)) | Talk, Actuality  
Interview (Clips) |
| 8. Let’s Cook Japanese | 2 announcers, Female or Male and Female  
1 Japanese Female (Chef) | Talk, Actualities (of each step of cooking)  
Demonstrated of cooking |

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs names in English</th>
<th>Voices</th>
<th>Presentation Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Welcome to Amazing Japan!</td>
<td>2 announcers, Female or Male and Female 1 Foreign announcer Male or Female Interviewee(s)</td>
<td>Talk, Actuality, Songs On-the-Spot Commentary Interview (Clips)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Japan Hit Tunes</td>
<td>1 announcer Female</td>
<td>Talk &amp; J-Pop Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Japanese Pop Culture Magazine</td>
<td>2 announcers, Male or Male and Female</td>
<td>Talk, Conversation, Actuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Music Journey</td>
<td>1 announcer Male</td>
<td>Talk and Music (Pop, Country, Anime songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The Reading Room</td>
<td>1 announcer Female</td>
<td>Talk, Reading out, Sound effects Songs, Music (transitional music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Friends around the World</td>
<td>2 announcers, Male and Female 1 interviewee Male or Female or 1 Male (Rakugo)</td>
<td>Conversation, Question &amp; Answer Interview, Responding to listeners’ messages, Songs (Requested), Storytelling (Rakugo) Actuality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Conclusion

The Thai language section of NHK WORLD Radio Japan employs effective radio production techniques that are very Japanese in style. Team work and discussions during the preparation phase inspire a good organizational culture, which harmonizes Japanese producers and Thai announcers - resulting in a shared understanding.

The sticky-note technique used in setting a program’s sequence helps the producer, announcers, and listeners to understand the message of each radio program.

Shifting between Japanese, English, and Thai results in the same message having different timelines that can wreak havoc on precise airtime requirements and is an important issue that needs to be addressed. The ‘Reading Script Together’ strategy, whereby stopwatches are used to fine-tune timings, is a powerful approach that enhances the preciseness of news reading and radio announcements of the Thai announcers.

Using actuality sounds as additional resources in programs is considered to be a best practice that enriches Radio Japan’s programs.

13

References


Abstract

Over the last five years, social media’s distinct structural and functional properties have played an instrumental role in the rise and growing traction of grassroots protest movements in Eastern and Western national contexts. While many scholars have focused their work on dynamics of political cyberprotest (e.g. the ongoing transnational Occupy movement, the 2012 Quebec student strike, the student-led protest movement in Chile between 2011 and 2013, the 2014 Umbrella movement in Hong Kong), few have studied how ethno-cultural minorities on the peripheries of the traditional political arena have leveraged social media’s capabilities to gain visibility, mobilize support, and engage in political and civic action. We fill part of this gap in the academic literature by investigating uses of Twitter for identity and culture-based political engagement in the context of the Canada-based Idle No More movement (INM). This ongoing protest initiative, which emerged in December 2012, seeks to mobilize Indigenous Peoples in Canada and internationally as well as their non-Indigenous allies. It does so by bringing attention to their culture, struggles, and identities and advocating for changes in policy areas relating to the environment, governance, and socioeconomic matters. Specifically, our study explores the ways in which, and to what extent, references to aspects of Indigenous identities and culture shaped Idle No More-related tweeting and, by extension, activism. We conduct a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of 1,650 #IdleNoMore tweets shared by supporters and, in some cases, detractors of this movement between July 3, 2013 and August 2, 2013. Our study demonstrates that, unlike other social media-intensive movements where economic and political concerns were the primary drivers of political and civic engagement, aspects of Indigenous culture influenced information flows and mobilization among #IdleNoMore tweeters.

Keywords: Social media, identity politics, political action, #IdleNoMore, Aboriginal Peoples

Overview

Given Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2008 apology on behalf of the Canadian government to survivors of the Indian Residential School Program (Regan 2011), the reescalation of tensions between his government and Aboriginal Peoples four years later was unexpected. Members of the Aboriginal grassroots and their allies spearheaded what would become the pan-Canadian - and later transnational - Indigenous protest movement known as Idle No More (INM). Rooted in a deeper Aboriginal resistance spanning over 500 years (Diabo 2014), this social media-intensive protest

---

1 Indian Residential Schools were jointly established and run by the federal government and various churches in most provinces and territories designed to assimilate Indigenous children into mainstream Canadian society. Children were forbidden from speaking their languages and practicing their culture and were subjected to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse at the hands of the school administrators (Regan, 2011).

2 The Canadian constitution recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, which includes “Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada” (Constitution Act, 1982: s 35). Throughout the paper, the term “Aboriginal Peoples” is used interchangeably with the term “Indigenous Peoples,” which is more commonly used in an international context to describe “people[s] with long traditional occupation of a territory, but who are now under pressure as minorities or disenfranchised populations within an industrialized or industrializing nation-state” (Kesler 2015).

3 As of 2011, there were 1,400,685 individuals identifying as Aboriginals living in all provinces and territories of Canada (4.3 percent of the Canadian population), up from 232,385 people, or 20.1 percent, from 2006 (Statistics Canada 2011).
movement was initiated in early November 2012 when four women\(^7\) based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan traded emails on policy matters important to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada - including Federal omnibus budget Bill C-45 (Tupper 2014; Woo 2013). This legislation, introduced by Harper’s Conservative government in mid-October 2012, made significant changes to the Indian Act and environmental legislation, among others, with few to no consultations with the Indigenous communities (Wotherspoon and Hansen 2013; Inman, Smis et al. 2013; Duplassie 2014). Over the following weeks, public education sessions and other events of varying sizes were organized throughout Canada - some of which involving the four women - to build support and shed light on what they argued to be long-standing issues manifesting themselves through Bill C-45 (Donald 2013; Welty 2015; Palmater 2014).

On December 10, 2012, a Canada-wide Day of Action inspired Indigenous Peoples and their non-Aboriginal supporters to show opposition to the provisions of Bill C-45 along with other policy proposals and decisions of the Canadian Federal Government (Barker 2015; Wood 2015). The following months were marked by INM gaining significant momentum throughout Canada and internationally. It experienced growth in the form of community meetings, teach-ins, flash mobs, and rallies that garnered growing news media attention (Barker 2015: 43). As the movement intensified, it became more broad-based and diverse, as it mobilized individuals and organizations with wide-ranging and often specific interests and objectives (e.g. socio-economic conditions, missing or murdered Indigenous women, colonialism, reconciliation, reassertion of Indigenous nations) (Kino-nda-niimi Collective 2014).

Social media played a key role within different facets of the INM movement (e.g. Callison and Hermida 2015; Wotherspoon and Hansen 2013; Tupper 2014; Gray and Gordo 2014; Morris 2014; Woon 2015; Dahlberg-Grundberg and Lindberg 2015). These user-generated communication channels have facilitated INM-related information flows and social interactions; thus contributing to the rapid expansion, diversification, and internationalization of this protest movement. In other words, “for social-movement cultures, such as secular Egyptian revolutionaries, 15M (Los Indignados), and Idle No More, social media [are] an integral part of life; it is context” (Gray and Gordo 2014: 551). Toronto Star journalist Karissa Donkin (2013) goes further by stating INM “[was] driven by social media, a place where anyone can participate in discussion and follow news if they have.” In fact, the #IdleNoMore hashtag has become a global “rallying cry” (Barker 2015: 48) that had mobilizing and organizing effects among the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and their backers on - and in some cases off - Twitter (Woon 2015; Tupper 2014).

INM is part of a broader wave of social media-intensive grassroots protest movements that have impacted many national contexts since 2009. Several factors distinguish these mobilization initiatives from more traditional movements of contestation, including their organizational structure, with limited formal leadership and loose, constantly evolving, membership having fragmented, and diverse, preferences and objectives (Gray and Gordo 2014; Welty 2015; Obar, Taylor et al. 2013). Whether it is in the context of the 2011 Indignados movement in Spain (Anduiza, Cristancho et al. 2013; Loader, Vromen et al. 2014), the student-led protest initiatives in Chile between 2011 and 2013 (Scherman, Arriagada et al. 2015; Valenzuela, Arriagada et al. 2014), in the province of Quebec, Canada in mid-2012 (Jochems, Millette et al. 2013; Raynauld, Lalancette et al. forthcoming), the transnational Occupy movement between 2011 and 2012 (Agarwal, Barthel et al. 2014; Bastos and Mercea forthcoming), or the on-going U.S.-based Tea Party movement (Turcotte and Raynauld 2014; Rohlinger and Bunnage 2015), Internet users have leveraged social media’s distinct structural and functional capabilities for political self-expression, mobilization, and organization.

\(^7\) Their names were Sheelah McLean, Nina Wilson, Sylvia McAdam, and Jessica Gordon (Tupper 2014).
While INM shares similarities with many of these social media-intensive protest initiatives (e.g., limited formal leadership, diversity of interests), it distinguishes itself in key ways. In this paper, we explore the structure of INM-related political engagement on Twitter, namely how tweets were used for information dispersion, opinion sharing, mobilization, or criticism. Specifically, we examine how this dynamic was shaped in part by tactics appealing to references to Indigenous culture. Comparatively, many other movements have been driven mostly by short-term concerns and goals relating to political ideology, values, or socio-economic policy (e.g. Agarwal, Barthel et al. 2014; Scherman, Arriagada et al. 2015). INM has a larger goal beyond merely opposing Bill C-45, as it seeks to unite the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and mobilize their supporters - both nationally and internationally - in the face of future challenges (Cavin 2013).

Glen Coulthard (2014) reinforces that point by linking it to resistance in the form of identity reassertion against many actions of the Canadian Federal Government, including the perceived continued dispossession of Indigenous Peoples from their lands. In other words, it laid the foundation of, and promoted, a shared consciousness rooted in Indigenous cultures, identities, histories, and struggles. Several scholars have echoed this argument. Terry Wotherspoon (2013: 11) notes this movement, “in adopting an educational and advocacy role, is simultaneously connecting indigenous youth with elders and other community members and fostering recognition of indigenous orientations to social and natural relationships.” Emily Welty’s work (2015: 78) makes a similar argument, showing how INM relies heavily on indigenous identity and culture for mobilization and organization. Some researchers have taken interest in the role of culture and identity in shaping the dynamics of protest in the social mediascape of recent years (e.g. Bennett 2012; Loader and Mercea 2011; Raynauld, Lalancette et al. forthcoming). However, further work is required as social, ethnic, religious, political, and other minorities are increasingly turning to the Web 2.0 for political and civic action in Canada and internationally (Sayre, Bode et al. 2010; Gerbaudo 2012).

This paper addresses and fills part of this gap in the academic literature. Specifically, it examines INM’s manifestation in the Twitterverse through an inductive approach rooted in two questions: How did INM participants, whether they supported or opposed the Aboriginal movement, use Twitter to engage in protest actions during the summer months of 2013? and 2) In which ways, and to what extent, did references to culture shape INM’s presence on Twitter? The first section of this paper offers a discussion of social media and political engagement, especially in the context of grassroots protest. Secondly, it takes interest in the way references to culture can have shaping effects on patterns of information dispersion, mobilization, and organization in the social mediascape. The third section of this paper unpacks the methodological approach developed to answer the research questions outlined. The fourth section discusses the findings. We conclude that INM participants used Twitter mostly to mass circulate information. However, unlike other social media-intensive movements, where economic and political concerns were the primary drivers of political and civic engagement, aspects of Indigenous culture played an important role in the shaping patterns of information flow and mobilization among INM tweeters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media, Protest, and Political Action

8 The initial leadership structure of the INM movement was centered around the four women in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. However, it experienced a rapid expansion and decentralization as social media became an important political engagement tools for its supporters who organize and managed political mobilization initiatives on their own (Wotherspoon and Hansen 2014; Gray and Gordo 2014).

9 While it can be argued that the movement promoted some degree of shared identity, it is important to emphasize the diverse identities, histories, cultures, and traditions of Indigenous Peoples across Canada’s territory. Throughout INM, these diversities continued to exist, often creating disagreements among and between various supporters of the movement.
Much research has been conducted on the uses of social media by formal political players in Canada for political information dispersion, mobilization, organization, and persuasion (e.g. political parties, elected officials, government agencies, public servants, candidates during elections; see: Francoli 2014; Small 2014; Riarh and Roy 2014; Raynauld and Greenberg 2014; Giasson, Le Bars et al. 2013). Significantly less academic attention has been given to the ways, and extent to which, these user-generated media platforms are utilized for political action by individuals and organizations at the edges of the formal political system (i.e. interest groups, social movements, and ordinary citizens).

Tamara Small and colleagues (2014: 9) have taken a look at how members of the Canadian public are using digital media - including social media - to become more “informed about, discuss and/or participate in politics.” Their findings suggest adult Internet users in Canada do not engage heavily in political activities through these media tools. Other studies have unpacked uses of social media in more specific contexts, such as citizen-driven protest movements and other forms of grassroots activism. Of interest is the work of Vincent Raynauld, Mireille Lalancette, Sofia-Tourigny Koné (forthcoming), Mélanie Millette, Josianne Milette, and Serge Proulx (2012) who have examined uses of Twitter during the 2012 Quebec student strike or the work Thomas Poell and Erik Borra who have studied social media’s effects on activist communication during the 2010 Toronto G20 protests (Poell 2014; Poell and Borra 2012). Internationally, a large volume of research has been done on uses of social media for protest, especially among younger adults (e.g. Boulianne 2015; Valenzuela, Arriagada et al. 2014; Scherman, Arriagada et al. 2015; Nekmat, Gower et al. 2015; Velasquez and LaRose 2014). For example, Shelley Boulianne (2015: 534) conducted a meta-analysis of 36 published academic studies on social media and politics and found a “positive relationship” between uses of social media and civic/political engagement.

