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WHY MILLENNIALS INITIATE E-WOM? CULTURAL
COMPARISON OF FINLAND AND RUSSIA.

Master's Thesis in
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ABSTRACT

This study explores motivation of millennials for e-WOM initiation and possible influence of national culture on this motivation. The theoretical part reviews previous studies on motives for WOM, e-WOM and UGC initiation. In order to understand the phenomenon of e-WOM we reviewed three related phenomena such as WOM, e-WOM and UGC. To explore the motivation from more comprehensive perspective we used a Theory of Planned Behavior that helped us to understand what else could influence the motivation of millennials other than motives. We also reviewed the distinctive features of generation Y to understand the possible influence of it on outcome of the study. Further, we took investigated the Hofstede's dimensions of national culture and their influence on possible results of research.

We built a theoretical framework upon theoretical part of the study in order to support an empirical part. The study is of qualitative type and use semi-structured interviews to investigate a research question. We conducted eleven interviews the results of which were twelve cases of e-WOM initiation.

The findings show that there is clear influence of national culture on motives that drive e-WOM initiation. However, there is no influence on other factors that were derived from the Theory of Planned Behavior. Moreover, such factor as subjective norm did not find a support of influencing a decision about e-WOM initiation. This fact could be explained due to certain distinctive feature of the generation Y. However, the relationships between platform factors and decision about e-WOM initiation were supported. Moreover, there are certain evidence that these relationships might be two-way depending on e-WOM type. The managerial implication of this study suggests that the methods of managing e-WOM should take into consideration possible cultural influence and platform factors.

KEAWORDS: e-WOM initiation, national culture, cross-cultural study, theory of planned behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

The technological development has a wide influence on different business areas. For example, we experience a wide penetration of e-commerce that moves sales of many different products from off-line to on-line space; or increasing importance of relatively new area in marketing like social media marketing (SMM) that works on product promotion in social media. Many people nowadays use different kind of devices likewise mobile phones, computers, laptops or tablet devices and this number is increasing every year. Therefore, we can assume that the advertising is not an exceptional area and is influenced by technological development as well as many others. Due to the fast spread of new technologies, new advertising channels replace the old one. For example, it is well known that TV advertisement does not give an equal outcome compare to the costs of this channel, as well as it is commonly recognized that internet advertisement is more effective than TV (Court, Gordon, & Perrey, 2005).

However, the history of online advertising is relatively short. The first online advertisement was created in 1994 for the company AT&T in the HotWired web magazine. In twenty years sector has grown up and changed a lot. This development becomes possible due to the obvious advantages of web advertising compare to the conventional one. First, the audience of the internet users was more sophisticated due to their ability to use internet and modern technologies, especially at the beginning of the internet era. Second, the internet gives a possibility of more accurate targeting of the consumer than for example TV or a newspaper. Third, the internet-based advertisement provide a less costly and time-consuming advertising test capability. (Telang & Bhatt, 2011:2-3.) Therefore, the topic of online advertising is emerging, yet very relevant, what means that there are more space and possibilities for new research in the area.

Nevertheless, there are many different types of marketing communication programs, likewise advertising through different channels or sales promotion, public relations and publicity, special events and experiences, direct marketing or personal selling and word-of-mouth marketing. Consequently, different types of communication programs would vary in terms of planning, resource allocation, execution and evaluation, as well as consumer perception of one or another program. (Kotler & Keller, 2009:510-603.) Therefore, in order to reach feasibility of the study we would focus on one type only

which is electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), or internet-based word-of-mouth communication.

