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Framework for the National Culture and User Engagement in Social Media

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between these websites run deep and involve culturally rooted customs, such as color associations, the tone of the text, type of pictures, etc. Reflection of the local culture is called "cultural congruency", "cultural congruity", "cultural similarity", or "cultural familiarity" (Vyncke & Brengman, 2010).

Favorable or unfavorable attitudes, which people might form in accordance with their cultural values, motivate them to behave in a certain manner. When operationalizing behavior in social media context researchers often look at passive and active engagement. In this paper, we focus on active engagement, which includes clicking "like" or other emotions, sharing, commenting or tagging content (Chwialkowska, 2017). While we consider "liking" and leaving a positive comment as positive active engagement, clicking negative emotion or writing a negative comment is negative active engagement. Sharing and tagging content are emotion-neutral activities and can occur in both cases when experiencing negative or positive emotions. Yes, national culture matters. At the same time, research and practice offer numerous examples when unique personalities, strong leadership or uniformity of practices overshadows the effect of culture (Earley & Gibson, 2002; Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000; Roth, Prasnikar, Okuno-Fujiwara, & Zamir, 1991). Moreover, since national culture is a property of a group, its effect on individual outcomes is indirect and likely moderated by a variety of other variables, which operate on three levels of analysis: individual, group and situation (Gibson et al., 2009). Understanding the extent of presence and power of the variables from these levels in any given circumstance assists to determine whether national culture will matter in those circumstances (K. Leung et al., 2005). Due to a high speed of globalization and a number of general and context-specific characteristics, such as the social aspect, consideration of these variables is especially important in the context of social media. Therefore, by considering the moderating power of individual, group and situation variables, researchers can study not only *whether* the national culture influences user engagement in social media, but also *when* and *how* (Gibson et al., 2009).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Understanding an importance of user engagement 91% of marketers state they want to know the most effective strategies for generating the social media content (Social Media Examiner, 2015). Therefore, the Marketing Science Institute highlighted the following questions in their research priorities of 2018-2020: (1) what are the most effective tactics to drive deeper and lasting consumer engagement with the firm?; (2) what is the role of personalization in a digital world and how it influences the consumer behavior?; (3) how should marketers link advertising to the content and context in which it appears? (Marketing Science Institute, 2018).

Despite the interest, we still do not have an in-depth understanding of the topic. Studies of the effectiveness of marketing communication using culturally appropriate appeals have only studied traditional print and broadcast media (Singh & Baack, 2004). Well-defined theoretical or conceptual framework that connects national culture to user engagement in the social media context does not yet exist. Therefore, *whether*, *how* and *when* the national culture influences user engagement is still to be studied.

This article takes upon itself to fill the existing gap in the knowledge by proposing the possible relationship between the national cultural configuration and user engagement, mediated by user attitudes and moderated by individual, group and situational variables.

Objectives of this paper are to:
- Propose and describe the relationship between the national cultural configuration and user attitudes.
- Propose and describe the relationship between user attitudes and user engagement.
- Propose the possible moderating variables of the relationship between the national cultural configuration and user engagement.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Main components

National culture

Gibson, Maznevski, and Kirkman (2009) define culture as "the configuration of basic assumptions about humans and their relationship to each other and to the world around them, shared by an identifiable group of people." (Gibson et al., 2009, p. 47-48). People spread it through the processes of socialization, which requires communication of key symbols, ideas, knowledge, and values between individuals from one generation to the next (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). The concept can refer to nations, societies, organizations, and even individuals (Witchalls, 2012). Therefore, researchers study culture using multiple levels of analysis (Chevrier, 2009; Shavitt et al., 2008). National culture, which is the focus of this research, manifests itself in values, beliefs, expected norms, and artifacts (Gibson et al., 2009).

There are three main approaches toward studying the national culture, as a set of- values, schemas, and norms (K. Leung & Morris, 2015). When describing the national culture as a set of values Hofstede (1980) defines it as a "collective programming… that distinguishes one group or category of people from others" (as cited in K. Leung & Morris, 2015, p. 1029). Researcher assumed the value heterogeneity (Chevrier, 2009; K. Leung & Morris, 2015). Moreover, according to Hofstede (1980) value orientation gives rise to "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (as cited in K. Leung & Morris, 2015, p. 1030), which makes the cultural patterns stable regardless of the situational characteristics. Furthermore, Hofstede (1980) describes the national cultural patterns as stable at the micro-level in the behavior of individuals across similar occasions and at the macro-level in a society's behavioral patterns across the long duration. For these reasons, many international differences in behavior do not map onto patterns of values (K. Leung & Morris, 2015).

