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## Abstract

*The introduction of Enterprise Social Media (ESM) has been driven by many factors that can be grouped into organizational activities namely, communication, cooperation, collaboration, and connections in real-time and asynchronous times. However, research shows that organizations struggle with enterprise-wide adoption. Research also indicates that one of the factors impeding adoption is organizational culture. It is essential to further understand the cultural dimensions that contribute to readiness for ESM because such understanding could help organizations better prepare for ESM adoption. This paper, therefore, compares two of the most prominent cultural studies, Hofstede's and Schwartz's cultural frameworks, within the context of ESM.*

**Keywords**: Social Media, Organizational Readiness, Enterprise Social Media, Culture, Adoption, Hofstede, Schwartz

## 1.0    Introduction

Innovative technologies, such as social media, can often enable innovative processes to take place and allow us to perform tasks in a way that was not possible before (Standing and Mingers, 2018). Enterprise social media (ESM) is the result of organizations integrating familiar social technologies from the public internet into the work environment (Riemer & Richter, 2012) to facilitate business communication, cooperation, collaboration, and connections (Cook, 2008) in real-time and asynchronous times (Davison, et al., 2014). A few distinct types of ESM have emerged in response to different business needs (Schlagwein and Hu, 2017).

The adoption of ESM has increased over the last years and, therefore, has become an important focus of researchers (Engler and Alpar, 2017). Since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, many organizations and individuals have moved to online working. Organizations that utilize advanced digitalization and internet technology, including social media, have been able to sustain business operations in times of a pandemic (Obrenovic, et al., 2020). As a result, more and more organizations use social media to communicate with customers and cooperate with business partners (Saleh, 2020).

Despite the increase in adoption, organizations still face challenges, particularly if use is voluntary (Engler and Alpar, 2017). Researchers (Armenakis, et al., 1993; Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Kotter, 1996) suggest that a level of preparedness helps organizations lessen resistance and failure of technology adoption. Cultural readiness has also been proven to have a significant role in assessing organizational readiness for change (Lokuge et al., 2019). Research from Jacobs (2013) identified the ESM readiness factors as human, financial, and technical resources, organizational climate, i.e. culture and awareness, new processes, values, discrepancy, benefit, management support, and organizational controls. Additionally, the cultural factors of readiness for ESM were identified using Hofstede's framework as a small power distance, higher individualism, weak uncertainty avoidance, and higher masculinity. However, the findings also indicated a need for further research into cultural factors.

The most recognized researchers in organizational culture are Hofstede and Schwartz. Whilst Schwartz argued that his index includes Hofstede's dimensions (Schwartz, 1994), Ng et al. (2007) found that the two were found to be non-congruent. Additionally, there is a tendency for Information Systems researchers to over-rely on Hofstede and potentially overlook other perspectives (Guo, et al., 2020). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to compare Hofstede's and Schwartz's cultural framework within the context of ESM.

## 2.0 Previous Work

### 2.1 Enterprise Social Media

Hoffman and Bublit (2017) stated that social media is an abstract concept as it broadly covers multiple platforms that may not perform similar tasks. Cook (2008) stated that social media tools offer organizations an alternative way to communicate, connect, cooperate, and collaborate through rich user experience. Landert (2017) stated that at its core, social media relies on a network of interactors who share information. The networks between people and the sites are categorized by Landert (2017) into three sections: participation, involvement, and interaction. Interaction is the direct communication between individuals through the platform. Participation refers to the actions within the platform. Involvement is when individuals interact with content found on the platform. Carah and Louw (2015) linked these actions as possibly affecting the organization and its processes. All three categories may vary and can also be used

synonymously. A few distinct types of ESM have emerged in response to different business needs (Schlagwein and Hu, 2017). Some examples of ESM that provide a social environment include Asana, Yammer, Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Chatter. Jacobs (2013) indicated that organizations are motivated to use ESM because (1) other organizations are using them, (2) humans innate desire to connect, (3) sense that connecting internal organization members will help them work, and (4) internal demand to use these tools. Whilst ESM could potentially increase an organization's productivity, the benefit lies with the successful implementation of such technologies. Previous research shows that whether an organization is ready to change has a significant impact on the success of technology implementation (Jones et al., 2005; Kwahk & Kim, 2008). Therefore, the next section will address organizational readiness for change.