While these investigations have been the source of valuable insights, it remains to explore other facets of these dynamics, especially as they relate to protest politics within the Indigenous context. Specifically, little to no research dealing with uses of social media by Indigenous Peoples in Canada - and in other national contexts - for political and civic action has been done (Dahlberg-Grundberg and Lindberg 2015). Candis Callison and Alfred Hermida (2015a; 2015b) have explored Twitter-based patterns of “dissemination and representation of news and information” and, by extension, the way this micro-communication channel was used by individuals and organizations for political expression in the context of the INM movement. While their paper offers an extensive quantitative description of this dynamic, it offers limited qualitative details. From a broader perspective, Anders Olof Larsson (2014) notes that few studies have looked at political tweeting from a qualitative perspective. Our paper supplements this stream of academic literature as it explores how INM participants - whether they supported or opposed the movement - turned to Twitter to circulate information, share opinions, mobilize support, or criticize and attack other political players.

Social media have also contributed to the expansion, diversification, deepening, and informalization of digital protest modes among the public. This digital “protest action repertoire” can be defined as Internet-based forms of non-institutionalized, “modular” (Passy 2009: 354), decentralized, and highly fragmented modes of political and civic action, geared towards contesting or, in some cases, defending the existence, purpose, or actions of established media, governmental, and political entities (see also: Bastos, Mercea et al. 2015; Piotrowski 2015; Passy 2009; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). Often used by social movements and other members of civil society at the peripheries of the formal political arena, this set of protest tactics represents an eclectic mixture of offline-inspired modes of political action and newer forms of political action, relying heavily on the distinct structural and functional attributes of digital media - including social media (Van Laer and Van
Social media are playing a pivotal role in this dynamic. Their distinct properties are helping to lower the threshold for informal political actors to create, maintain, or expand networks “with their peers, receive information regarding mobilizations, and also be exposed to different sources of content that can promote engagement with their causes” (Valenzuela, Arriagada et al. 2014: 2048). Libby Lester and Simon Cottle (2015) point out that, with the help of Web 2.0 media, grassroots protest and other forms of decentralized mobilization initiatives can be launched, promoted, and coordinated independently of contextual variables, such as time, access to financial and technical resources, or geographical location. They note that “it is by these same means that some also become exclusively conducted - whether for example, through online petitions, the mobilization of consumer boycotts or digital hacktivism” (Lester and Cottle 2015: 102).

To some degree, these, often identity-centered, media platforms allow individuals and organizations to engage in protest politics on their own terms, mostly outside the realm of established media and political elites. In other words, this dynamic has reinforced “selfactualizing” patterns of citizenship (e.g. Loader, Vromen et al. 2014; Bennett 2012). This form of citizenship can be defined as citizens’ ability to shy away from institutionalized forms of political action that are generally guided by established norms and practices (Hooghe and Dejaeghere 2007: 250-251). Individuals and organizations are increasingly turning to flexible modes of political and civic engagement, more in line with their narrow personal preferences, interests, and objectives, which might differ sharply from broadly accepted societal norms. In the words of Kahne, Lee et al. (2012: 2-3), “they are engaging in highly individualized forms of “lifestyle politics and politics that emphasize [horizontal networking,] self-expression and self-actualization.”

More importantly, in the case of this paper, political engagement tactics appealing to individual-based culture can play a key role in the dynamics of protest in the social mediascape. As noted by Sebastián Valenzuela, Arturo Arriagada and Andrés Scherman (2014: 2048), social media can heighten “processes of social identity construction in political spaces where opinions and ideas are shared” and contribute to the creation, promotion, or reinforcement of a shared consciousness that can fuel protest behavior. In other words, the social mediascape can act as space for a wide range of individuals and organizations - especially those who are considered social, political, ethnic, and cultural minorities - to engage in identity contestation and, as a result, identity and culture-based mobilization.

**Indigenous Culture as Catalyzer of Political Action**

References to culture can fuel and, in some cases, shape the dynamics of political and civic engagement, especially in the social mediascape. However, little consensus exists among academics across disciplines (e.g. political science, sociology, anthropology, communication studies) on how to define culture, as it is shaped by factors that are constantly evolving. Culture is multifaceted in nature, as it encompasses a large number of endogenous and exogenous indicators that can vary greatly due to different social, demographic, political, economic, and ideological variables (see Rosaldo 2006; Baldwin, Faulkner et al. 2006). In recent years, some authors have identified close to 300 unique definitions of the concept of culture, up from 200 based on a compilation by John Baldwin and Sheryl Lindsey (1994) in 1993, and 152 in 1996 based on work by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) (see Rosaldo 2006). For example, this concept has been defined as:

[A] group’s shared collective meaning through which the group’s collective values, attitudes, beliefs, customs, and thoughts are understood. It is an emergent property of the member’s social interaction and a determinant of how group
members communicate...Culture may be taken to be a consensus about the meanings of symbols, verbal and nonverbal, held by members of a community (Barnett and Lee, 2002: 277).

It has also been described as a fluid social construct “dynamically changing over time and space - the product of ongoing human interaction.” Tracey Skelton and Tim Allen (1999) characterize the notion of culture as ambiguous and suggestive rather than analytically precise. It reflects or encapsulates the muddles of life.” (Skelton and Allen 1999: 4).

Defining Indigenous culture constitutes an even greater challenge, as it varies greatly between - and within - communities (see Alfred and Corntassel 2005). Terry Wotherspoon and John Hansen (2013: 29) point out that “Indigenous [P]eople have experienced hundreds of years of imperialism and social exclusion, resulting in a legacy with respect to outcomes and social practices that have been perpetuated to the present day.” These experiences had deep shaping effects on their cultural framework. Angela C. Angell and John R. Parkins (2011: 68) define Indigenous culture as a “unique set of beliefs and practices which have successfully sustained [A]boriginal [P]eoples physically, socially, and spiritually, since time immemorial, has been identified as an important factor in the well-being of [A]boriginal communities, particularly under conditions of rapid social change.” In fact, it has been argued it is rooted in four core elements: “sacred history, ceremonial cycles, language and ancestral homelands” (Alfred and Corntassel 2005: 609). It should be noted that Indigenous culture can be viewed as a “site of contestation” of power relationships that are rooted in societal frameworks such as capitalism (Baldwin, Faulkner et al 2006: 19; Coulthard 2014: 7).

While the culture of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia are different in nature, they are rooted in similar “sociohistorical predicaments” (Kirmoyer et al. 2005: 15). Still the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are culturally diverse. It possible to identity elements at the core of the Indigenous cultural makeup in Canada. Wotherspoon and Hansen (2013) point out that it “espouses a deep connection to the land; the connection is manifest in responsibility to serve as ‘stewards of the land’, a philosophy that has survived to the present day” (Wotherspoon and Hansen 2013: 28). Furthermore, they note the environment plays an important role. As noted by Wotherspoon and Hansen (2013: 23), Indigenous culture is based on “a heritage designed to respect the environment and to prevent others from devastating the natural world.” Finally, language is also a key component of the Indigenous cultural framework in Canada (Wotherspoon and Hansen 2013).

When it comes to INM, Indigenous culture is central. This protest movement seeks to put forth “a vision to protect the land and water that leads to sustaining rather than exploiting the environment” (Angell and Parkins 2011: 68), “values that promote peace and social harmony,” and “the attribution of a social justice dimension that includes rather than excludes the community” (Wotherspoon and Hansen 2013: 27). More broadly, INM’s main goal is the promotion of the culture of Indigenous Peoples of Canada, which, as many authors and commentators point out, has been “under assault” in recent years (e.g. Woolford 2015).

**Social Media and Indigenous Resistance**

In their work on small media and political mobilization, Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi (1994) link culture and communication to protest and resistance. They argue small media - grassroots media that carry the means of instant reproduction of messages and information - provide spaces to articulate and circulate alternative messages and identities contrasting those in state or private broadcast media. In effect, small media broaden the definition of the political public sphere; obscuring the relationships between communication, culture, and politics, arguing instead
for an understanding of dissent as a form of media production “that strengthen[s] preexisting collective identities and the politicization of cultural practices and rituals” (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994: 31). They further argue that it is difficult to separate culture and politics when it comes to understanding Indigenous resistance, since they tend to mobilize their cultures to engage in cultural resistance against “would-be hegemonic regimes” (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994: 33).

Faye Ginsburg (1997; 2008) argues the proliferation of digital media, like social media, has created important opportunities for media creators to engage in, what she terms, “cultural activism;” where producers are able to use media as a means for cultural promotion and reassertion involving struggles of representation and identity. Understanding social media activism within Ginsburg’s framework is useful because it helps in understanding media practices as a space of struggle and protest. In other words, social media provide the means and opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to actively mobilize their cultures and identities in a digitized public arena. She argues cultural activism involves media makers acting in ways underscoring their sense of both political and cultural agency. As Ginsburg (1996) explains, they use their platforms “to mediate historical and social ruptures within their own cultures and to assert the presence and concerns of First Nations peoples in the broader societies that encompass them.”

Taken together, this paper’s analysis of INM tweets, as they pertain to Indigenous political mobilization, is additionally informed by notions relating to cultural activism. In doing so, we understand media production as a site of political mobilization and pay particular attention to the ways it is manifested through tweets referencing identity, identity construction, and culture.

METHODS

In order to examine the manifestation of INM in the Twitterverse, we turn to an inductive approach anchored by two broad research questions: 1) How did INM participants, whether they support or oppose the Aboriginal movement, use Twitter to engage in protest action? and 2) In which ways, and to what extent, did identity and culture shape the manifestation of INM in the Twitterverse? To unpack these questions, we conduct a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of a sample of 17,482 tweets having at least one #IdleNoMore hashtag – inclusive of the content of web links embedded by authors (when available) and shared on Twitter’s public timeline between July 3, 2013 and August 2, 2013. Twitter can be defined as a free micro-communication channel “with internal community-building capabilities that enable the publication of posts of up to 140 characters” (Raynauld and Greenberg, 2014: 141). Twitter, alongside other social media outlets, has played a key role in INM gaining momentum over a relatively short period of time, as well as “widespread exposure while mobilizing large gatherings for many of its events” (Wotherspoon and John Hansen 2013: 23).

Hashtags can be defined as content interactive mechanisms, consisting of hyperlinked textual expression (letters and numbers without any space between them) preceded by the pound (#) sign, serving three main functions: tagging tweets in order to associate them to a wide range of themes or topics of interest; coordinating conversations between users who might or might not be following each other; enabling tweeters to express themselves (e.g. opinions, emotions, criticism) (Small 2011). Between November 4, 2012 and December 21, 2012, the #IdleNoMore hashtag appeared at least 36,000 times from sites across North America (Peterson 2012). On December 29, 2012, the Canadian national newspaper, The Globe and Mail (2012) reported approximately 20,000 tweets comprising at least one #IdleNoMore hashtag were posted everyday on Twitter. On January 11, 2013 alone, 60,000 #IdleNoMore tweets were posted (on that day Indigenous leaders met with the Prime Minister in Ottawa) (Friesen 2013). Ellison and Hermida (2015) found that 249,777 tweets with the #IdleNoMore hashtag were posted between December 2012 and January 2013.
We utilized a two-stepped sampling approach to assemble the corpus of #IdleNoMore tweets taken into account for this study. First, we collected all tweets with at least one #IdleNoMore hashtag that were shared on Twitter’s public timeline with the help of the data mining tool service Tweet Archivist\(^\text{10}\) between July 3, 2013 and August 2, 2013. As noted previously, the #IdleNoMore hashtag emerged as a global “rallying cry” (Barker 2015: 48) that was used by a wide range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals and organizations supporting or opposing the movement to express themselves and be active politically.\(^\text{11}\) While INM has been active since November 2012, we consider this particular time period because we sought to analyze the #IdleNoMore tweeting dynamic outside intense moments marked by high levels of mobilization and intense policy debates. Secondly, we narrowed our corpus by randomly selecting 50 #IdleNoMore tweets posted every day of the time period considered, for a total of 1,650 tweets. We recorded specific elements of #IdleNoMore tweets in the archival process, including information about the author, media channel through which they were posted (e.g. Web browser, mobile application), textual content (e.g. hyperlinks, hashtags), and time of publication.

To analyze the specificities of #IdleNoMore tweeting, we developed a three-pronged quantitative and qualitative data analysis strategy, inspired by recent academic work on social media-based political action by political, social, religious, and ethnic minorities (e.g. Theocharis, Lowe et al. 2015; Scherman, Arriagada et al. 2015; Raynauld, Lalancette et al. forthcoming). We tested the relevance and reliability of the coding approach by first testing it on a small number of #IdleNoMore tweets before the coding of the entire corpus was initiated.

First, we coded the basic content of #IdleNoMore tweets, such as the authors of the tweet, the date and time of publication of tweets, the language of used, or the presence of hyperlinks or other social and content interactive mechanisms (i.e. hashtags and social contacts between two or more tweeters). Second, we examined the purpose of #IdleNoMore tweets. Specifically, we determined if #IdleNoMore tweets served an information dispersion, an opinion sharing, a mobilization, and/or a criticism function. In cases where tweets served more than one function, we qualitatively assessed which was the main function.