Concept of e-WOM has aroused from the concept of traditional word-of-mouth (WOM). Word-of-mouth represents a person-to-person communication that relates to the qualities and attributes of the product and services, as well as purchasing experience (Kotler & Keller, 2009:512). Philip Kotler is considered as one of the guru of marketing and we believe that the definition above precisely enough indicates a general meaning of WOM. Moreover, most of the variations of definitions of WOM state the fact that this is a person-to-person, or consumer-to-consumer communication (Sundaram, Mitra, & Webster, 1998:527; Kotler & Keller, 2009:512; Strutton, Taylor, & Thompson, 2011:562). However, in the edition from 2009 of Marketing Management book when authors talk about the typology of word-of-mouth the discussion is mainly based on the e-WOM, like viral marketing, or blogging (Kotler & Keller, 2009:585–591). Therefore, it makes us suspect that conventional word-of-mouth is losing its relevance against an e-WOM as a research topic, due to the deep penetration of new technologies in all area of marketing. Yet, there might be another reason for that phenomenon, likewise the fact that it is probably easier to create and control the WOM in the internet space due to its visibility, the growth of scope and the speed of diffusion (Tang, 2010:15) of WOM communication.

Although quite often the effect of WOM is beyond marketers' control (Kotler & Keller, 2009:588), the importance of traditional WOM is acknowledged due to the effect it has on the consumer. Consumer perceives WOM as a "*reliable, credible, trustworthy and empathetic channel*" (Tang, 2010:43). Thus, this channel can be considered as more effective and efficient in terms of communication, however, highly difficult to manage. Due to development of new technologies, WOM, as many other ways of communication, more often takes place on the internet space including private conversations through social media rather than offline.

Moreover, due to ease of access and wide spread of information technologies companies have less control over their brands' image. Interactions between customers have a bigger impact on consumer purchasing behavior than communication between company and customer. Therefore, this might threaten the effectiveness of established communication channels between company and consumer. (Blazevic, Hammedi, Garnefeld, Rust,

Keiningham, Andreassen ... Carl, 2013:294.) Hence, the research on electronic word-of-mouth phenomenon gets more relevant than ever before.

1.1. Background information

While traditional concept of WOM was related to the verbal or written interactions between consumers, nowadays it was broaden by adding electronic and non-verbal types of communication. Today customers can be connected through numerous amount of different internet-based tools, starts from social media to online communities, blogs and wikis. Therefore, communication opportunities are likely to include not only verbal, but also non-verbal communications. Moreover, this fact has changed not only the way of communication between consumers, but also the interactions between consumers and companies. (Kotler & Keller, 2009:513; Libai et al., 2010:267–268; Blazevic et al., 2013:295.)

The broadening of concept to non-verbal type of communication can be seen as a logical consequence of increasing social media popularity (Blazevic et al., 2013:295). It could be difficult to transmit a non-verbal communication in a modern society without special tools, like posting images, or videos in the internet space. The ultimate demonstration of this phenomenon is probably an Instagram, Pinterest or Snapchat social networks that are focused on posting visuals with possibility of the short comments, which has less importance in the post than the picture per se. Therefore, with the rise of internet and the popularity of social networks the concept of WOM has changed, but the main idea, which is person-to-person, or consumer-to-consumer interactions, remains the same. However, now this interaction got larger audience, faster penetration speed and bigger scope. Hence, we can say that this interaction has more prominent in marketing communications than it was just few decades ago.

As we have mentioned above, the concept of e-WOM has aroused from the concept of traditional WOM. Therefore, by studying e-WOM we should pay a certain attention not only to the previous research on e-WOM, but on conventional WOM as well. According to the work of Tang (2010:43–47) the main stream in the research on WOM phenomenon was an outcome of WOM and its influence on consumer. This topic was explored with

regard to different types of products or services, including retailers. Another significant topic in previous research devoted to antecedents of WOM effect, including the influence of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, loyalty, receiver's and sender's characteristic and product expertise on engaging in WOM. (Tang, 2010:43–47.) However, rather little attention was paid to the motivational factors on WOM initiation. There are just two main studies that are usually taken for the foundation of further research in this area. One of the first work on motivation was done by Dichter (1966), where he researched motivational factors that influence consumers decision to talk about products. These factors he divided into four main categories, likewise product involvement, self-involvement, other-involvement and message-involvement (Dichter, 1966:148). However, in this work he investigated motivations only for positive WOM initiating (Sundaram et al., 1998:527). Thus, it was difficult to predict if the same categories will work with the motivation for negative WOM initiation.