## 2.2 Organizational Readiness for Change

Organizational readiness research has evolved from change management theory (Armenakis et al., 1993) and behavioral science theory (Snyder-Halpern, 2001). Organizational readiness for change indicates the extent to which the members of the organization and the organization itself are willing and able to take action (Weiner, 2009). Organizational readiness for change can also be defined from the structural perspective as the level of fit between the new technology and the organization (Snyder-Halpern, 2001). It is essential for organizations to be ready for change prior to implementing any change process (Armenakis et al., 1993; Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Kotter, 1996). Organizational readiness has been linked to Lewin's (1951) three-stage model of change, i.e. unfreezing, changing, and freezing. Unfreezing provides the basis for organizational readiness, as it requires providing effective unfreezing of previous patterns before convincing people to transition into new patterns.

Readiness was associated with resistance to change until Armenakis et al.'s (1993) seminal article, where they made the distinction between the two of them. Resistance to change has been defined as any behavior that is not in line with the change agent's attempts to create change (Jansen, 2000) from passively resisting to aggressively trying to undermine it (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Resistance to change refers to delaying or slowing down the change process (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990). However, it is important to recognize that the resistance to change arises from the imbalance and contradictions within the organization, rather than from the individuals (Burnes, 2015).

Relevant readiness factors have been identified by researchers (Holt, et al. 2007; Salasin & Davis, 1977; Molla & Licker, 2005); however, concerns of reliability and validity exist and their focus on non-technology change make their use for organizational change for ESM unsuitable. ESM has characteristics, unlike previous technology change initiatives. The focus of change research should be on social aspects, especially in a culture that is conducive to engagement levels required by these tools.

Cultural readiness has been proven to have a significant role in assessing organizational readiness for change (Lokuge et al., 2019). Cultural readiness is considered a critical factor for successful change (Mate-Sanchez-Val & Harris, 2014). Organizations with strong organizational cultures that promote innovation are more likely to succeed in the digital economy (Boudreau & Lakhani, 2013). Therefore, the next section explores the concept of culture and the various dimensions of culture in the context of ESM.

## 2.3 Culture and Cultural Dimensions

Schwartz (2012) suggested that human motivations may be universally organized. Schwartz further states that values are used to characterize cultural groups, societies, and individuals to explain the motivations of attitude and behavioral changes. But individuals and groups attribute varying levels of importance to these values. Culture has been investigated through both qualitative (Schein, 1990; Ott, 1989) and, more recently, quantitative methods. Researchers at the forefront of classifying organizational culture consist of Hofstede (1980) and Schwartz (1994). Qualitative methods are expensive and time-consuming whereas quantitative methods for classification provide an alternative and useful approach to organizational culture research (Lim, 1995). Various research findings (Chau, 2008; Ng et al.,2007) have provided evidence of validity for both theories to successfully explain the effects of culture in different ways. Researchers (Tekes, et al., 2019) have begun to combine the two theories to obtain a deeper understanding of cultural effects. For the purposes of this research, a comparison of Schwartz and Hofstede's cultural dimensions will be explored.

Hofstede and Schwartz have investigated the effects of culture across a multitude of countries through values. The theories differ by theoretical underpinnings, methods, respondents, and time-period, etc. (Schwartz, 1994). Schwartz's cultural value foundations are determined by an individual's biological needs, societal needs for interaction, and a group's subsistence. Hofstede's (2001) cultural foundations stem

from macroeconomics based on norms. Although originally applied to national cultures, it can be applicable to the organizational level as well as the occupational level (Helmreich & Merritt, 1998).