Third, we assessed if the #IdleNoMore tweets considered in this study referenced elements relating to Indigenous culture.\(^\text{12}\) We developed a detailed codebook accounting for different manifestations of Indigenous culture, especially that of Canadian Aboriginal culture, as INM was initiated and mostly grew up in Canada. First, we looked at uses of Indigenous languages (Baldwin, Faulkner et al. 2006) and mentions of Indigenous language resurgence as cultural markers (Alfred and Corntassel 2005; Gustafson 2009; Hermes 2012). Second, Aboriginal cultural productions, such as activities (Ellis 2013), sartorial choices (Thoral 2015; Hodgson 2011), objects (Nelson 2006), and food (Janer 2010) were coded as culture markers. Third, manifestations of group membership were treated as cultural markers (Baldwin, Faulkner et al. 2006). Specifically, we unpacked the concept of group identities by determining if tweets mentioned Canadian Aboriginal bands or nations solidarities, pan Canadian Aboriginal solidarities (Smith 2002), or Indigenous international solidarities. Fourth, land was categorized as a central component of Aboriginal culture (e.g. Alfred and Corntassel 2005; Coulthard 2014; Altamirano-Jimenez 2013) and we coded mentions of land claim processes, natural resources, or traditional territories as uses of culture in the context of the INM protest. Fifth, we acknowledged the presence of Indigenous epistemologies by looking for references to pedagogy (e.g. Janer 2010; Simpson 2004), spirituality (LaDuke 1999; Fleming and

\(^{10}\) It should be noted that many researchers have turned to Tweet Archivist for Twitter data collection and archiving over the last five years (e.g. Croeser and Highfield 2014; Boynton, Cook et al. 2014).

\(^{11}\) Other scholars studying the manifestation of the INM movement on Twitter have used the #IdleNoMore hashtag as a sampling mechanism (e.g. Dahlberg-Grundberg and Lindberg 2015).

\(^{12}\) It should be noted that the hashtag #IdleNoMore was excluded when analyzing the data for the presence of identity markers.
Ledogar 1998) and storytelling (e.g. Absolon and Willett 2005; Corntassel, Chaw-win-is et al. 2009). Lastly, ideology was identified as a cultural marker (Baldwin, Faulkner et al 2006), particularly “resistance culture” (Alfred and Corntassel 2005), anti-colonialism (Abdo 2014), and anti-capitalism (Smith 2012; Simon and Gonzales Parra 2013). In cases of tweets containing more than one type of reference to Indigenous culture, we assessed qualitatively which cultural reference was the most significant. The third author of this paper, who has expertise with Aboriginal culture and sociology, coded all references of Indigenous culture in the #IdleNoMore tweets.

FINDINGS

This section details some the findings of our analysis. First, we discuss the basic content of #IdleNoMore tweets. Second, we analyze the different purposes of #IdleNoMore tweets. Finally, we conclude the analysis by looking at the presence of cultural markers in the sample of #IdleNoMore tweets amassed for this research project.

Basic Content of #IdleNoMore Tweets

Our analysis of #IdleNoMore tweeting between July 3, 2013 and August 2, 2013 revealed several political engagement dynamics. First, a review of the sample of 1,650 #IdleNoMore tweets indicated that 816 tweeters contributed at least one #IdleNoMore tweet. A minority of tweeters - known as “vocal tweeters” (Mascaro and Goggins 2012) - were the source of a large volume of #IdleNoMore publications. For example, 3 #IdleNoMore tweeters posted 35 tweets or more, for a total of 277 tweets (16.7 percent of the dataset). User @TeamRevoltNow, who defines himself as an “open Twitter stream highlighting the ongoing worldwide revolution against Fascism/Oppression,” tweeted 189 times, California-based user @joanie399, who describes herself as interested in “human rights” and “native [A]merican history”-related issues, shared 53 posts, and Toronto-based user @IndigoRave, who identifies himself as an Aboriginal writer and Indian Residential School program survivor, contributed 35 #IdleNoMore posts. Our analysis reveals the overwhelming majority of #IdleNoMore tweeters (94 percent of #IdleNoMore tweeters) shared three tweets or less. This data reflects the structure of the tweeting dynamic observed in the broader corpus of #IdleNoMore tweets where most tweeters were the source of only one or two postings. More importantly, these findings are in line with studies that have examined the manifestation of other protest phenomena in the Twitterverse, which have found similar tweeting patterns (e.g. Turcotte and Raynauld 2014; Bastos and Mercéa 2015).

Our review of the dataset shows mobile media applications were used by #IdleNoMore tweeters. While 35 percent of their posts were shared through Twitter.com, a large volume of tweeting was done through mobile channels, including Twitter for iPad (2.6 percent of tweets), Twitter for iPhone (11 percent of tweets), Twitter for BlackBerry (2.5 percent of tweets), or Twitter for Android (8.2 percent of tweets). Other mobile tweeting platforms used by tweeters include TweetCaster for Android, Twidere for Android, and Feedly on IOS.13 Online content producers also turned to social media services to share #IdleNoMore content on Twitter, such as Facebook (1.2 percent of the corpus), Pinterest (0.2 percent of the corpus), and Instagram (0.4 percent of the corpus), to take part in #IdleNoMore tweeting. From a broader perspective, the data suggests mobile media were used for the publication of a sizable portion of #IdleNoMore tweets, which served a wide variety of functions, which will be described later in this section of the paper.14

---

13 It should be noted that many tweeting applications used by #IdleNoMore contributors can neither be identified as belonging to mobile media nor non-mobile media.

14 The geolocation analysis of the #IdleNoMore dataset considered for this study revealed that tweets were posted from a variety of geographical locations within Canada, including Dawson Creek and Nuu-chah-nulth Territory in British Columbia, Saskatoon, Treaty 6 Territory and Kainai, and Blackfoot Confederacy in Saskatchewan, Maniwaki in Quebec, Miramichi and Fredericton in New Brunswick, Whitehorse in Yukon, as well as the greater Toronto area in Ontario. Our samples also included #IdleNoMore tweets emanating globally, including the United States, the
Our analysis of the #IdleNoMore dataset suggests #IdleNoMore tweeters included a wide range of content in their posts. While close to a third (35.5 percent) of tweets did not include an hyperlink, 63.2 percent featured at least one, 1.2 percent had a minimum of two, and 0.2 percent had at least three. These hyperlinks pointed to a wide range of digital material, including news stories by legacy media and journalists, social media content, or websites of local, regional, and national government agencies, private companies, and advocacy groups. A large number of hashtags other than #IdleNoMore were also embedded in tweets. Our analysis showed 21.1 percent of tweets had one hashtag (the #IdleNoMore hashtag) compared to 20.8 percent of tweets that featured two hashtags, 17.9 percent of tweets embedded three hashtags, 16.2 percent had 4 hashtags, and 21 percent had 4 hashtags or more. Hashtags embedded in #IdleNoMore tweets referred to a wide range of matters relating directly or indirectly to INM, including provincial political contexts (e.g. #onpoli, #nspoli, #abpoli), policy issues (e.g. #fishing, #tarsands, #foodSecurity), mobilization initiatives (e.g. #MarchAgainstCorrupt, #sovsummer, #OWS), activist networks (e.g. #anonymous), geographical locations (e.g. #vancouver, #toronto, #yyc), as well as emotions, states of mind, or commentary (e.g. #shame, #never).

Our analysis of #IdleNoMore dataset showed most of them were @retweets (@RT). A @retweet can be defined as a Twitter-specific mechanism enabling users to redistribute tweets originally published by other users without any modifications. Specifically, 59.2 percent of all #IdleNoMore postings considered for this study were @retweets, while 35.5 percent were regular tweets, and 0.4 percent were modified tweets (MT@), which can be defined as a Twitterspecific mechanism enabling tweeters to circulate tweets originally shared by other users that have been altered slightly, such as by the inclusion or removal of words. Only 4.9 percent of #IdleNoMore tweets were social interactions between one or more users, thus indicating that #IdleNoMore tweeters utilized Twitter more as a bullhorn to mass broadcast digital material to a large audience and make their voice heard, than interact other users. These findings are in line with those of other recent studies that have examined the presence of protest movements in the Twitterverse (e.g. Turcotte and Raynauld 2014; Raynauld, Lalancette et al. forthcoming).

Unpacking #IdleNoMore Political Engagement Patterns

We examined whether #IdleNoMore tweets served an information dispersion function, an opinion sharing function, a mobilization function, or a criticism function. The analysis revealed 51.6 percent of them were used for mass information dispersion. A closer look at the structure of informational tweets allowed us to distinguish sub-categories. We determined 15 percent of informational tweets comprised digital material on one or multiple policy matters, including the environment, natural resources, or education. For example, user @AngToledo posted the following tweet on July 15, 2013 at 1:43:21 AM +0000:

```
"#IdleNoMore The CAN mining Project next to Belo Monte is about to receive an environmental legal permit licence! (?) http://t.co/zAA8vjKkqW."
```

Meanwhile, user @Terrilltf retweeted about Aboriginal-related policing issues on July 23, 2013 at 11:36:57 PM:

```
"RT @IndigoRave: Possible end to First Nations policing raises outcry http://t.co/KQ6H4ZmVY1 #IdleNoMore #INM #FirstNations #cdnpoli."
```

Netherlands, Ecuador, the United Kingdom, and Iran. These findings confirm claims about INM’s transnational nature made by scholars over the last two years (e.g. Wood 2015; Barker 2015)

15 It should be noted that 0.3 percent of hashtags were categorized as comprising no hashtags as there was a typo in the hashtag (extra space between the pound sign and the textual expression of the hashtag), but they were still archived Tweet Archivist.
Our analysis revealed that 53 percent of #IdleNoMore tweets shared information on INM-related current events. On July 10, 2013 at 5:22:18PM +0000, Vancouver-based user @ChantingWomen retweeted a post by user @bearclannation, stating the following:

“[t]eachers ill-equipped to handle racism in schools, says #IdleNoMore co-founder Sheelah McLean" Metro http://t.co/OCk….”

Furthermore, 17.3 percent of all informational tweets circulated details about INM mobilization initiatives, such as online petitions, demonstrations, or other types of protest action. User @Zizania_meghan incited her followers to join an INM webinar in the following tweet posted on July 13, 2013 at 4:55:52 PM +0000:

“Did u miss the #IdleNoMore webinar w/@LawladyINM, @bearclannation & @BuffySteMarie Tues 2nd July? Watch it here: http://t.co/IMls0wOHnK #INM.”

Wisconsin-based user @LilReddeather called on his followers to attend a rally at the Wisconsin State Capitol in the following tweet on August 2, 2013 at 18:31:18 PM +0000:

“#IdleNoMore Solidarity Peace Rally at the Wis. State Capitol (January 13, 2013) Idle No More calls o http://t.co/r0UW9t4ZaD.”

Finally, 4.3 percent of informational tweets provided details on miscellaneous INM-related matters or were not specific in nature.

Second, we determined that 343 #IdleNoMore tweets (20.8 percent of the corpus) served a mobilization - or call to action - function. These tweets generally consisted of the promotion of forms of personal and collective political action in online and offline settings. For example, @user AngToldedo called for a “tweetstorm” in this tweet posted on July 16, 2013 at 1:40:02 PM +0000:

“TweetStorm against: #GolpePLP227Não NEW Brazilian legislation of "legalized theft of indigenous land" http://t.co/e0BEK3divn #Idlenomore.”

On July 3, 2013 at 4:09:41 PM +0000, Ontario-based user @DavidSpencerEdu encouraged his followers to learn about Indigenous culture:

“Head out to a #Pow-wow in North America celebrate culture http://t.co/nXXThbhB3 #Aboriginal #Indigenous #IdleNoMore.”

Third, our analysis found that 261 #IdleNoMore tweets - or 15.8 percent of the #IdleNoMore corpus - served an opinion sharing function. A closer look at the data revealed different categories of opinion tweets. #IdleNoMore tweeters shared their views on a wide range of INM-related matters, including policy initiatives (26 percent of opinion tweets), current events (11.1 percent of opinion tweets), INM-related mobilization initiatives (56.3 percent of opinion tweets), and miscellaneous matters (6.5 percent of opinion tweets). On July 9, 2013 at 2:16:08 PM +0000, user @TeamRevoltNow retweeted the following post by user @MegFerguson1 where she argued for more education to end racism in Canada:

“Canada may be in denial about our racism. Education is key. Sheelah McLean, co-founder #idlenomore #CTFForum #NSTU http:/…”

User @EndingViolence opined that the Canadian government should investigate cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in this tweet posted on July 30, 2013 at 1:04:11 AM +0000:
“Gov’t should hold inquiry into missing & murdered #Indigenous women and girls http://t.co/jL0laG4Fzg #cdnpoli #idlenomore #MMIW -EG.”