According to the theory of the national culture as a set of schemas, people with the same value priorities may exhibit different behaviors as a function of the schemas conferred by their cultures. This approach contradicts the value approach in terms of predictions about the generality and stability of cultural patterns of behavior. Schemas influence the behavior only when they are activated, or put into use as a filter for one´s information processing. This

activation depends on three factors: accessibility, applicability and judged appropriateness (K. Leung & Morris, 2015).

Culture as a set of norms, locates the source of the national cultural influence in the surrounding group and the individual´s perceptions of it. There are two types of norms: descriptive- what group members commonly do in a situation and injunctive norms- what they approve of (K. Leung & Morris, 2015).

Effect of culture on various dependent variables, including attitudes, is widely studied in international marketing (Gibson et al., 2009; K. Leung et al., 2005). It is powerful as it serves as a template for cognitive processes to digest information automatically (Gibson et al., 2009). Therefore, people respond to marketing messages in a manner that is congruent to their cultural values. This suggests that effectiveness of a marketing communication, at least to some extent, depends on its match with people´s national cultural values (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Ko et al., 2015; Vyncke & Brengman, 2010; L. Zhou et al., 2015). Therefore, to capitalize on the shared attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and values and avoid aspects of culture, which might lessen the impact of their advertising efforts, marketers need a better understanding of cultural differences and their influential power (Zhang & Neelankavil, 1997).

On the other hand, research and practice offer numerous examples when the unique personalities, strong leadership, or uniformity of practices dominated the effect of culture. Furthermore, since the national culture is a property of a group and not an individual it does not explain a large amount of variance indicating that researchers must consider other variables as important moderators alongside culture (Gibson et al., 2009). For example, the fact that people in certain culture appreciate achievement more than harmony does not mean that every individual from that culture values achievement more than harmony (Hoeken, Starren, Nickerson, Crijns, & van den Brandt, 2007). Therefore, Gibson et al. (2009) suggested that when studying the effect of the national culture on individual outcomes, such as consumer behavior, it is important to consider moderating variables operating at three levels of analysis. These moderators are individual-level, such as personality, experience, and self-identity, group-level, such as workgroup and social group characteristics and situational, such as elements of the environment and social richness.

Social media content and user engagement

Social media is a group of Internet-based applications, which allows the creation and exchange of content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Content delivers a particular message in a digestible form of information. It includes every aspect of the message- texts, images, videos, audios, buttons, tools, icons, links, etc (Bruck, Buchholz, Karssen, & Zerfass, 2006; Handley & Chapman, 2010; Sheffield, 2009). Creators of content are users of social media platforms, who generate user-generated content (UGC) and firms, who generate firm-generated content (FGC) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

UGC must meet three requirements to be considered as such. (1) Users should publish it on social media platforms and make it accessible to everyone or a selected group of users; (2) it

should be creative, and (3) users should generate it outside of professional routines and practices. (Luca, 2015). As mentioned earlier, creators of FGC are firms, which disseminate content through their brand pages or accounts on social media platforms (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). FGC tells potential consumers about the products and service offerings, prices and promotions and encourages them to interact with each other and the firm (Toubia & Stephen, 2013). Researchers and practitioners refer to this interaction as engagement (Berthon et al., 2012; Kietzmann et al., 2011).

In 2005, Algesheimer et al. described engagement within brand communities as "consumer´s intrinsic motivation to interact and cooperate with community members" (as cited in Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013, p. 845). Since then a significant interest developed toward the concept (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011) and researchers created a number of context-dependent definitions of it (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). Some of these definitions highlight the cognitive and emotional aspects of engagement (Bowden, 2009). For example, according to Calder et al. (2009) engagement makes the user want to visit the website, download its page, pay more attention or recommend it to a friend. Therefore, it serves as an antecedent for usage, affects and response to advertising (as cited in Chwialkowska, 2017). Chwialkowska (2017) states that in a unique environment of digital marketing and specifically social media, content fitting the consumer motives is the antecedent to engagement (Chwialkowska, 2017). Thus, involvement constitutes the predecessor of engagement behavior and not vice versa. According to the researcher, engagement includes "user interactions with a company´s content and related user-to-user interactions" (Chwialkowska, 2017, p. 4). Researchers commonly refer to this form of engagement in social media as user engagement. Chwialkowska (2017) differentiates between (1) active engagement, which involves "liking" (or choosing a "reaction"), commenting, tagging or sharing company´s content; and (2) passive engagement that involves reading and watching the company´s content (Chwialkowska, 2017; Pansari & Kumar, 2007).