Therefore, few decades later another significant study in this area was done by Sundaram et al. (1998). They went further and decided to explore motivational factors for engaging in both positive and negative WOM. Their categorization is appeared to be different compare to the one that was used in Dichter's research. Moreover, they found that such category like altruism is true for both positive and negative WOM engagement. However, three other categories were found to be different from each other. (Sundaram et al., 1998.)

Later research have become more specific oriented. For example, Alexandrov, Lilly, & Babakus (2013) in their study focused on social and self-motives for both positive and negative WOM, while another study was focused on the differences in the motives for ongoing and immediate WOM (Berger & Schwartz, 2011).

However, most of the studies brought a western perspective on the motivational factors. Fewer research were done on the cross-cultural issues or from the point of view of another culture. There is a small amount of studies that examines an influence of e-WOM on consumer decision-making (Christodoulides, Michaelidou, & Argyriou, 2012:1690), and even less on the cross-cultural differences in motivation for WOM engaging. Nevertheless, there is a study of Cheung, Anitsal, & Anitsal (2007) on difference in motivational factors between US and Chinese consumers, where authors have

acknowledged an existence of differences and defined what kind of factors are differ from each other.

Taking into consideration the relatively short time of existence of e-WOM concept, we can see that even less research were done in this area. However, there are some interesting research, likewise one from Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler (2004), where authors discovered that consumers can be divided into segments according to the motives that drive them to initiate e-WOM communication. They suggested that strategies for encouraging consumers to initiate an e-WOM should be created with consideration of particular segment (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004:51). However, this research was conducted in the context of German culture. Some other research examined differences in consumer motivation in e-WOM initiation for particular industry, like fashion industry (Wolny & Mueller, 2013), or presumable differences between generations (Strutton et al., 2011). We found one conference paper that examines motivational factors in the context of Chinese culture (Shen, Cai, & Li, 2011), yet to find a cross-cultural study on the motivational factors that influence a decision about e-WOM initiation appeared to be challenging. Nevertheless, according to the findings of Cheung et al. (2007) and close connection between concepts of WOM and e-WOM, we can assume that cultural differences can affect consumers' motivation to engage in e-WOM initiation. Therefore, we argue that studying consumers' motivation in e-WOM initiation in a cross-cultural context of Russian and Finnish cultures would be a relevant topic for Master's Thesis.

Another factor that might have an influence, especially when it comes to the technology involvement, is a factor of generation. According to the existent hierarchy of generations, there is only one generation that is known for being "technology native" – it is a generation Y (gen Y, or Millennials). Gen Y is one of the most active generations in terms of social media use. This generation use it for any kind of manipulations with the content – for sharing, consuming, searching, working, etc. Moreover, social media affects their purchasing behavior, consumer's identity and values formation, engagement with brands and companies, brand loyalty and expectations of services. (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, ... Solnet, 2013:245–246.) Therefore, we can say that social media affects this generation more than any previous one. Hence, it would be fair to assume that Gen Y plays one of the most important role among participants in

e-WOM due to significance of the social media role in this type of communication, and in life of formers.

There is no common agreement about age limits of the generation. For example, according to the Macmillan Dictionary, Generation Y are people who was born between late seventeenth and middle of nineteenth (“Macmillan Dictionary,”). While some other sources suggest that the boundaries of generation are between eightees and early two sousands (Bradt, 2014; “The Millenial Legacy,”). However some authors state an exact time boundaries, likewise from 1981 to 1999 (Bolton et al., 2013:246), or 1982 to 1994 (Strutton et al., 2011:560). In this paper we would define the generation Y as people who was born between 1982 and 1994, because according to the author’s personal experience this is a target audience for most of the companies, especially in fast-moving goods (FMCG) sector.

The main distinctive characteristic of the generation Y is early and frequent interactions with technologies. Moreover, increasing trend of globalization and consumerism make this generation “want it all” and “want it now”. These trends are related to all aspects of their life starts from cognitive behavior to their work and their role in society in general and active contribution in its well-being in particular. (Bolton et al., 2013:245–247.)