Finally, we found 156 #IdleNoMore tweets - or 9.5 percent of the narrowed down corpus - featuring criticism of matters relating to INM, including policy issues (44.8 percent of critical tweets), legacy media news stories (26.6 percent of critical tweets), and mobilization initiatives (28.7 percent of critical tweets). Only 6.3 percent of critical tweets featured personal attacks aimed at individuals and organizations, and even less (2.8 percent) criticism of miscellaneous INM-related matters. For example, user @RobertJensen2 retweeted on July 15, 2013 at 8:25:04 PM +0000 a post by user @etenebrislux in which he directly attacked federal minister Pierre Poilievre:

“Douchebag of the Week: Pierre Poilievre - Conservative htt”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Functions of #IdleNoMore tweets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References to Culture in #IdleNoMore tweets

We also surveyed the data to find references to Indigenous culture in #IdleNoMore tweets. We found that 89 percent of our sample of tweets included cultural markers. Cultural markers relating to group membership, land, and epistemologies were the most common, followed by ideology, cultural production, and language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: References to Indigenous culture in #IdleNoMore tweets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group membership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandl/nation solidarities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational solidarities (within Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational solidarities (international)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land claim processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemologies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-colonialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No mention of Aboriginal culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indigenous group membership was expressed mostly in tweets with references to transnational solidarities, both within Canada (6.6 percent of tweets) and internationally (13.6 percent of tweets). On July 3, 2013 at 6:27:41 PM +0000, user @plrsTweet emphasized solidarity among First Nations, as well as solidarity between First Nations and other groups in Canadian society:

```
“First all speakin the sam languag #nbpol #idlenom Nations,Angophones,Franophones,are g e e. i ore http://t.co/RTAaGCTS5o #solidarity #nspoli”
```

On July 3, 2013 at 2:01:33 AM +0000, user @TeamRevoltNow retweeted user @joanie399 who linked INM to the “NDNZ” (meaning Indians) identity and the Indigenous identity, which are not country-specific:

```
“RT @joanie399: #NDNZ #IDLENULLMORE #INDIGENOUS #clemency4peltier Immigration Reform Heads to the House http://t.co/k3I48jzJL”
```

Mentions of land were also central to #IdleNoMore tweeting. Many tweets focused on natural resources (14.7 percent of tweets). This is the case for user @jarrahpenguin who associated the hashtag #IdleNoMore to criticism of oil exploitation on July 29, 2013 at 1:41:16 PM +0000:

```
“Alberta’s Oil Sands are a Project of Colonial Violence by @arijactually #indigenous #idlenomore #ednpioli http://t.co/0jKnszo2pR”
```

Epistemologies also played an important role in #IdleNoMore tweeting. Many tweets referenced pedagogy (8.4 percent of tweets). For example, on July 17, 2013 at 5:08:58 PM +0000, user @VeroMato brought attention to Indigenous history:

```
“Des enfants autochtones auraient servi de cobayes pour des régimes expérimentaux http://t.co/qGzRUDUcMU #polcan #IdleNoMore” (translation: “Aboriginal youth would have been used as Guinea pigs for experiments http://t.co/qGzRUDUcMU #polcan #IdleNoMore”).
```

A large number of tweets (7.5 percent) discussed elements of Indigenous spirituality. For example, several tweets talked about Nishiyuu walkers, pilgrims who walked from Northern Quebec to Ottawa during the winter 2013 in support of the INM movement. A retweet posted by @chuddles11 on July 16, 2013 at 6:59:38 PM +0000 is a good illustration of this phenomenon:

```
“RT @AFN_Updates: Inspired &amp; energized by actions of #IdleNoMore #INM , women and young ppl, incl the Nishiyuu walkers - #AFN NC @shawnatleo…”
```

Many #IdleNoMore tweets contained multiple markers, especially those with web links. A good example would be a tweet by user @ykotanaka shared on July 1, 2013 at 9:21:42 PM +0000, which was coded as referring to international transnational solidarities, but also contained references to anti-colonialism, transnational solidarities within Canada, and traditional territories:

```
"Now lets work in solidarity toward migrant justice and decolonization. We are all treaty people. #homeonnativeland #IdleNoMore."
```

**DISCUSSION**

Social media played an important role in the INM movement. INM participants, whether they supported or opposed the movement, used these media channels, often with the help of mobile
media technologies (e.g. smartphones and tablets) for information dispersion, mobilization, and organization. The goal of this research project is to provide a snapshot into the communication activities of Twitter users, in relation to INM between July 3 and August 2, 2013. The specific goals were to identify trends, examine the content, and begin to consider broader implications. In so doing, we coded a set of 1,650 individual tweets accompanying the hashtag #IdleNoMore, examining from where the content originated, how INM participants used the micro-communication service for mobilization, and how culture factored into their activities.

We established that #IdleNoMore tweets served four main functions. As shown in the findings section, slightly more than 50 percent of #IdleNoMore tweets (51.6 percent) served an information dispersion function compared to 20.8 percent serving a mobilization function. Also 15.8 percent served an opinion sharing function, 9.5 served a criticism or personal attack function, and 2.4 fulfilled miscellaneous objectives. These findings are in line with a recent study that has taken a look at the 2012 Quebec student movement and found that most tweets also served a mass information dispersion function (Raynauld, Lalancette et al. forthcoming). In other words, it can be argued that #IdleNoMore tweets were used more for circulating INM-related content that could potentially have mobilization effects on the public, than for self-expression, or overt mobilization functions.

In this paper, we also asked, “how culture shaped the manifestation of INM in the Twitterverse?” Relying on Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi’s (1994) as well as Ginsberg’s work (1997; 2008), we argue that social media provided opportunities for #IdleNoMore tweeters - whether they supported or opposed the movement - to appeal to Indigenous culture to engage in a wide range of political/civic or, from a broader perspective, protest actions. Our findings indicate that cultural markers were referenced in 89 percent of the narrowed down selection of #IdleNoMore tweets considered for this study, especially those related to group membership, land, and epistemologies. It is clear that culture plays an important role in Twitter-based activism relating to INM in the months after the movement faded from public attention. As a form of mobilization, this study indicates that research into the uses of culture as a strategy for mobilization in the social mediascape require further investigation.

With the deeper understanding of the content genres circulating through social media presented in this research, there is an opportunity to explore the significance of the implications to INM by examining the types of support the movement garnered and the kinds of messages posted by allies. Future research could conduct an in-depth analysis of the hashtags used by INM tweeters. Further, there is an opportunity to continue to explore the functionalities of social media technologies for mobilization, situating the data into existing academic debates about the ways in which they contribute to social movements. Finally, there is an opportunity to assess the significance of social media in keeping a movement active long after the height of public attention through other media, like broadcast television. This could be done by conducting interviews with different stakeholders.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and the Office of Graduate Studies, ORCS and Academic Affairs of Emerson College. They would also like to thank the Department of Communication Studies of Emerson College for providing additional funding, which helped with the production of this paper. They would like to thank Derek Antoine, Ph.D. candidate at Carleton University, for his input as well as Emerson College-based research assistant Natalia Locatelli and University of Windsor-based Abunya Medina who played an important role in the analysis of the data and in reviewing the paper. Finally, they would like to thank Patricia Ochman, lawyer at O'Reilly & Associé, who specializes in Aboriginal law, for her valuable insights.
REFERENCES


Constitution Act, 1982 (UK), c 11, sch B.


Ellis, Clyde. (2013). ‘My heart jumps happy when I ... hear that music”: Powwow singing and indian identities in Eastern North Carolina. Native South 6(1), 1-32.


Poell, T., & Borra, E. (2012). Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr as platforms of alternative journalism: The social media account of the 2010 Toronto G20 protests. Journalism, 13(6), 695713.


NEW WAVE IN STORYTELLING? MANAGING CONTENT IN CROSS-CULTURAL PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS IN AN ONGOING CHANGE OF ROLES OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA. A CASE STUDY OF THE PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS, by Enric Ordeix, PhD. (Ramon Llull University, Catalonia-Spain) and Xavier Ginesta, PhD. (Universitat of Vic-Central University of Catalonia, Catalonia-Spain).

Abstract

This paper studies how traditional media functions have changed due to new media growth, in terms of consumption and influence; and how this has affected Public Relations (PR) campaigns in terms of storytelling and managing content. The starting point of this article is the media coverage of the Paris attacks on 13th November 2015, as well as, the institutional ceremonies that the French government organized as a tribute to 120 victims.

The methodology of this article is based on a sample of the mainstream media reports in French and English language published in Europe. The analysis indicators are the following: 1. The ‘message’, as the story based on organizational essentials, values and identity. 2. The publics in a media relations campaign: opinion leaders and opinion makers. 3. The Social dimension and the agenda setting. 4. Effectiveness versus Excellence. 5. Role of the media: traditional media (or mainstream media) and new media. 6. Trends and challenges for professionals.

As we will see, new trends of communication are redirecting the media strategy in PR campaigns in terms of influencing other key publics that generate major engagement in institutional reputation. Hence, traditional media functions (setting agenda, transmitting values and creating opinion) operate in a new digital context of mashup journalism, where cross-cultural PR seeks to better align media agenda with public/political agenda in order to set frames of sociability and community engagement.

Keywords: Communication Campaign, Public Relations, Public Opinion, Agenda Setting, Media Effectiveness, Media Relations, Paris terrorist attacks

Introduction

On 13th November 2015, 120 people were killed and two hundred were injured in a series of devastating attacks across Paris; the most important one occurring at the concert hall, Le Bataclan. As French Police reported, eight attackers of the ISIS terrorist group also died - seven of them by detonating explosive suicide belts. Afterward, a state of emergency was declared across the country and security at French borders was tightened. President François Hollande highlighted after the attacks: “[w]e are going to lead a war which will be pitiless. Because when terrorists are capable of committing such atrocities they must be certain that they are facing a determined France, a united France, a France that is together and does not let itself be moved, even if today we express infinite sorrow” (The Guardian, 14th November 2015).

Hence, the French government understands these terrorist attacks as an act of war against the nation and social cohesion: France has 4.7 million Muslims (7.5% of the population) (Salvatore, 2007; Hackett, 2015). For this reason, different events were planned in order to strengthen the cohesion among the citizens and to project a message of unity, political determination, and military power in this new fight against Islamic terrorism. The aim of this article is to understand how government strategos structured this storytelling, taking into account that mainstream media are changing.
journalistic routines in order to adapt to a new context where new media and mashup journalism are prevalent in reporting current affairs (Bonsón, Torres, Royo and Flores, 2012).

Theoretical background: new professional routines in PR professionals

Professionals who supervise and guide strategic communication policies need to make sure they are coherent and aligned with publics’ expectations. This is one of the major roles of the PR profession. We know Public Relations practitioners are in continuous change to make this happen and this is a major aim when dealing with media. We used to hear that the current changes in this field are a great opportunity, but most PR professionals do not like the changes because they take us out of our comfort-zone. We will be talking about the main steps to follow to set an effective media approach in a communication campaign, taking as an example how the French government strengthened its diplomatic and paradiplomatic message after the Paris terror attacks.

In essence, we can state the effectiveness of Public Relations in selecting media in a communication campaign depends consistently on the capability of creating stories based on organizational values (in our case-study, the nation building process in France has been successful), the ability to engage opinion leaders (i.e. journalists and bloggers), and the effectiveness in choosing the right channels and techniques to launch these stories (new media is needed to establish the agenda). To show this, we are going to investigate the following areas: the ‘message,’ as a way to demonstrate values and identity; the publics in a media relations campaign; agenda setting in managing media; the effectiveness versus excellence; the main “new” media roles and functions; and, last but not least, trends in new ways of managing media relations.

The ‘message,’ as a way to demonstrate values and identity
A PR process should always start by organizing the identity and attitudes of an organization, which should become the core message of its actions. This would work only when the organizational structure permits permeability with key publics. This would be when the organization, company, or institution would achieve the desired influence. At this stage of the process, we can state the corporate/organizational discourse/core message needs to be aligned with the organizational values of the entity.

The publics’ engagement in media relations campaigns
This has a to do with symmetry and dialogue, as well as leadership management. Individuals, people, and groups are able to influence other individuals, people, and groups as influencers on the key publics/stakeholders of the organization. In fact, the mutual understanding concept relies on this principal; open system organizations need to be permeable to the social environment; therefore, symmetry and dialogue with key leaders/journalists is necessary when belonging to key groups/publics (traditional and new media). Extensive dialogue and symmetry with them is required.

Agenda setting in managing media
This drives us to the third part of the PR process: the willingness of organizations to influence public opinion. This is to say organizations want to influence the media agenda (agenda building) and, therefore, to take part in the process of forming a public agenda (agenda setting) (Cobbs & Elder, 1971; McCombs & Show, 1972; Saperas, 1982).

Organizations seek to keep the social status quo, prevent potential social crises, and gain recognition or reputation, among others. This is aligned with what we understand as social synergy; to get the social pulse and facilitate organizational change in order to adapt better to publics’/stakeholders’ demands. This is the reason why we usually talk about the necessity of
organizations to influence the public agenda in order to gain social legitimacy and recognition (Ordeix & Duarte, 2009). Again, this constructs and influences a new social personality that affects the corporate or organizational values and parameters. This is just one reason to redo and remake the corporate core message.

Effectiveness means excellence and vice versa: a new arena of analysis and managing media relations

*Effectiveness* and *excellence* are mostly included in the “Excellence Study,” as key factors in the current analysis. Nevertheless, these topics and indicators will be further engaged by going deeper within the selected articles and in the following theoretical framework of this dissertation.

Those concepts are inspired in the principals of “Excellence Study.” Before we explain them, taking as the starting point the research done by James Grunig (2000, 2006), we would like to summarize the excellence factor as: excellent public relations determine that its management is deliberate, structured, and strategic; i.e. developed at a management level or depending on the most influential group of the organization/institution (dominant coalition) and that it integrates disciplinary functions and activities, separate from other functions of the different communication disciplines. This involves management knowledge that includes strategic and technical expertise that enables dialogue and understanding between the parties. Excellent Public relations also require communication symmetry with the internal public, as a sign of quality in the process of public relations. They must also be committed to ethical and social responsibility, which are extrapolated to the diverse components of their social and organizational environment (Ordeix et al., 2009).

“New” media roles and functions

As Saperas (1985) summarizes in his in-depth analysis of Mass Communication Research theories, the functions of traditional media would be: setting agenda of discussion; transmitting societal values and creating opinion. As for the mainstream media, the main characteristics are to align media agenda with public and political agenda in order to set frames of sociability and discussion (Casero, López & Ordeix, 2013).