Studies on the topic of user engagement mostly focus on the results of engagement (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). These studies prove that engagement positively correlates with satisfaction (e.g., Bowden, 2009), commitment and emotional attachment (e.g., Chan & Li, 2010), empowerment(e.g., Cova & Pace, 2006; Füller, MüHlbacher, Matzler, & Jawecki, 2009), consumer value (e.g., Schau, Muñiz Jr, & Arnould, 2009), and trust formation (e.g., Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalíu, 2007; Hollebeek, 2011). When it comes to social media, user engagement with social media content results in higher profitability and better company performance (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Enders, Hungenberg, Denker, & Mauch, 2008; Hallowell, 1996; Kumar et al., 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2007).

Even though social media engagement constitutes a vital performance measure (Kumar et al., 2010), companies' efforts to engage users are often unsuccessful. Research shows that only around 0,5-1% of users, who have liked the Facebook pages, actually engage with the content posted by the company(Nelson-Field & Taylor, 2012). Engaging users is not an easy task, as there are many factors, which influence their attitudes and behaviors. One of these might be the national culture.

Motivation, opportunity, and ability

MacInnis and Kaworski (1989) developed the motivation, opportunity, and ability (MOA) theory, which suggests that these three components largely influence the information processing of an individual.

Originally developed for information processing, researchers have employed MOA theory in a variety of contexts. For instance, it has been used to explain organizational knowledge management (e.g., Argote, McEvily, & Reagans, 2003), technology/innovation adoption (e.g., Azadegan&Teich, 2010; Sääksjärvi & Samiee, 2011), online airline ticket purchase intentions and perceived channel benefits(e.g., Bigné, Hernández, Ruiz, & Andreu, 2010), community participation in tourism development(e.g., Hung & Petrick, 2012), travel intentions (e.g., Hung, Sirakaya-Turk, & Ingram, 2011), etc.

Liu-Thompkins (2012) adopted the MOA theory to explain the online interactions. She identified the perceived value and perceived risk as motivational factors, technology expertise as an ability and time-pressedness and technology-environment as opportunities for the online interaction (Liu-Thompkins, 2012). According to her, the perceived value is a key contributor to the decision to engage in online interaction. These reasons include social fulfillment, immediacy, convenience, and timesaving. While perceived value motivates the user to interact, perceived risk deters them from this behavior (Liu-Thompkins, 2012). McCorskey (1984) states that when individuals perceive a certain situation as risky, they are inclined to behave reluctantly to interact (as cited in Liu-Thompkins, 2012). This variable is especially relevant in the web-settings as the virtual and personal nature of the social web brings uncertainty and risk to online communication, making users concerned about the security and privacy issues and preventing them from interaction (Liu-Thompkins, 2012).

Obviously, users need to possess a certain level of technical knowledge for them to be able to interact through these channels. According to Hoffman and Novak (1996) consumers without Internet/computer skills are likely to get frustrated, preventing them to take full advantage of the interactivity provided to them (as cited in Liu-Thompkins, 2012).

Time-pressedness and technology environment, which map on the opportunity dimensions of the MOA model can also influence the user´s willingness to engage in online interaction. Lack of time, which is especially relevant in today´s fast-paced lifestyle, has a double-edged effect on a consumer´s level of interaction. One the one hand, Alba et al. (1997) describe that consumers use the Internet more because of its timesaving properties, while, on the other hand, Liu and Shrum (2002) state that two-way communication is time-consuming (as cited in Liu-Thompkins, 2012). Finally, online interaction requires access to a technology and Internet connection. Liu-Tompkins (2012) concludes that even though having a computer or mobile device with the Internet is important for an active online interaction to happen. Users need a regular presence in technology-facilitating settings, for their tendency to use the Internet for interaction to increase (Liu-Thompkins, 2012).

Theories to explain relationships

Reception theory is useful to explain the processes through which culture can "filter" the information, unconsciously enhance the significance of some parts of it, while ignoring the

others. Developed by Hall (1974), according to this theory readers do not passively accept the "text" or the "visual material". They, together with the message sender, actively participate in co-construction of the communication meaning. Therefore, the meaning encoded by the sender is only released through the relationship between the object and the reader (as cited in Holub, 2013). The reader interprets this meaning based on his or her individual cultural background and life experiences. In doing so they adopt one of the following positions- dominant, negotiated or oppositional reading (as cited in Holub, 2013).

Dominant reading happens when the reader understands the meaning as encoded by the sender. This mostly occurs when the audience members share the cultural background. In negotiated reading, the reader accepts parts of the sender´s views but also has his or her own understanding and input. This type of reading takes place when the audience members do not have the same life experiences or do not relate to the object in a meaningful manner. Oppositional reading occurs when the reader creates his or her own meaning for the object. The reason for this can be the controversial themes that the reader disagrees with, different cultural backgrounds that sender and reader have or the complex narrative structure of an object (as cited in Holub, 2013).