## 2.4 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions for ESM

Hofstede's (2001) four cultural dimensions of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism, and Masculinity/Femininity will be reviewed in relation to ESM. Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 2001). Large power distance organizations typically embrace a centralized hierarchy and formal rules with little interaction between levels. Alternatively, small power distance organizations value interdependence between superiors and subordinates. According to Hofstede (2001), individualism is the extent to which the interest of the individual prevails over the interest of the collective group. An individualist prefers personal time, freedom, and challenging tasks. Collectivism is the opposite where there is a sense of belonging and the best interests of the collective group are preferential. Hofstede (2001) described strong uncertainty avoidance organizations as fearing ambiguous situations and unfamiliar tasks. Weak uncertainty avoidance societies are comfortable in ambiguous situations and unfamiliar risks. A weak uncertainty organization will accept higher risk for convenience. Hofstede (2001) stated that the masculinity dimension describes the polarization of gender roles in society. Masculinity cultures are assertive, competitive, tough, and materialistic while femininity cultures are modest, tender, and prioritize the quality of life.

Social media use is considered to be democratic and has a sense of leveling the equality of participants (Cook, 2010), therefore has complementary qualities to small power distance. Researchers have found that a large power distance will negatively impact adoption (Schlagwein, 2011; Omoush, et al. 2012; Barron & Schneckenberg, 2012). Also, Marcus & Krishnamurthi (2009) argue that open access, multiple channels of communication, and shareable paths are preferred by societies with a small power distance, whereas high power distance cultures may prefer the use of authentication and passwords and restricted choices.

Schlagwein & Prasarnphanich (2011) investigated the impact of societal culture on ESM finding that uncertainty avoidance has a negative impact on social media adoption. This means that risk-taking cultures may be early-adopters in organizational social media, whereas cultures that avoid uncertainty remain reluctant. Other researchers have agreed that uncertainty avoiding cultures adopt technologies later than those with weak uncertainty avoidance (Keil, et al. 2000; Veiga, et al. 2001; Barron & Schneckenberg, 2012).

Individualists may have more loose social ties, but collectivists would have smaller, yet stronger social ties. Whether an organization should be more towards the individualist spectrum or the collectivist spectrum for adoption purposes has been debated. For example, Barron & Schneckenberg (2012) argued that organizations that embrace collectivism may adopt faster citing that individualistic characteristics, such as self-emphasis can lead to a low perceived utility for technologies with collaborative objectives. Omoush et al. (2012) argue that there was a significant relationship between collectivism and the motivations of engagement, as well as attitudes in Facebook.

According to Veiga et al. (2001), the masculinity dimension has been the most difficult to conceptualize and validate. Schlagwein & Prasarnphanich (2011) found assertiveness positively impacts organizational social media adoption. In a comparison of Web 2.0 acceptance based on cultural differences. Jacobs's previous research (2013) on cultural dimensions of readiness suggests that organizations with small power distance, higher individualism, weak uncertainty avoidance, and higher masculinity will be more prepared to introduce ESM. Yoo & Huang (2001) also found the four dimensions of cultural difference, power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance particularly relevant in studying the use of Web 2.0 applications.

**2.5 Schwartz Cultural Dimensions**

Schwartz's investigation of values (1994) produced two levels of value types: individual and cultural. The seven cultural value types (categorized into three-polar dimensions, namely embeddedness/autonomy, hierarchy/egalitarianism, and mastery/harmony) have been used by researchers (Sagiv and Lee, 2006; Sagiv et al., 2011) to investigate organizational culture. According to Schwartz (1994), embeddedness is considered a value that aims to preserve the status quo, where individuals avoid actions that could lead to the disruption of the current order of things. Organizations with high embeddedness are likely to function like extended families and

expect members to work towards the shared goals, and they are prone to treat their members as independents with their own interests and preferences (Sagiv et al., 2011). According to Schwartz (1994), hierarchical societies accept unequal levels of power, roles, and resources. Organizations that value hierarchy tend to employ well-defined roles with authority and control over others. On the contrary, egalitarian societies embrace equality and tend to build on cooperative negotiation amongst employees and managers, and appeal to joint welfare (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Sagiv & Lee, 2007). Shwartz (1994) explains mastery societies as encouraging individuals to master, direct, and change the environment in the service of others. According to Sagiv et al. (2011), a mastery organization would embrace a dynamic, competitive, and achievement-oriented environment. Organizational goals can be met with the use of technology to manipulate the environment.