Hence, the organization needs to know its own positions and wish to create discussion; needs to search for legitimacy and to contribute to user-generated content by leading online media actions. On this point, it is important to understand journalistic routines are changing in a context where Web 2.0 technologies and platforms are essential to create media messages (Bonsón, Torres, Royo and Flores, 2012). On the one hand, blogs and social networks (above all, twitter) become significant informative sources to cover major events; on the other, “mashup journalism” arose as the basic technique to report on current affairs. As Bonsón, Torres, Royo, and Flores (2012: 125) highlight, mashups can be understood as “the combination of technologies and services from different conventional and 2.0 sources in the same website or social media platforms.” Therefore, journalists become semantic route creators when they not only write their own content, but find connections among user-generated content or other media messages.

**New trends of managing media relations.**

There are three major trends professionals need to face. Firstly, there is the growing number of corporate public relations departments that integrate press as one for the major functions. These departments work 360° in terms of publics and areas: corporate and internal, community and institutions, and customer relations and media (mainstream media and new media). This holistic perspective gives the media relations manager a more strategic and higher profile, in terms of the company’s competences.
Secondly, globalization increases demand for local experts that know the feelings and writers of the area, in order to create more publicity events and effective messages according to the media needs and agenda. Local opinion leaders are mainly known by local citizens and organizations need to be playing the local role in order to be “corporate citizens” and to achieve higher local support (Ordeix & Duarte, 2009).

Last but not least, media relations managers, are content creators. Managing content is an added value to attract media attention. Creativity here is a must and knowledge of story telling is significant (Masip & Rom, 2005).

Methodology

This article follows a case study methodology, using a sample of six European mainstream media: The Times and Le Monde, as the most important newspapers in English and French; and both right-wing and left-wing newspapers: in England (The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph) and France (Libération and Le Figaró). This Case Study compares how the online versions of these dailies reported about the Paris attacks and how the French government planned the official ceremonies honoring the victims: people and politicians observed a minute of silence at the Sorbonne University; the Eiffel tower was lit up in the French Tri-Colour and, finally, an official tribute to the victims was done at the Invalides Palace, in Paris.

Results and discussion

We divided this section into two major topics: the new roles of the mainstream media and the planning of the major institutional events. Regarding the first topic, lots of changes occurred in the last decade, in terms of the structure of news, journalism routines, and processes (Van Dijk, 2012). Taking a sample of the chronicles of the Paris terrorist attacks, we can state the following aspects.

Firstly, all articles made use of embedded videos, tweets, and blog quotes. For example, Le Figaró online edition reported about the terrorist attacks via a live feed using embedded content coming from iTELE, Europe1, and the AFP; Le Monde used TF1 videos to report on Prime Minister Manuel Valls, speech, after the attacks. Libération included different tweets as illustrations of its chronicle, most of them based on twitter users that took pics of the venues where the massacre was done.

These reflections take us to the second consideration. Stories are based on personal experiences explained, directly, by those who took part in them. Those who were at Le Bataclan or attending the football match at the Stade du France were able to publish their own histories using social networks, that, at the same time, were a significant informative source for mainstream media. Hence, the narrative of the story is no longer based on the journalist’s narrative but on the narrative of others’, following a mashup style. One of the first articles, the English mainstream daily, The Times published about the massacre was titled: “They are killing us one by one, hostages tweeted from the concert hall” (The Times, 14th November). The Times’ columnist Colm Tobin analyzed the role of social media in that moment. He wrote: “[s]ocial media has no time for dignified silences. Misinformation, fury, and the blame game prevailed on Twitter as news of the Paris attacks came in.” He concluded: “[i]f we’ve become used to seeing these all-too-common events through the sensationalist prism of 24-hour rolling news and all that it entails, the Wild West of social media brings a white noise all its own” (The Times, 16th November).

Thirdly, journalists’ story layout reminds us more of a blog style format than a traditional structured news format. Newspapers reported the terrorist attack in a live format blog style, emulating the 24-
hour news TV channels and linked these reports to content broadcast by radio and television stations. *The Guardian*, for example, embedded videos from the US television network, NBC exclusive reports. Reporting on time has prevalence above analytic content.

Finally, we see highly sectioned news by format and content: videos are linked to YouTube and have independent and decentralized consumption from the whole journalistic chronicle; twitter and other social media links operate as single informativeunities; content creators organize media coverage by single subtopics for a nonlinear reading. Infographic content not only illustrates articles, but acts as single informative unites. For example, some days after the massacre, *The Guardian* published a “visual guide to a week that shook the French capital” (*The Guardian*, 23th November). The Daily Telegraph also published infographic content based on pictures of the Paris tragedy in an article titled, “Paris terror attacks: The 25 images that define the tragedy in France” (*Daily Telegraph*, 15th November).

Regarding the second analyzed aspect which refers to the effects of these new roles and structures of traditional and mainstream media to Public Relations plans and events. We took three major events that influenced the media agenda and the public agenda: the minute of silence at the Sorbonne University; the Eiffel tower being lit with the French Tricolor and, the official tribute to the victims at the Invalides Palace. We analyzed these events as an example of media diplomacy organized within the structure and roles played by the media. To analyze, then we used these indicators: 1. Message; 2. Publics/stakeholders; 3. Media means and roles; 4. Agenda; 5. Effectiveness.

Concerning the message, we realize most companies and institutions base their stories on their values and symbologies, linked to certain icons. The Eiffel Tower for instance works as an icon that represents certain values, as does the Invalides Palace (where Napoleon is buried), and so too, la Sorbonne de Paris (where the revolution of May of 1968 started).

Concerning the publics/stakeholders, we realize these events are not chosen randomly but empowering engagement with key publics as opinion makers for the new socially reinforced and enhanced France. The event at the Sorbonne gives the students and young people the “68th revolutionary spirit” to not surrender. The lighting of the Eiffel Tower works as an icon-message that merges the city’s values with the national ones and has the intention to work as a grassroots communication tool, to be reproduced virally through the traditional and new media. So, then, this communicative action/event is seeking a large engagement to provide dialogue within specific groups and platforms (whatsapp, twitter and facebook) in order to reach, first, the local community, and international supporters of the cause. Finally, let’s pay attention to the organization of the national tribute to the victims. As Hamelink says (2015: 163): “The most open form of public diplomacy is media diplomacy. Nevertheless, the most serious danger of this public openness is the oversimplification of complex issues.” Official funerals are often the platform for considerable diplomatic activity, where diplomatic communication with certain key publics has demonstrably played an important role in maintaining certain values of peace and social strength.

When analyzing the media and agenda setting, we can see how certain topics are highly reproduced in YouTube, especially the ones who are presenting best the national symbology (see for instance *La Marseillaise* sang by the army choir during the official funeral). We understand certain events have hotspots to highlight certain messages and to achieve better spread of the content, virally. The traditional up-down public diplomacy process is following the third party endorsement as a way to achieve a larger impact in opinion. Besides, we see how the selected events are chosen according to the current media and public agenda: this is what Hamelink (2015: 205) states when he says, “to make an intercultural interaction a satisfactory communicative act that participants would like to
continue, in which none of the participants feels humiliated, after which participants feel they tried their best to understand each other and to take the other(s) seriously.” This is, in fact, grassroots communication and what happened at the Sorbonne event. Nevertheless, Hamelink (2015: 204) assumes that in confrontation with religious groups, “the ultimate truth may be at stake and mutual understanding may be impossible.”

Based on Grunig (2000, 2006), managing content in cross-cultural Public Relations must be deliberated, structured, and strategic. These terrorist attacks happened in a context where news-making processes are clearly more different than ever before and play a crucial role in influencing public opinion in a new political context, where the French government qualified the terrorist attacks as an act of war. Therefore, publics, key messages, scenarios, and communication techniques are meticulously chosen to fulfill the dominant coalition and better engage the key publics and opinion leaders. Moreover, cross-cultural communication must be committed to ethical and social values; this means, as Hamelink (2015) highlights: to accept multiple identities, self-awareness of one’s own cultural identity, cultural biases, values, and practices.

**Conclusions**

The media coverage of the Paris attacks has been based in a mashup news-making style, where stories are not created in order to be read linearly. Reporting on time, via their online versions, has been more important than in-depth analysis of current affairs. So, user generated content has been essential for newspapers to find personal stories that illustrate the massacre. All the newspapers analyzed have used tweets or homemade videos as primary informative sources.

This new journalistic news-making process, based on content production in a network society (Van Dijk, 2012), directly influences the way PR managers plan institutional or official events. The three events analyzed have had a wider mediatization in social networks, thanks to citizens’ mobile technologies (*smartphones*). In this way, we can consider that engaging citizens with these events is essential to find their commitment in using media as a *paradiploismatic* tool. This is to say, citizens’ commitment to the official agenda is necessary to strengthen “media diplomacy” (Hamelink, 2015: 163).

However, as this case study shows, citizens will not be close to the institutional agenda if it is not based on global and common values. In the French case, where a nation building process has been the basis of the governance, linking the official ceremonies honoring the 120 terrorist victims with republican values (essentially represented by the flag and the national anthem, *Le Marseillaise*) has been successful. Above all, taking into account France is currently facing a social challenge, searching for social inclusion of second and third migrant generations, most of them Muslims. The Paris terror attacks will open a new research field that will need further work.

In sum, we can point out as a major finding that media changes are considerably changing public relations actions and policies; and less the other way around as we used to see.

**References**


FASHION SUPPLY CHAIN WORKER EXPLOITATION: A STRUCTURAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE THEORY PERSPECTIVE, by Jon M. Shapiro, Ph.D. (Northeastern State University, USA)

Abstract

Worker exploitation is an ongoing problem globally within the textile and garment industry. Multinational and local retailers often grapple with the issue of identifying and navigating perpetrators along inherently intricate supply chains. This paper examines the crucial strategic, cross-cultural knowledge within this setting, necessary to develop relational competency. It introduces structural cultural knowledge theory (SCKT) with the aim of demonstrating how critical knowledge structures are essential in developing marketing relationships, while identifying and mitigating worker exploitation.

INTRODUCTION

While knowledge acquisition is a complex process, it remains one of the most prized possessions for understanding relationships and developing trust within relationship networks. Businesses must strive to harness knowledge in order to train employees in a multitude of cultural references. For instance, rapid globalization has made it progressively more important for trainers to teach managers how to operate successfully across multiple countries and cultures (Bruner and Lannerelli 2011). In addition, over time, the global business environment has become increasingly multifaceted and supply-chain worker exploitation has proliferated.

Many factors have contributed to this complexity, including expanding trade blocks, globally-sophisticated capital markets, and cross-national ethnic entrepreneurial networks. Increasingly, relational-exchange-functions involve partners and teams from multiple countries and, more importantly, a mosaic of differing cultures. In order to effectively bridge the various players in the globalized market together, managers and policy-makers must consider how knowledge and forms of intelligence can be utilized beneficially. Building on the work of Shapiro et al. (2008), this paper explicitly categorizes key knowledge categories, introduces structural cultural knowledge theory (SCKT); introduces key declarative knowledge structures; and suggests how to identify and mitigate worker exploitation within the fashion supply-chain.

This paper is divided into 5 categories. First, we consider key cultural knowledge categories and how they are arranged. Second, we introduce and discuss structural cultural knowledge theory and the hierarchical nature of knowledge development. Third, based on the findings of Hall and Hall (1987), we discuss the central role of context. Fourth, we introduce a theoretically-grounded process, designed to thwart worker exploitation. Last, we offer a discussion of our findings and their implications.

Types of Cultural Knowledge Structures

Previous research on cultural knowledge offers little direction on how to organize, classify, or understand such knowledge. However, the field of cognitive psychology, specifically the research on the cognitive structure of experts and novices, offers some potential guidance. For instance, Rosch (1975) based his research on the categorical model of memory, suggesting that categories are cognitive structures that organize information about topics. Likewise, organized knowledge can be declarative (i.e., simple facts) or procedural (i.e., rules of thumb or action linked to a category) (Chi, 1978). For example, an international buyer may have a category in memory labeled “Japanese exchange.” Associated with this category of Japanese exchange might be declarative knowledge,
such as MITI mediates (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) and is involved with Japanese trade deals. Procedural knowledge, such as "hire an agent with past ties to MITI," may also be linked to this category. Thus, in applying these ideas to this study, declarative knowledge provides the building blocks for understanding a cross-cultural exchange, but procedural knowledge offers guidance on how these building blocks can be used (Weitz, Sujan and Sujan, 1986).

Aristotle laid the foundation for systematic knowledge and categorizations of the knowledge of things. He said, “systematic knowledge of nature must start with an attempt to settle questions about principles [...] We must start thus with things which are less clear by nature, but clearer to us, and move on to things which are by nature clearer and knowable” (Ackrill, 1987, p. 81). Following Aristotle’s ideologies about categories, particulars, and universals, we are able to understand the need for breaking universals into particulars; more importantly, into categorizes of particulars. For example, categorization is important for helping people deal effectively with a complex, dynamic, environment. Without categorization, all information would have to be explored and understood anew. Instead, people compare new events, people, and objects to categories stored in memory. Based on similarities and dissimilarities to these categories, people are able to respond more efficiently (Rosch, 1975).

Research on experts and novices suggests that their cognitive structures may be different. For example, when compared to novices, experts have a larger number of categories (Mervis and Rosch, 1981); they organize these categories in a hierarchical manner so information is more detailed [in other words, they organize information around abstract ideas but have subcategories with more specific information (Rosch et al., 1976)]]; and they classify information more accurately because they rely on category characteristics that reveal the deeper structure of the category (Sujan, 1985).

An analogy can be made to cross-cultural exchange: culturally knowledgeable marketers can be viewed as experts in cross-cultural exchange. Thus, insights from the cognitive literature are useful in organizing the different types of knowledge that culturally knowledgeable people possess.