At the same time, in every nation, there are people who hold beliefs different from those typical. In defining their self-identity education, profession or other characteristics can come to the front line for these people (K. Leung & Morris, 2015). Based on *social identity theory* and *theories of the self-concept*, when a person views him or herself as a member of the national culture, it will have a stronger impact on his or her beliefs (Zhang & Neelankavil, 1997). In other circumstances, other characteristics may overweight the influence of the national culture.

Social impact theory proposes that various groups can influence an individual´s attitudes and behaviors. Level of this influence depends on (1) strength of the group, (2) immediacy of the group, and (3) the number of people in the group exerting the social influence. Thus, a group that has many members, high power and close proximity should exert the most influence on an individual (Psychology, 2018).

As Gibson, Maznevski and Kirkamn (2009) suggested several situational characteristics could also moderate the impact of the national culture on individual-level outcomes. To support their point of view, they use Zhang and Neelankavil´s (1997) study and state that cultural priming is a promising tool to examine the situational dynamics of cultural influence. When an individual faces certain situational characteristics, they exhibit different cultural values and may even modify their own values. Culture as a situated cognition is especially relevant in today´s globalized world, where people have an access to various options and depending on context, may use different mindsets as the basis for their action (as cited in Gibson et al., 2009).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework illustrated in Fig. 1 is applicable to the social media settings. It connects national culture to user engagement on social media platforms. User attitudes mediate and a number of individual and group-level variables moderate this relationship. At the same time, motivational factors influence user attitudes and user engagement, while ability acts as a barrier for the user to overcome. The process takes place in a specific situation; therefore,

situational variables can also influence the outcome. Reception, social-identity, self-concept, social impact, situational priming, and MOA theories provide the theoretical support for the conceptual framework.

Reception theory places the reader in the center of communication and suggests that the meaning of the message, in this case firm-generated content, is only released by the user´s understanding and perception of it. In this process individual, group and situational characteristics and the level of their presence can have an impact. Based on how message reader decodes the information he or she forms attitudes toward it and behaves accordingly. At the same time, individual, group and situation-level moderators, some of which are general and others are context specific can modify the influence of the national cultural configuration on user engagement.

Figure 1
Proposed conceptual framework

Situation

Motivation

Group

Individual

National cultural configuration

User attitudes

Ability

User Engagement
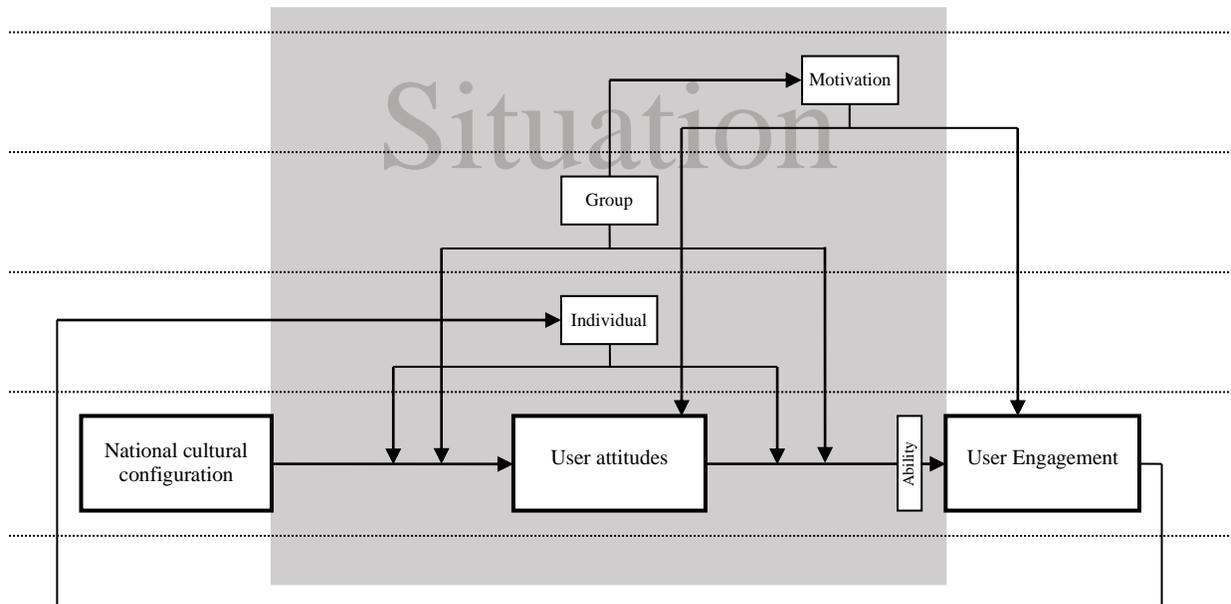
Below we break down the model, and propose the items for each of the variables, as well as the relationships.