Within the context of ESM, Cook (2008) suggests social media use to be democratic and has a sense of leveling for individuals, and therefore it has complementary qualities to egalitarianism. Opposingly, researchers have found that hierarchical distances will negatively impact organizational adoption for Web 2.0 (Barron & Schneckenberg, 2012) and social media (Schlagwein & Prasarnphanich, 2011) as well as attitudes towards e-government readiness (Kovačić, 2005).

A study conducted by Tripopsakul (2018) surveyed future entrepreneurs to determine factors for the adoption of ESM as a platform for business. The determinants included Rogers's (2003) technical factors for adoption of relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, trialability, and observability. Relative advantage relates to Schwartz's mastery dimension because entrepreneurs have qualities of ambition, success, and assertiveness. Societies that value mastery embrace actions that change the environment in order to succeed, although it could be at the expense of others sometimes. In a harmonious society, individuals are prone to accept their roles and do not desire change. The emphasis is likely on groups rather than individuals. Schlagwein and Prasarnphanich (2011) found assertiveness positively impacts organizational social media adoption. Richter et al. (2014) found that organizations that are more accepting of ESM are likely to bolster their current mission rather than adopt a new perspective that circulates around new technologies.

## 3.0 Discussion

This paper presented an initial comparison into Hofstede's and Schwartz's frameworks within the context of ESM. A deeper understanding of the cultural values from both Hofstede and Schwartz will lay the foundation for discovering salient factors contributing to ESM readiness. The literature review suggests that in relation to ESM, autonomous cultures may have more loose social ties where people can pursue their own intellectual and pleasure-seeking interests, while in embedded cultures people identify with a group and shared goals. This presents an interesting dichotomy as both lend well to enterprise social media use. It could be argued that organizations that are socially integrated are more autonomous or more embedded, depending on the perspective. The literature review also suggests that organizations with hierarchical culture, where individuals show respect to superiors through compliance of roles and behaviors, would have a negative impact on ESM readiness. Conversely, organizations with egalitarian cultures depicted by individuals that are considered equal and cooperative would positively impact ESM readiness.

Therefore, using Schwartz's framework it is likely that organizations with a higher egalitarianism index and both mastery and harmony index would have a higher level of ESM readiness. However, it is unclear how embeddedness and autonomy would affect ESM readiness as they both lend well to social media. On one hand, embeddedness brings a sense of belonging, and on the other hand, autonomy permits exploration into one's own interest and finding groups with similar interests. When applying Hofstede's framework, organizations with small power distance, higher individualism, weak uncertainty avoidance, and higher masculinity will be more prepared to introduce ESM.

## 4.0 Conclusion

ESM is a growing area of research interest. Similar to any technology adoption, the level of readiness plays a significant role in the successful implementation of ESM. Culture has been long recognized as a key factor of technology adoption. In this paper, we compare two of the most prominent cultural dimensions, namely Hofstede's and Schwartz's frameworks, in the context of ESM. Through analyzing previous research, we identified some of the factors most likely to contribute to ESM readiness from each framework. From the perspective of Schwartz, a higher egalitarianism index and both mastery and harmony index are likely to increase ESM readiness. Based on Hofstede's

framework, small power distance, higher individualism, weak uncertainty avoidance, and higher muscularity could be positive contributors to ESM readiness. However, we also noticed that some of the cultural dimensions might not provide a clear indication of ESM readiness. For instance, Schwartz's embeddedness and autonomy would affect ESM readiness as they both lend well to social media.

In conclusion, this initial step contributes to research as it brings together theories of cultural values and organizational readiness for ESM adoption. This provides a practical contribution to organizations as the readiness factors can be assessed prior to the implementation of ESM. Future work would extend the investigation into the congruence between Hofstede's and Schwartz's framework. The intent is to discover if the two models can measure the same cultural values for ESM readiness in organizations. If found to be non-congruent, then is it possible that one framework is more suitable for ESM readiness?

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