Based on the work of Shapiro et al (2008), we extend procedural knowledge into etic (outsider's) procedural knowledge and emic (insider's) procedural knowledge. Procedural knowledge (or rules of thumb) develops from within a cultural world view or way of life. In other words, people evolve heuristics they link with categories through experience. For example, to the extent to which buyers rely on procedural knowledge from their home culture and are unable to rely upon emic or insider’s procedural knowledge, business people are less culturally sensitive. However, to the extent to which buyers rely on procedural knowledge from their host culture and are able to rely on emic or insider’s procedural knowledge, business people are more culturally sensitive. Cultural knowledge has three dimensions: cultural declarative knowledge, etic procedural knowledge, and emic procedural knowledge.

**Dimension One: Cultural Declarative Knowledge**

Declarative knowledge involves simple facts (Fiske and Taylor, 1984; McPherson and Thomas, 1989; Stillings et al., 1987). For instance, declarative knowledge of baseball would likely include a mental representation of all possible field positions (i.e., first base, second base, catcher, etc).

Similarly, cultural declarative knowledge is composed of simple facts about a culture. Based on the literature, it became clear that it is necessary to have this type of knowledge within a number of key areas in order to understand a host culture. Culturally-knowledgeable business people possess cultural declarative knowledge across key domains such as time, face’, political systems, religion, and family. For example, one form of cultural declarative knowledge that was particularly important to buyers was knowledge of the political system. Specifically, the role of government agents and the prevalence of bribery ("grease") were of vital interest. One must understand the role
of government officials within the host culture where they are underpaid and rely on bribes in order to make a living. Knowledge of the officials' roles was necessary to negotiate successfully. These officials also possess knowledge crucial toward obtaining quotas and expediting the delivery of goods.

Given that government officials are sometimes members of poorer economic groups, some count on pay-offs to make a living. As a result, some government officials will call certain items sensitive in order to facilitate bribery-based revenues. Knowledge of the Thai government's practice is important in obtaining a quota and is crucial for negotiating with government officials.

Procedural Knowledge

In order to process cultural knowledge, we depend upon our experiences. Scholars identify procedural knowledge as having representations in memory that are linked to goal-directed actions. Moreover, many scholars have divided the particular procedural knowledge category into two disparate subcategories (Leigh and McGraw, 1989; Szymanski's, 1988; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan, 1986). Since this term was developed within the field of cognitive psychology, a brief review of this literature was conducted. While procedural knowledge was interpreted somewhat differently among researchers, a common thread was found that procedural knowledge involves having representations in memory that are linked to goal-directed actions (Anderson, 1985; Best, 1989; Gangne, 1984; McPherson et al., 1987).

Based on Anderson's (1985) work, the following definition was used: "procedural knowledge fundamentally has a problem-solving organization... People often use general problem solving methods for deciding what sequence of operators to use in solving a problem. These methods are called heuristics when they often lead to problem solution" (p. 198). These rules of thumb help guide goal directed behavior.

The importance of procedural knowledge is central to Structural Cultural Knowledge Theory (SCKT) because procedural knowledge helps the international marketer to interact effectively with exchange partners. Within the contextual framework of SCKT, the two types of procedural knowledge are hierarchically developed and applied, meaning those cultural knowledge structures and applications for the home and host cultures: (1) etic procedural knowledge (i.e., rules of thumb/heuristics derived from within the home culture), and (2) emic procedural knowledge (i.e., rules of thumb/heuristics derived from within the host culture) (Shapiro et al., 2008).

Dimension Two: Etic (Outsider's) Procedural Knowledge

With etic procedural knowledge, the person's categories are organized around facts that are derived from within the home culture and linked to heuristics that lead to problem solutions at home. As a result, to the extent that this knowledge collides with the host culture, s/he is potentially less able to operate effectively in the new environment. Thus, the marketing manager is operating abroad in a foreign culture as though still at home and is assuming that differences do not exist.

Thus, etic procedural knowledge involves action structures based on home culture facts. Obviously, marketers with highly developed knowledge structures have low reliance on etic procedural knowledge. The third knowledge structure is emic (insider's) procedural knowledge.

Dimension Three: Emic (Insider's) Procedural Knowledge

With emic (insider's) procedural knowledge, the person's knowledge categories are organized around concepts that are derived from within the host culture, and are linked to heuristics that often lead to problem solutions in this context. As a result, s/he is better able to operate effectively in the
new environment and has more sophisticated knowledge structures than one who relies on etic (outsider's) procedural knowledge structures. Based on SCKT, when people have highly developed emic procedural knowledge structures, their understanding of the host-culture tends to become more independent of their home cultural concepts. As a result, they are better able to deal with the host cultural exchange partners. Emic procedural knowledge involves cultural declarative knowledge linked to heuristics appropriate to the host culture and is less dependent on home cultural declarative or procedural knowledge.

FUNDAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURES

Knowledge is a highly complex domain and has challenged psychologists’ ability to provide a clear conceptualization. However, over the last few decades, two unique and interrelated variants of knowledge have emerged within the psychological and international business literature: declarative and procedural. Declarative knowledge is knowledge of facts, ideas, and theories (Fiske and Taylor, 1984), which some scholars suggest, serve as building blocks similar to schemas (McPherson and Thomas, 1989), or they serve as networks of facts related to a phenomenon of interest. For instance, understanding the meaning of colors, or other cultural symbols are important schemas. Additionally, knowledge of cultural violations and, adiaphora, or behaviors that are not required, but considered beneficial, are declarative knowledge structures.

Categorization (knowing what things are) is an important first step in acquiring cultural knowledge. However, business training often limits itself to these facts, instead of attempting to facilitate an understanding of the more important question: why are things culturally defined in a certain way? Often, complex and important issues, such as relevant cultural declarative knowledge categorizations within a country tend to cloud the bigger picture. This may be due to the richness and complexity of existent cultural declarative knowledge within the popular business literature.

Procedural knowledge is the understanding of how to perform tasks. It involves scripts associated with the performance of goal-related activities (Leigh and McGraw, 1989). For instance, the process of dining with a person involves both table manners and relational protocol. The ability to perform these tasks appropriately, related to the concept of expertise, is a procedural knowledge structure.

Fundamentally, well-developed declarative knowledge lies closer to the cognition of categorical facts associated with the intellectual understanding of a phenomenon, while procedural knowledge encompasses the structures directly utilized to perform a goal-directed behavior. In other words, a person enacts procedural knowledge when they commence a specific act. A primary goal within any successful international business relationship is to utilize knowledge that leads to “correct” behavioral outcomes within a given context (Chen et al., 2012; Hansen et al., 2011; Early and Peterson 2004; Shapiro et al., 2008; Triandis 2006). For instance, appropriate negotiations, dyadic relationship formation, and communications are all critical domains associated with international business success.

STRUCTURAL CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE THEORY

Structural Cultural Knowledge Theory (“SCKT”) is grounded on the principle that cultural knowledge is hierarchical in nature and has a declarative foundation (Shapiro et al., 2008; Tokar et al. 2012). Moreover, well-formed emic-procedural knowledge is grounded on a richly developed network of declarative knowledge. Optimally, declarative knowledge should be developed based upon a theoretically-driven understanding of cultural variance. Only once a person develops a declarative knowledge foundation will it be possible to develop well-formed emic procedural structures. As useful cultural knowledge is developed, etic procedural structures are replaced by emic procedural structures. Vital to SCKT is the delineation of the three dimensions of cultural
knowledge: declarative, etic procedural, and emic procedural. It is the interaction among the three knowledge types, which lead to the development of cultural knowledge structures.

THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Among key cultural theorists within business literature (Hofstede 1991, Kluckhohn and Strodbeck 1961), Hall and Hall (1987) introduced concepts that explain significant cultural variances within the supply-chain setting. This section describes conceptual domains related to this setting.

Context is the information surrounding an event. High-context societies have significant amounts of information associated with a unit of communication, while low context cultures provide straightforward information with little background knowledge imbedded within a communiqué. China and most of the world’s population is high context, while North America, Northern Europe, and Australia tend to be low-context. Most of south-east Asia, including Thailand is high-context.

‘Face’ is associated with a group’s shame. If ‘face’ is lost, the group compromises its honor. As a result, within ‘face’ cultures it becomes crucial to avoid any conflict in order for ‘face’ not to be lost. ‘Face’ cultures are typically high-context because they share information in order to avoid any unpleasant confrontation.

Time is another key concept where monochronic cultures tend to be on time and perform one act at a time, while polychronic cultures tend to be late, and perform multiple tasks simultaneously. High context cultures tend to be polychronic because relationships take a higher priority than deadlines. Asian cultures tend to be high context, ‘face’ oriented, and polychronic; while North American, Northern European, and Australian cultures tend to be the opposite.

CORRECT IDENTIFICATION: WORKER SUPPLY-CHAIN EXPLOITATION

It is documented within the literature that industries across Asia, and globally, have employed workers who have been underpaid, provided unsafe environments, and made to toil extraordinarily long hours. Often the workers are migrants, children, and indentured servants (Ritch 2015).

This phenomenon transcends the garment industry. For instance, many global retailers have purchased seafood from Thai businesses that employ virtual slaves and this has attracted attention from public policy advocates (Macfarlane 2015).

Regardless of the context, emergent consumer groups are demanding the end to these practices. Increasingly more consumer segments are willing to reward firms that operate in an ethical and sustainable manner, although there still is a gap between values and behavior (Janssen and Vanhamme 2012). However, many companies fall short in terms of developing a process that helps them implement such goals effectively. The following section discusses the usefulness of contextualization.

CONTEXTUALIZATION AS A LEARNING APPROACH

Based upon a series of in-depth interviews with twelve Thai clothing exporters, the key emergent strategic factor leading to business success, in terms of long-term relationship development and sales, is that of creating a high-context relationship within the supply-chain (Shapiro et al 2008). For instance, the western negotiators within the top performing firms act similarly to ethnographers and actively learn nearly every possible nuance within the supply chain. Fashion exporters learn every detail about cost structures, religious holidays, infrastructure issues, and every parameter that affects how components are manufactured, processed, and grown. In this way, reasonable dyadic requests are made, loss of ‘face’ is minimal or nonexistent, and specifications tended to be met
accurately at a price-point sustainable for all dyadic constituents. This leads to successful relationships and to better product value propositions.

We reason that this same form of high-contextualization is the best way for a retailer to minimize or eliminate worker exploitation. If a firm’s goal is to stop worker exploitation, this method would serve as a best practice. Through the intricate understanding of each constituent and process, the retailer and exporter are likely to discern the vast majority of reasonable business outcomes. Such high-context actors will commonly be in a position to identify wrongdoing within the supply chain. It is through ethnographic monitoring that discrepancies can be identified and mitigated by way of negotiations, or other strategic decisions.

By living within supply-chain-related facilities, it is also possible to learn about normal costs, acceptable wages, and other fixed costs. A manager may also visit competing vendors who utilize diametrically different labor practices. This is a process that requires intense training and should be an active function within the retail organization. A highly context driven retail buyer is able to negotiate more effectively, find ways to relay value propositions to other key constituents, including customers, and mitigate issues of worker exploitation.

Similarly, it is imperative that retailers communicate how supply-chain workers are expected to be treated, and these expectations woven clearly into each arrangement. Within such an agreement, a process should be put in-place that allows the retailer to become high-context in terms of understanding each supply-chain actor and developing long-term interpersonal relationships with each supplier, fabric growing group, and manufacturer.

DISCUSSION

Often, when learning about a new culture, business people focus on specific declarative knowledge categories, such as key holidays, the meanings of symbols, and specific procedural knowledge categories, such as how to bow one’s head during a greeting. These are worthwhile pursuits but have significant limitations. First, business people fail to learn the underlying meaning of why these behaviors are important. Therefore, when a novel situation emerges, the visitor is ill prepared to adjust to the scenario.

Knowing how to act is crucial within any dyadic relationship. In order to know the correct way to conduct oneself, it is important to understand why cultures have certain priorities. For instance, once a person understands that the Thais are high-context, collective, ‘face’ saving, value the past, and are hierarchical - it becomes easy to deduce that one should take time to develop the relationship and be careful not to criticize the dyadic partner’s family, firm, leader, or any individuals.

Based upon Hall and Hall’s (1987) ethnographic work, we define contextualization as the development of collective relationships where every event contains abundant information. It is through the development of strong relationships that the understanding of the exchange partner’s meanings and values emerges. Moreover, it is only though this knowledge that successful relationships and improved working conditions are likely to transpire.

CONCLUSION

This paper introduces Structural Cultural Knowledge Theory (SCKT) and discusses how three primary knowledge structures are hierarchical in nature. It is then demonstrated that the proper understanding of theory-driven declarative knowledge structures are important in facilitating the development of procedural knowledge. Based on SCKT, this paper then provides guidance
regarding what are the key theory-driven declarative knowledge structures necessary to gain a foundation for cross-cultural understanding, and for impeding worker exploitation.

Future studies should further examine empirically the types of knowledge structures that expert cross-cultural business people have developed in order to determine the importance of theory-driven declarative knowledge. In addition, future research should examine what types of training programs lead to optimal understanding and better diagnostics, regarding supply-chain-related exploitations. Anthological training is uncommon within the retail sector. Yet, this approach appears to provide valuable tools within the import/export sector and may be considered within retail organizations as a viable alternative. Further work along this path may help firms and public policy advocates to address this unjust phenomenon.