National culture and user attitudes

National culture manifests itself in values, beliefs, expected norms, and artifacts (Gibson et al., 2009). People growing up in a specific national culture, become accustomed to these elements (Zhang & Gelb, 1996), which shape the way they process, interpret and react (Žegarac, 2008). In other words, the national culture serves as a gateway through which people receive, organize and make sense of external stimuli (Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014).

Academic literature provides insights into the importance of consideration of national culture in advertising and website development. Researchers study not only content, but also design, structure and navigation (Vyncke & Brengman, 2010). Firm-generated social media posts

share the basic characteristics of advertisements and websites. These posts include texts, links, and audio-visual materials. Therefore, the literature on advertisements and websites comes in handy for explaining the relationships of this model. Examples below illustrate the differences in preferences according to the national cultural configuration of the audience. In western individualistic cultures, the main purpose of the advertisement is to provide information and help consumers to solve problems. Such texts persuade. On the other hand, in collectivistic cultures, the purpose of the advertisement is to build relationship and trust between the communication parties. Because of this, advertisements in collectivistic cultures focus on activating positive feelings rather than providing information (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; S. Zhou, Xue, Xue, & Zhou, 2005).

When it comes to design, different cultures have different preferences for the advertisement and web site characteristics. For instance, colors and screen designs have various psychological and social associations in different countries (Nielsen, 1996). Therefore, many localized web sites use national colors for navigation bars, images, and other web-objects, which promote customer loyalty and national pride (Becker, 2002). Pictures in advertisements and web sites of different countries also differ. Marcus and Web Gould (2000) suggest that masculine cultures favor traditional gender and family distinctions, while feminine cultures show little or no distinction between the gender roles (as cited in Becker, 2002). Collectivistic cultural orientation unconsciously motivates people to conform to group norms and follow trends. Because of this, advertisements in collectivistic societies show celebrities more often than the advertisements in the individualistic societies do (Choi, Lee, & Kim, 2005).

Preferences of the structure of the website also differ from culture to culture. People perform information-seeking tasks faster when someone, with the same cultural background as their own, creates the website (Faiola & Matei, 2005).

Studies based on content analysis match the advertising appeals to the national cultural values. According to Han and Shavitt (1994) in collectivistic cultures appeals focusing on in-group benefits, harmony and family are more effective, whereas, in individualistic societies advertising that appeals to individual benefits and preferences, personal success and independence are more appreciated (as cited in De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

Summing up, values influence attitudes consumers hold toward various objects and situations (Homer & Kahle, 1988; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). When the values of consumers match the values reflected in advertising, consumers find them to be more interesting and less irritating, forming more positive attitudes (Pae, Samiee, & Tai, 2002; Singh, Fassott, Chao, & Hoffmann, 2006).

Based on literature, we propose the following propositions:

P1.1: The greater the content congruence with the national culture, the more positive the attitudes toward the firm-generated content is.
P1.2: The lower the content congruence with the national culture, the more negative the attitudes toward the firm-generated content is.

With an economic integration, cultures around the world influence each other and change, leading to the increasing homogenization of consumer preferences (Okazaki & Alonso Rivas, 2002). At the same time, there are significant cultural differences across the races, ethnicities and other sub-groups within the same nation. Therefore, it is important to note that even though we label "national" to the culture we do not consider geographic boundaries as a "proxy" to the nation. Nor do we mean that everyone within the national population equally embraces the national cultural values. We only use the term "national" to distinguish the cultural character of a society from other forms of culture, which are out of the scope of this article (Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998).

User attitudes and user engagement

When operationalizing behavior in social media settings we should look at the behavioral expression of user engagement. Engagement constitutes user interactions with the company´s content and related user-to-user interactions. In this article, we focus on active engagement, which involves "liking" (or choosing a "reaction"), commenting, tagging or sharing the firm-generated content (Chwialkowska, 2017).