REFERENCES


CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES AS AN INFLUENCER OF SERVICE QUALITY IN MEDICAL TOURISM, by Prof. S. Sundararajan, Dr. A. Chandramohan and Dr. K. Sadasivan (SRM University, India)

ABSTRACT

Cross culture describes matters involving cultural interactions or various forms of cultural interactivity. Cross-culturalism is synonymous with 'transculturation,' a term coined by Cuban writer Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s to describe processes of cultural hybridity in Latin America. The term "cross-culturalism" became prevalent in cultural studies in the late 1980s and 1990s by the Guyanese writer Wilson Harris, who wrote, in his book "The Womb of Space," that "cultural heterogeneity or cross-cultural capacity" gives an "evolutionary thrust" to the imagination.

Medical Tourism could refer to travel to another country, with the primary aim of undertaking medical treatment. The various reasons to undertake such travel could be to save costs, reduce the waiting time for treatment, enhanced effectiveness, legal issues, pleasant mental conditioning amongst other reasons. Traditionally, from Third World countries, the travel took place to the advanced countries of the West. However, in the past two decades, the trend is from the developed nations to developing nations like Jordan, Israel, Turkey, India, South Africa, Mexico, China, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. To a large extent it is due to the medical advancement and creation of various associated facilities in the developing nations. In 2015 an estimated 32 million medical tourists are expected in India alone. The global revenues of the Medical Tourism industry are currently around 2 billion U.S. Dollars, making the sector attractive.

Service Quality deals with experience and expectations. Ten determinants that may influence the appearance of a Service Quality gap were described by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in the SERVQUAL model: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer and tangibles. Subsequently, the determinants were reduced to five: 1. tangibles; reliability; responsiveness; service assurance; and empathy, in the so-called RATER model.

With the ease of travel and movement amongst nations, cross cultural issues are likely to take centre stage in influencing Service Quality in Medical Tourism. For example, in several Asian countries it is customary to give gifts or tips to the medical attendants. Gifts or Tips are forbidden in some cultures. Propriety or nature of communication and myriad languages add complexities in transferring understanding, between the various players in Medical Tourism, such as the patient, doctors, nurses and other medical attendants, travel agents, tour operators, hospitality providers; including hoteliers and caterers, bankers, transporters amongst others. Cross cultures dominate communication, gestures, facilities for stay, preference for food and cuisines combined with the specialised medical requirements in some cases etc. Further cultural issues influence understanding and behaviour to such an extent that they in turn impact the experience as well as expectations amongst the Medical Tourists as well as the various service providers.

In the present article, the authors try to bring out the conceptual aspects covering the cross cultural issues, which largely influence Service Quality in Medical Tourism.

Key terms: Cross culture, Service Quality, Medical Tourism, Gaps Model,

1. Introduction

Medical tourism services should examine physician–patient communication methods and physician– visitor culture, because each may lack sufficient cultural competence, as well as levels of cultural respect. It is recommended healthcare providers arrange such education for their employees. Medical services are a part of social infrastructure. Medical services are viewed not only as market commodities but also as something with cultural aspects that are difficult to alter.
Medical tourism is a growing sector in India. India is becoming the 2nd medical tourism destination after Thailand. India’s medical tourism sector is expected to experience an annual growth rate of 30%, making it a $2 billion USD industry by 2015. As medical treatment costs in the developed world balloon - with the United States leading the way - more and more Westerners are finding the prospect of international travel for medical care increasingly appealing. An estimated 150,000 of these travel to India for low-priced healthcare procedures every year. Cosmetic surgery, bariatric surgery, knee cap replacements, liver transplants, and cancer treatments are some of the most sought out medical tourism procedures opted for by foreigners. Some of the leading hospitals for medical tourism are Apollo Hospitals, Global Hospitals, Bombay Hospital, Hinduja Hospital, Hiranandani Hospital, Akruti Institute of Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery, Columbia Asia, and Fortis Health Care.

2. Definition

Cross culture - Cross culture describes matters involving cultural interactions or various forms of cultural interactivity.

Culture shock - Culture shock is the disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration, a visit to a new country, or a move between social environments.

Medical Tourism - Medical Tourism could refer to travel to another country, with the primary aim of undertaking medical treatment.

Service Quality - Service Quality deals with customer experience and expectations.

2.1.1. Dimensions of Service Quality

A customer's expectation of a particular service is determined by factors, such as: recommendations, personal needs and past experiences. The expected service and the perceived service sometimes may not be equal, thus leaving a gap. The service quality model or the ‘GAP model’ developed by a group of authors- Kevin, Kristine and Berry at Texas and North Carolina in 1985, highlights the main requirements for delivering high service quality. It identifies five 'gaps' that cause unsuccessful delivery. Customers generally have a tendency to compare the service they 'experience' with the service they 'expect.' If the experience does not match the expectation, there is a gap. The ten determinants that may influence the appearance of a gap were described by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in the SERVQUAL model: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer, and tangibles. Later, the determinants were reduced to five:[7] tangibles; reliability; responsiveness; service assurance and empathy in the so-called RATER model.

2.1.2. Approaches to the improvement of service quality

In general, an improvement in service design and delivery helps achieve higher levels of service quality. For example, in service design, changes can be brought about in the design of service products and facilities. On the other hand, in service delivery, changes can be brought about in the service delivery processes, the environment in which the service delivery takes place, and improvements in the interaction processes between customers and service providers. Various techniques can be used to make changes such as: Quality function deployment (QFD); failsafing; moving the line of visibility and the line of accessibility; and blueprinting.

3. Impact of cross cultures on Medical Tourism

Medical tourists consider individual cultural values, preferences, or habits when choosing medical services in other countries. When they arrive in unfamiliar environments, tourists create challenges
for their bodies and minds. Specifically, ill tourists are more sensitive to environmental factors, and must overcome mental barriers to openly present themselves to foreign medical personnel for treatment. Apart from those factors, cultural thinking and ideas are also crucial, including language ability or competence for physician–patient communication, respect for patient privacy, respect for subjectivity of the body, cultural dietary requirements, and the physician–visiting culture. International healthcare organizations make efforts to educate their staff about understanding the cultural dissimilarity of international patients. They teach providers about key cultural challenges arising from geographies, languages, religion, societies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and individual perceptions (Jagyasi, 2010).

4. Managing Cultural Gaps to enhance Service Quality

Globalization across all sectors has brought complex cultural needs, in an already culturally diverse world. Understanding culture and behavior was important in healthcare to provide comprehensive care with a delightful experience, but it has certainly become essential in medical tourism as patients arrive with different cultural beliefs and from different geographies. Cultural competence can be discussed further in terms of healthcare systems, medical organizations, and individual levels. From the dimension of medical service supply, how to increase cultural competence and respect for diverse cultural values among systems, organizations, and individuals should be taken as a target for further diligence.

Cultural communication differences can be identified by 8 different criteria: 1) when to talk; (2) what to say; (3) pacing and pausing; (4) the art of listening; (5) intonation; (6) what is conventional and what is not in a language; (7) degree of indirectness; and (8) cohesion and coherence.

Culture shock is the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration, a visit to a new country, or a move between social environments. One of the most common causes of culture shock involves individuals in a foreign environment. Culture shock can be described as consisting of at least one of four distinct phases: honeymoon, frustration, adjustment, and mastery. Common problems include: information overload, language barrier, generation gap, technology gap, skill interdependence, formulation dependency, homesickness (cultural), infinite regress (homesickness), boredom (job dependency), response ability (cultural skill set). There is no unique way to entirely prevent culture shock, as individuals in any society are personally affected by cultural contrasts differently. After some time (usually 6 to 12 months), one grows accustomed to the new culture and develops routines. One starts to develop problem-solving skills for dealing with the culture and begins to accept the culture's ways with a positive attitude. The culture begins to make sense, and negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced. Thus the service providers can help the patients manage Excessive concern over cleanliness, Feelings of helplessness and withdrawal, Irritability, Anger, Mood swings, Desire for home and old friends, Physiological stress reactions, Homesickness, Boredom, Withdrawal, Getting "stuck" on one thing, fatalistic thoughts, Stereotyping host nationals, and Hostility towards host nationals.

5. Conclusion

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has received considerable attention in academic literature. The results of most research studies have indicated that the service quality and customer satisfaction are indeed independent but are closely related and a rise in one is likely to result in an increase in another construct.
6. Reference


"Easing of visa norms to boost medical tourism". The Times of India. 2012-12-05.


Indian Medical Tourism To Touch Rs 9,500 Crore By 2015, The Economic Times, posted on IndianHealthCare

THE DETERMINANTS OF BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THAI AND VIETNAMESE TRAVEL AGENCIES, by Ratiwan Watanasin (Suan Dusit University, Thailand), Mai Ngoc Khuong (International University - Vietnam National University, Vietnam)

Abstract

The inter-organizational or business-to-business relationship marketing literature reveals the importance of determinants, such as trust, commitment, interdependence, coordination, flexibility, communication, and compatibility. As well, it is evident that worthy relationships lead to marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction. Various environmental changes have occurred in the tourism industry, such as the official commencement of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 and political conflict in Thailand. It is essential to identify the key determinants of business relationships in order to thrive within the Thai-Vietnamese business context.

This research compared quantitative data from 207 Thai and 114 Vietnamese travel agencies. In-depth interviews were conducted with five Thai travel agencies. In addition, recommendations from 39 Vietnamese travel agencies were utilized to verify the determinants arising from the quantitative analysis undertaken.

Factor analysis and multivariate regression analysis were applied the data from both countries. The findings indicate there are cultural differences in managing Thai and Vietnamese business relationships. The most important determinant of business relationships for Thai travel agencies is trust. Other significant determinants for Thais are formalization, coordination, participation, frequency of interaction, and conflict resolution. For Vietnamese agencies, the important determinants are participation, frequency of interaction, and commitment. The findings suggest that frequency of interaction is a good predictor for any beneficial business relationship.

Content analysis of qualitative data supported the quantitative findings and this outcome enhanced marketing insight with regard to the improvement of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies.

Key words: business relationships, interorganizational relationships, relationship marketing, Thai-Vietnamese tourism management

Overview and Rationale

Thailand has a vision to become one of the top five tourist destinations in Asia to generate more sustainable wealth for the country. However, there are at least three challenges. First, the challenge follows the official commencement of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015. The AEC, bringing with it a concomitant reduction in trade regulations and restrictions, will add several complexities; particularly changes in the customer base and their behaviors, and increased regional competition. These complexities will force travel agencies to seek out alliances as an instrument to help preserve sales and profitability, as well as to boost their brand or reputation otherwise.

Second, travel agencies, academia, and practitioners have reported an increase in the bargaining power of consumers and buyers. As such, the customer lifetime value and strategies countering customer defection have become considerable factors in marketing management. Considering that marketing today prioritizes value creation to safeguard customer satisfaction and repeat purchase, travel agencies realize the importance of having cooperative alliances (Mehta, Takao, Mazur, & Anderson, 2013). In fact, relational alliances and relationship marketing practices are increasingly
popular in tourism-related industries, such as airlines, hospitality, and financial services (Mai, 2013). However, success seems to be dependent on many factors, with this leading to the question of determinants that can effectively guide business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. Thus far, the answer to this question is less known as very little previously-published research has examined the issue. This research originated from the 2010 Ph.D. dissertation of Dr. Mai Ngoc Khuong (Mai, 2012). He studied the relationships between Vietnamese and Thai travel agencies only from the perspective of Vietnamese agencies. For the purpose of filling the knowledge gap of international business relationships within the tourism industry, the research contrasted the perspectives of Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies and applied qualitative research to verify the differences according to the lapse of time.

As for the third challenge, Voldnes, Grønhaug, & Nilssen (2012) reveal the congruence between international partners in terms of antecedents that are crucial for achieving partnership satisfaction. Unfortunately, differences exist between how partners describe their own actions and how they perceive those of their counterparts. These differences are explained by cultural dissimilarities. Since marketers aim to maximize their performance, relationship success is of increasing importance. As partnership phenomena vary cross-culturally in critical ways, it appears, that the investigation of key cross-cultural determinants will increase the understanding of international business relationships; and, as a direct result, enhance the ability of related players to manage these important relationships.

Business Relationships

Business relationships are based on the concept of alliances, which are a vital form of relationship marketing. These can be defined as collaborative efforts between two or more organizations that share strategic resources with the purpose of achieving mutually compatible objectives that they could not accomplish alone (Hunt, Lambe, & Wittmann, 2002). Success results from co-producing market offerings that have superior value or lower costs and, in turn, improving firm competitive advantage. This research, explains relationship success through financial success, marketing support, and satisfaction. Financial success is the main reason for any collaborative effort (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003). Success, per Mai(2013), includes: the potential sales and profit; the customer willingness to pay a price premium; sales growth; and lower costs. Also, collaborative efforts may be described in terms of marketing support. Competition in the international tourism industry forces travel agencies to continuously search for attractive destinations, well-organized processes, and technologies that add competitive value to their own offerings. As such, a procurement strategy is one of the most important elements in delivering superior value to customers. Consequently, organizations seek out partners who are enthusiastic to provide marketing efforts, such as budget allocations, joint activities, customer databases, and technology to achieve better mutual results (Palmatier, Scheer, Evans, & Arnold, 2008). Relationship satisfaction is a prerequisite in maintaining business relationships. Satisfaction is a positive affective state reflecting the degree to which a party in a relationship fulfills his partner's expectations of financial, behavioral, and other factors of success. Satisfied partners are willing to prolong relationships and contribute further resources for reciprocal success (Leonidou, Palihawadana, & Theodosiou, 2006; Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006).