Favorable and unfavorable attitudes shape people´s minds, making them like or dislike an object and dictate their behaviors (Kotler and Keller). In general, when studying attitude-behavior relationship, researchers consider it logical that a person holding favorable attitudes toward some object will perform a favorable behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Walker and Dubitsky (1994) pointed out that more people like the advertisements, the greater the chance that they will notice and remember it or be persuaded by it(as cited in Polegato & Bjerke, 2006). Yang and Yoo (2004) also found that attitudes could determine behavioral intentions (Yang & Yoo, 2004). Other researchers suggest the positive interplay between attitudes and electronic WOM intentions (Bagozzi, 1981; Shih, Lai, & Cheng, 2013).

To sum up, based on literature, users holding favorable attitudes will engage in positive behaviors, which in social media settings translates into clicking "like", leaving a positive comment or sharing the content with their social media friends and followers. Hence, we propose the following proposition:

P2.1: The more favorable user´s attitudes toward the firm-generated content, the more likely he or she is to positively engage with it.

When content does not match the user´s cultural value priorities, therefore, triggers unfavorable attitudes it does not exactly mean they would not engage with content. Unfavorable attitudes trigger negative behaviors. Therefore, users experiencing negative emotions are likely to click negative "emotions", express their oppositional opinions in the comments and even share the content with friends and followers. Therefore, we propose:

P2.2: The more unfavorable user´s attitudes toward the firm-generated content, the more likely he or she is to negatively engage with it.

Power of individual variables

Review of literature shows that culture does have an impact, one that we cannot ignore (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992; Gibson et al., 2009; K. Leung et al., 2005). At the same time, research and practice offer numerous examples of studies and observations in which it had been less effective than did unique personalities, strong leadership, or uniformity of practices. Furthermore, in many scholarly studies impact of the national culture is statistically significant, but does not explain a large amount of variance. This indicates that researchers must consider other variables as factors alongside culture (Gibson et al., 2009). For example, the fact that a certain culture values achievement more than harmony does not mean that every individual from that culture values achievement more than harmony (Hoeken et al., 2007).

As Gibson, Maznevski and Kirkman (2009) suggest individual-level variables, such as personality, experience, and self-identity, moderate the impact of national culture on individual outcomes (Gibson et al., 2009). For example, based on social identity theory developed by Turner (1987) and theories of self-concept created by Markus and Kitayama (1991), when a person views him or herself as a member of the national culture, it will have a strong and pervasive impact on his or her beliefs. In every society, there are people who hold beliefs, which are not congruent to their national cultural value systems. In this case, other sources of self-identity, such as educational or profession may play a much stronger role in defining who they are, what motivates them and which values they embrace. Therefore, culture matters more for those who identify themselves with it, while for others who do not, culture is a weaker predictor of behavior (as cited in K. Leung et al., 2005).

Moreover, an experience that comes with an age and exposure to foreign cultures can also enhance or mitigate the influence of national culture on individual-level variables. For example, one can argue that people from the older generation have a reduced degree of tolerance; therefore, foreign cultures influence them less than they do younger people. On the other hand, some can say that older people have traveled more than younger ones and had been exposed to foreign cultures more often. This could change their beliefs and value systems. Based on this information we propose:

P3.1: Individual-level variables- personality, experience, and self-identity, moderate the effect of national culture on user engagement.

Furthermore, personality traits can further moderate the relationship between the national culture and individual outcomes, in this case, user engagement. For example, the user may hold positive attitudes toward the firm-generated content, which is tailored to his or her national cultural configuration, but being introvert may prevent him or her from engaging with the content. In this case, the individual´s personality traits act not as moderators, but as independent variables. Therefore,

P3.2. Individual-level variables- personality, experience, and self-identity, influence the user engagement.

Power of group variables

Groups of people hold their own norms. Birenbaum and Sagarin (1976) define group norms as "legitimate, socially shared standards against which the appropriateness of behavior can be evaluated" (as cited in Chatman & Flynn, 2001, p. 956). These relatively stable norms influence how group members interact with each other, find decisions and solve problems (Chatman & Flynn, 2001). This view is close to seeing culture as a set of norms, which locates the source of the national cultural influences in the surrounding group and individual´s perception of it (K. Leung et al., 2005).

Gibson et al. (2009) differentiate between the social group and work group characteristics. These two groups can moderate the relationship between national culture and individual outcomes.

For example, one of the moderators operating on the group level is the stage of group development. National culture is often a more readily detectable attribute, and therefore is likely to be more influential on an early stage of group development (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Once the group members understand the contribution of other attributes, culture may play less of a role.

It is important to point out that the same person can simultaneously affiliate himself or herself with many different types of groups. For example, an architect working full-time at the architecture firm can also be the member of the salsa dance group. These two groups with very different characteristics can both influence the behavior of the person. Based on the above-mentioned arguments we propose:

P4.1: Group-level variables- social group and work group characteristics, moderate the effect of national culture on user engagement.

In general, the influence of group-level moderators is more complex and powerful in nature than that of individual-level variables (K. Leung et al., 2005). This idea is further supported by the social nature of social media, where people can easily see each other´s activities. The desire or fear of social or work group members' reactions can push or prevent the user to engage with the firm-generated content on social media. Similar to the individual variables, in this case, group-level variables act not as moderators but as independent variables. Hence, we propose:

P4.2: Group-level variables- social group and work group characteristics, influence the user engagement.

Power of motivation

Liu-Thompkins (2012) identified variables, which are specific to the social media settings, putting this conceptual framework into context. When studying what affects consumer´s tendency to engage in interactive online communication, the researcher found five antecedents, which fit neatly into an ability-motivation-opportunity framework proposed by MacInnis and Jaworski (1989).

Except for the national cultural configuration, individual and group-level variables user attitudes and behavior can further be influenced by the perceived value of the firm-generated content in social media or the value of engaging with it. Liu-Thompkins (2012) defines perceived value as the perceived ability of inline interaction to help fulfill the user´s goals (Liu-Thompkins, 2012). These goals can be associated with gaining information, entertaining oneself or achieving certain social objectives (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). The social aspect of user engagement in social media can comprise extrinsic motivational values, such as material rewards, the chance to impress others or the chance for the community recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Based on this, we suggest that:

P5.1: The greater the perceived value of the firm-generated content, the more positive the user attitudes toward such content is.
P5.2: The greater the perceived value of the firm-generated content, the higher the user engagement with such content is.

While perceived value can contribute to forming positive attitudes toward content and motivate users to engage with it, perceived risk can prevent the user from engaging, regardless of his or her attitudes. Stone and Gronhaug (1993) define perceived risk as "subjective expectations of loss" (as cited in Liu-Thompkins, 2012, p.80), because of interacting online. Risk perceptions in social media are mostly associated with the security and privacy issues and can motivate users to withdraw and exhibit reluctance to engage. Hence, we propose:

P5.3: The greater the perceived risk of the firm-generated content, the less the user engagement with such content is.

Ability as a barrier

Regardless of attitudes, which are formed in connection to several variables, users need to possess a certain level of technology expertise to engage in online interaction. Those who lack technology expertise are less likely to have an enjoyable experience on social media platforms and more likely to feel frustrated (Liu-Thompkins, 2012). Hence, we propose the following:

P.6: Ability to engage acts as a barrier for the user engagement, regardless of attitudes.

Situational variables

Finally, it is important to consider the situational variables. These variables can influence user attitudes, individual and group-level variables, as well as motivation and their relationship with each other. Research in cognitive psychology shows that the human mind is fluid and adaptive, and is engaged in active, dynamic interaction with the environment (K. Leung et al., 2005). This view is in accordance with the theory of national culture as a set of schemas, which suggests that situations activate different types of schemas and people behave according to the activated schema.

When describing the situational variables Gibson et al. (2009) mention different types of uncertainties as powerful situational factors, which can amplify the impact of national culture on individual outcomes. A good example of how uncertainty can influence the relationship between national culture and social media behavior is technological uncertainty. Research demonstrates that under conditions of uncertainty people tend to respond in accordance with their national cultural prescriptions (K. Leung et al., 2005). Thus, technological uncertainty intensifies the impact of national culture on individual-level outcomes (K. Leung et al., 2005).

Another important situational variable is social richness, which is closely related to the experiences that we described earlier as an individual-level characteristic. People exposed to a richer, or more diverse environment develop more complex belief structures (Triandis, 1994) and their own national cultural configurations are less likely to influence their beliefs and consequently behaviors. Those with the same national cultures, living in areas that are more isolated are more likely to maintain belief structures, which are consistent with their national cultures. Therefore, national cultures strongly influence the behaviors of these people (Gibson et al., 2009; Triandis, 1994).

When studying the antecedents of online engagement Liu-Thompkins (2012) identified the technology environment as one of the critical factors. She states that online interaction at the minimum requires access to a computer or a mobile device with an Internet connection. When users are regularly present in technology-facilitative settings, and the Internet connection speed is high, their tendency to use the Internet for interaction purposes is likely to be high. At the same time, technology facilitates a high degree of exposure to foreign cultures, which, as described earlier can mitigate the power of national cultural values.