Much research confirms the importance of trust and commitment in creating relationship values (Zabkar & Brencic, 2004). Naturally, there are more determinants related to successful cross-cultural business relationships. As the research aimed to identify the determinants in a Thai and Vietnamese context, determinants, such as communication, conflict resolution, coordination, formalization, frequency of interaction, interdependence, organizational compatibility, and participation, were measured as well.
**Trust** refers to a belief of one party in a business relationship that the behavior of the other party is honest and fair, and that he will perform actions, which will result in positive outcomes; as well as prevent actions that will result in negative outcomes. Trust has both cognitive and affective properties. Cognition is the belief that the partner is competent, and this shall affect the feeling that the partner is reliable (Abdul, Gaur, & Peñaloza, 2012). In the tourism industry, trust is a foundation of the business relationship (Crotts & Turner, 1999).

**Commitment** refers to an exchange partner’s belief in the importance of an ongoing relationship. The committed party believes the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Thereby, mutual commitment is a foundation of cooperative relationships and determines who will become the stayers and leavers in business relationships (Crotts & Turner, 1999).

**Communication** refers to the formal and informal sharing of meaningful and timely information (Anderson & Narus, 1990). The exchanges of data and information between partners include day-to-day, tactical, and strategic categories (Leonidou, et al., 2006). For that reason, communication between partners has many aspects, such as communication quality, types of information sharing, and systems that can facilitate joint planning and goal setting (Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

**Conflict resolution** refers to mutual attempts in clearing or reducing conflict, disagreement, frustration, and tension among partners; which arise from the incompatibility of goals, aims, ideas, and values. It is unfavorable since disagreement, frustration, and tension may create an impression that the partner is preventing goal achievement, having disapproval with regard to existing arrangements, and also creating uncertainty in fulfilling economic and non-economic goals (Leonidou, et al., 2006).

**Coordination** refers to similar or complementary coordinated actions taken by firms in interdependent relationships to achieve mutual outcomes with expected reciprocation over time (Anderson & Narus, 1990). The definition was expanded by Morgan and Hunt (1994) by emphasizing the pro-active aspect of coordination. That is, partners are expected not only to work together in order to achieve shared goals, but also to go beyond their assigned role and responsibility to serve the partners and their consumers.

**Formalization** refers to the degree to which the rules prescribing the desired behaviors and the role responsibilities of each party are formulated (Mai, 2013). Formalization, such as through documentation, i.e. contracts, and guidelines, can create a structural bond; which is a vector of forces that create impediments to termination of the relationship. In the tourism industry, travel agencies and partners normally set up the boundaries of their services, reservation and payment systems, joint trainings, and service and safety standards.

**Frequency of interaction** refers to the amount of contact and tourist exchanges between agencies (Mai, 2013). It suggests the intensity of interaction (Palmatier, et al., 2006). Travel agencies normally work with several suppliers. The numbers of tourist exchanges clearly reflect the intensity of their relationships. Also, travel agencies visit their partners in order to maintain their relationships, discuss their joint activities, and talk about new business opportunities. This variable is less studied in the area of business relationship.

**Interdependence** refers to a partner's perception of his dependence relative to his partners’ dependence on the relationship (Anderson & Narus, 1990). It reflects the need to maintain a relationship with his partner in order to achieve their desired goals. Interdependence reflects in the partners’ shared objectives. It implies a desire for reciprocity (Wilson, 1995), which will contribute to better performance (Chattananon & Trimetsoontorn, 2009).
Organizational compatibility or similarity reflects mutual goals and objectives, as well as similarity in operating philosophies and corporate culture (Mai, 2013). This will lead to the enhancement of partners’ effectiveness and competitiveness. In order to minimize structural and attitudinal conflicts and achieve long-term success, partners must be compatible in terms of goal, identity, and value (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2010).

Participation refers to the extent to which partners engage jointly in planning and goal setting. When one partner's actions influence the ability of the other to effectively compete, the need for participation in specifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations increases (Mohr & Spekman, 1994). In the tourism and hospitality industry, travel agencies often request information and ask for assistance from hotels, airlines, and other related business (Medina-Munóz & García-Aabarca-Falcoán, 2000).

Cultural Differences

Building and maintaining relationships has long been acknowledged as beneficial for international businesses. However, the involved parties are usually embedded in different cultures, which leads to differences in relationship expectations, behavior, and satisfaction (Voldnes, et al., 2012). Cultural differences increase uncertainty that can destabilize relationships. Voldnes, et al. (2012) found that Norwegian and Russian partners describe their own as well as their partners’ actions and emphasize relationship aspects differently. Since relationships are not stable phenomena, they evolve in line with the partners’ characteristics, relationship contents, and situations (Börjeson, 2015). Clearly, it is important to understand the cross-cultural determinants of business relationships.

Furthermore, Hofstede (2015) explains that national culture affects corporate culture through the seminal and widely-used six-dimension model. From his analysis (Table 1), Thailand and Vietnam are similar in terms of having societies that represent high power distance, collectivism, and femininity; yet are different in terms of uncertainty avoidance and short-term versus long-term orientation. As might well be apparent, the preceding cultural similarities and differences influence how Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies must operate in attaining and maintaining mutual benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Power Distance</th>
<th>Individualism versus Collectivism</th>
<th>Masculinity versus Femininity</th>
<th>Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>Pragmatic versus Normative</th>
<th>Indulgence versus Restraint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Hofstede, 2015)

Research Methodology
This research focuses on the determinants that guide relationship success between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. For this reason, a quantitative approach is the major method applied. However, since there is a wide gap between the timing of this research and when the original research in Vietnam was conducted in 2010, qualitative research was used to clarify the possible issues arising from a duration gap, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the conclusions reached.

It is noteworthy that the unit of analysis for this research was the firm and the target population was composed of international travel agencies in Thailand and Vietnam that have international relationships with Vietnamese and Thai travel partners.

The Vietnamese travel agencies chosen for study in this research project were obtained from a list provided by the office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Ho Chi Minh City. This list consisted of 237 companies (Mai, 2013). However, there is no definite number of Thai-Vietnamese travel agencies provided by the office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Thailand. Since the number of Thai travel agencies with Vietnamese partners could not be confirmed with certainty, researchers selected samples from the entire population. In this context, the number of usable samples in Vietnam was 114, and that in Thailand was 207.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents’ job position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CEO or owner</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marketing director</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deputy marketing director</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marketing staff</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of company</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of full-time staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1-15</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 16-30</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 31-45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More than 45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of part-time staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 0</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 1-15</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 16-30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Multicollinearity, or high inter-correlations among variables, has become a major concern in the multivariate regression analysis. The researchers used the variance inflation factor (VIF) to characterize the level of collinearity (Becker, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Völckner, 2014), in order to reduce the set of unstable predictions. The variables, which yield VIF values under 5, are accepted for regression analysis as the rule of thumb for VIF. However, VIF values under 10 are still considered acceptable by many scholars (O'Brien, 2007). After checking for multicollinearity, dependent variables such as marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction yielded VIF values less than 5. For independent variables, after applying factor analysis, communication and organizational compatibility were removed from the variable set because VIF values were more than 10, with this showing that they were highly correlated with other independent variables.

Once quantitative results were obtained, a qualitative study was applied to clarify the associated determinants. Five Thai travel agencies were interviewed in 2014-2015, and Dr. Mai Ngoc Khuong provided recommendations from 39 Vietnamese travel agencies. Content analysis was applied to explain the rich descriptions of the business relationships and confirm the trustworthiness of results and inferences (Creswell, 2007).

Findings

Quantitative Results. After clearing multicollinearity conflicts, multivariate regression analysis was applied, in order to contrast the key determinants affecting the relationships, as well as to confirm the differences between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies.

Marketing Support. Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies have disagreement in relation to the important determinants. For Thai travel agencies, there are five significant determinants. Ranging
from the highest to the lowest coefficients, these are trust (0.584***), formalization (0.485***), frequency of interaction (0.141***), commitment (-0.140**), and interdependence (-0.258***). Nevertheless, the negative coefficients are against the previously-supported concept in relationship marketing literature. For Vietnamese agencies, only frequency of interaction is significantly related to marketing support, and since the coefficient (.411**) is higher than that of the Thai perception (.141***), it implies that the frequency of interaction is more important for the Vietnamese agencies. Moreover, the predictive power of the Thai data ($R^2 = 0.821$) is higher. In fact, it is higher in the case of every dependent variable (marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction). This might well be due to the fact that the Thai data set is larger compared to the Vietnamese data set.

Financial Success. For Thai agencies, there are six significant determinants. Ranging from the highest to the lowest coefficients, these are coordination (0.290***), participation (0.256***), frequency of interaction (0.184***), formalization (0.132*), conflict resolution (0.116***), and interdependence (-0.416***). However, the coefficient for interdependence is negative again. For Vietnamese agencies, participation (0.545***), frequency of interaction (0.173*), and commitment (0.170*) are significantly related to financial success. In general, there are more determinants affecting financial success than have an impact upon marketing support and relationship satisfaction. These imply more complex decisions guiding financial success. Moreover, both parties share the same perception towards participation in creating financial success and frequency of interaction in creating marketing support and financial success. As mentioned earlier, the frequency of interaction is rarely studied. This finding can expand existing knowledge of business relationships and relationship marketing.

Relationship Satisfaction. The results indicate that, for Thai travel agencies, trust (0.862***) is very important. By itself, trust seems to be the best predictor of relationship satisfaction since the other significant determinant, interdependence (-0.118*), yields a negative coefficient. For Vietnamese agencies, in contrast, commitment (0.321***) and frequency of interaction (0.214**) are important.

Figure 1 summarizes interesting issues arising from the quantitative results.

![Figure 1: Key determinants affecting Thai and Vietnamese business relationships]

Qualitative results. In-depth interviews were mainly conducted to mediate the time lapse between the data collection in Vietnam and Thailand. Five Thai travel agencies were interviewed. The interviews lasted between ten minutes and two hours. The summary of the interviews are as follows:
Trust. It was apparent that the qualitative findings supported the quantitative findings. Trust is the biggest issue. Two of them explained that bad experiences in Vietnam and other destinations, yielding both minor and major incidents. As a result, they altered their business arrangement and had less dependence on their partners. Formalization is another important determinant for Thai travel agencies. Two agencies believed they needed written agreements. Even so, others believed that documents could not completely stop the troubles that arise in cross-border tourism. Many times trouble came from the partners’ staff, the parties that their partners worked with, or the parties related to travelling programs, such as airport staff.

Coordination. Fifteen Vietnamese travel agencies required business coordination, and four Vietnamese travel agencies mentioned coordination at the government level. However, this determinant was not significant in the quantitative analysis. There were no comments indicating trust and formalization in Vietnamese recommendations. Also, most comments were rational and business-oriented. Very few were affect-oriented.

AEC Commencement. Thai agencies were quite confident in their expertise. They believed Vietnam had good potential. However, Thai tourists have many choices. Vietnamese agencies need to offer new attractions to draw Thai tourists.

In conclusion, most Vietnamese agencies had positive views towards their partners, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the tourism industry. Since more Vietnamese tourists visit Thailand (than vice-versa), Vietnamese agencies require more coordination, participation, and frequency of interaction from Thai partners, as well as from the tourism authorities. On the other hand, Thai agencies have concerns about competition and unprofessional conduct in the industry.

Discussion

The analysis of the determinants affecting the business relationships among Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies confirms and reveals new leads in understanding the associated business relationships. Specifically, there are three key premises:

Cultural Differences. Hofstede’s study (2015) clarifies differences in Thai and Vietnamese characteristics that, in turn, influence their managerial practices. Thailand has a high score in uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, it is easier for Thai people to feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and this creates beliefs and institutions to avoid them. The research reflects this quality in the Thai travel agencies’ priorities with regard to business relationships, trust, and formalization. This is because trust is a belief in a partners’ integrity and a safeguard from uncertainty (Leonidou, et al., 2006). As well, formalization (such as documents or contracts) gives the agencies the power to claim their rights through the legal system. In contrast, the research reflects a low score in relation to uncertainty avoidance, and a higher one in relation to long-term orientation in Vietnamese travel agencies. Despite the political turbulence in Thailand, they hoped to resume their business at the same level as they had before. They did not mention fear or resentment as a consequence of the incident.

Trust vs Coordination. Trust is acknowledged as the most critical determinant in relationship marketing (Crotts & Turner, 1999; Heffernan, 2004; Hunt, 1990) because trust can lead to effective communication (Anderson & Narus, 1990), commitment (Crotts & Turner, 1999; Walter, Mueller, & Helfert, 2000), coordination (Crotts & Turner, 1999), and relationship value (Walter, et al., 2000). However, the quantitative findings reveal different sets of determinants affecting Thai and Vietnamese business relationships; which were confirmed by results emanating from the qualitative study. Differences may indicate weakness in the research tools and data set. Even so, they instigate the necessity to understand if the determinants can be applied to Thai and Vietnamese relationships in other industries, or to that among firms located in other AEC countries.
Frequency of Interaction. Frequency of interaction is defined in terms of the amount of contact and tourist exchanges. So, it is different from communication frequency that had more related literature (Blenkhorn & MacKenzie, 1996; Racela & Thoumrungroje, 2014). This research suggests the importance of the frequency of interaction for the betterment of cross-border inter-agency relationships in the tourism industry.

Recommendations and Further Research

This research is an attempt to enhance the body of knowledge regarding the key determinants of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, which was carried out by contrasting relevant data from both countries. The determinants of business relationships developed in the research were based on relationship marketing which was originally developed within Western cultures. The findings of this research suggest that developing a long-term relationship is necessary for Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies and that they must be aware of cultural differences.

The findings from Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies were quite different. However, they are indicative rather than conclusive. Though Thailand and Vietnam have some shared culture and have shared a long history, differences are revealed and should be acted upon as a precaution for international tourism management. This issue should be further investigated for the development of long-term relationships with other AEC travel agencies.

References