Another factor, which can act as a barrier for user engagement in social media is time-preciseness. Lack of time is a common issue in today´s fast-paced lifestyle. This can significantly restrict the individual´s ability to engage with social media content.Therefore:

P7: **Situational variables- uncertainty, social richness, access to technology and time-pressedness, influence the user attitudes, individual, group and motivational variables and their relationships with each other.**

Feedback loop

After the engagement takes place, the user will get an outcome of some kind. This outcome will translate into experience, which is one of the individual-level variables. Therefore, as a final stage this conceptual framework connects the user engagement to individual-level variables and proposes:

P8: User engagement results in the formation of the user´s past experience.

DISCUSSION

The objectives of this work are to propose (1) the relationship between the national cultural configuration and user engagement in social media (2) the possible moderating variables

operating on three levels of analysis- individual, group and situational, which can influence the relationship between the national cultural configuration and user engagement, as well as the user engagement directly. Below, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our work, limitations and future research directions.

Implications for theory development

Through the process of globalization, the national cultures around the world influence each other and change. Views toward this change are controversial. Some believe that barriers between countries have almost disappeared, thus creating a so-called "transcultural "world, where the geographic location of a person no longer matters in terms of cultural affiliation (Chevrier, 2009; Witchalls, 2012). Contrarily, others state that globalization can make cultures not only converge but also diverge. Therefore, the gap between the groups from different nations is expanding, making the construct of the national culture more important than it has ever been before (K. Leung et al., 2005).

Studies of the effectiveness of marketing communication using culturally appropriate appeals have only studied traditional print and broadcast media (Singh & Baack, 2004). Therefore, the topic in the social media context remains under-researched (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). Nowadays, we do not know whether the national culture influences user behavior in social media settings and what are the factors, which can increase individual´s propensity to behave in accordance with their cultural prescriptions (K. Leung et al., 2005, p. 368).

Addressing the gap in knowledge, this conceptual paper presents culture as a multi-level dynamic phenomenon and highlights the complex relationship between the national cultural configuration and user engagement in social media. The reception, social identity, self-concept, social impact, and MOA theory support the relationships proposed in this article. By taking into consideration the power of individual, group and motivational variables, as well as the situation, we combine the three different approaches of understanding the national culture as a set of values, schemas, and norms. Further investigation of the specific relationships presented is a critical task for future theory and research, as the stronger, the impact of the moderating conditions, the less predictive culture will be of individual outcomes (K. Leung et al., 2005).

Implications for managers

With an increased popularity among users, more and more companies employ social media as a venue for information dissemination. To avoid information overload, before showing content on newsfeed social media platforms pre-filter it according to relevance. The relevance is determined through the evaluation of the user´s previous engagement with similar content. This means that every post, which fails to catch the user´s eye and motivate him or her to engage will result in decreased reach for every following post. This makes engagement an important concept, which marketers cannot ignore.

Even though some general suggestions for catching the user´s eye and motivating him or her to engage exists, managers need to have a clear view about how the national cultural configuration and user engagement dynamics work. This will give them an opportunity to focus their time and

energy even more tightly. Further investigation of the variables and relationships we presented will give an opportunity to generalize and suggest, which of the variables are the most powerful, and in which degree managers should include cultural considerations in their social media content strategies. This will help them use their restricted resources effectively and tweak their content to manipulate consumer perceptions and behaviors to the firm´s advantage.

Limitations and future research directions

We argue for the possible relationships between the variables of this conceptual framework using the studies conducted on advertising effectiveness and website design and usability. Validation of our framework is questionable in the absence of empirical findings. Therefore, we encourage conceptualization, testing, and extensions of our conceptual framework. This will reinforce the model and grant the confidence to its implications.

Another challenge to overcome is that we cannot generalize findings from one social media platform to others. This is because social media platforms differ from each other in terms of their design, usability, and purpose; therefore, they serve different types of people, with different types of motivations of being on social media. Motivational drivers, which can work in one social media platforms, will not necessarily have the same effect on others.

It is also important to consider the product type about which the brands create the firm-generated content. Consumers may have different types of antecedents for engagement for the hedonic and utilitarian products.

CONCLUSION

This paper integrates three different views of studying the national culture to propose the conceptual framework, which researchers can use to study whether, when, and how the national cultural configuration influences the user engagement in social media. User attitudes act as mediators, which can lead to positive or negative user engagement. Various individual, group, and motivational variables moderate the relationships, which take place in a specific situation. We support the relationships between the different variables by integrating the reception, social identity, self-concept, social impact, and MOA theories.

Using the model practitioners can advise when they must consider the national culture in their social media tactics, and how to manipulate its effect for catching the user´s attention and motivating them to engage. Moreover, since effects are not tied to any specific context, and can be widely applied, the model contributes to the advancement of the theory of culture as a multi-level dynamic situated phenomenon and the theory of digital marketing.

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