Although, Strutton et al. (2011) in their research did not find any strong evidence of different e-WOM behavior of Gen Y compare to the Gen X, they discovered a difference in frequency in use of Facebook. Therefore, we suggest focusing on Gen Y alone in order to investigate an e-WOM behavior, because this will help to minimize uncontrolled external factors that might influence a research quality.

1.2. Research question and objectives

As was mentioned above, the internet technology has changed modern marketing communication industry. However, the area of internet marketing communication is still emerging.

Furthermore, according to different sources consumers see word-of-mouth communication as a most trustful communication channel when it comes to the promotion. According to the short literature review above, the research on e-WOM is not developed enough. There is a lack of research on the different aspects of e-WOM, particularly on motivation. However, knowledge about factors that drive consumer to initiate an e-WOM could help marketers to encourage positive e-WOM about products or services and discourage a negative one. Consider the effectiveness of WOM communication and its trustworthiness from consumer perspective we can assume that ability to manipulate an e-WOM communication may lead to ultimate success in promotion of products, or services.

Moreover, the least amount of research is done in the cross-cultural area. Most of the studies reflect a western point of view and is done in the context of Western European countries or USA (Dichter, 1966; Sundaram et al., 1998; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Alexandrov et al., 2013) . Very little research is done from the perspective of any other countries, few of them are done from particularly Chinese perspective (Cheung et al., 2007; Shen et al., 2011; Christodoulides et al., 2012), no other perspectives were found during the literature review. However, research in the context of Chinese culture found evidences that culture plays a moderating role in consumers' behavior in e-WOM initiation (Cheung et al., 2007; Shen et al., 2011; Christodoulides et al., 2012). Therefore, we argue that there is a gap in the cross-cultural research in this area. Consider a permanent global-local tension (Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin, & Regner, 2014:270) for multinational companies we assume that cross-cultural research would have a useful managerial implication in terms of marketing communication strategy.

Another, rather moderating factor that was discussed above is a focus on representatives from one generation. Even though, as the research shows, there are no significant differences between Gen Y and Gen X in e-WOM behavior, the frequency of use of Facebook found to be different (Strutton et al., 2011). The latter plays a significant role in marketing communications. If we remember our personal experience, we would notice that nearly every company we know has a Facebook profile, where they communicate information about products or services with current or potential customers. Prove of this fact can be found in the research that was done in 2010, where 42 percent of the business-

to-customer companies used Facebook as a communication channel (Solis, 2010). While more recent empirical study shows that around 77 percent of European marketing students consider Facebook as a main communication channel between brands and consumers (Nanji, 2013). Therefore, we believe that even if we would not focus our study on Facebook as a main communication channel, the use of Facebook may still play a moderating role when talk about e-WOM behavior.

Thus, based on the information that was provided above we would like to explore “Why millennials are initiating product-, company- and/or service-related e-WOM and what are the similarities and differences between Russian and Finnish millennials’ motives?”

In order to make it easier to study this matter we would like to define certain objectives. These objectives will help to clarify a purpose and keep a right direction during the whole study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007:32):

1. To define the concept of e-WOM and analyze factors that may affect a decision about e-WOM initiation, likewise motives, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and distinctive features of generation Y
2. To define the national cultural dimensions and identify the possible influence of these dimensions on the e-WOM initiation.
3. To build a theoretical framework based on the factors that might influence a decision about e-WOM initiation and cultural differences.
4. To analyze and compare factors that may influence a decision of Russian and Finnish millennials to initiate an e-WOM.

1.3. Delimitations of the study

The study aims to find difference in motivational factors in e-WOM initiation between Finnish and Russian cultures. According to the fact that all international companies face global-local dilemma at all levels of their strategy, we assume that findings would have a valuable managerial implication.

Cross-cultural analysis would be done on the national level in order to see the general influence of the culture on motivation to initiate e-WOM. For this purpose would be utilized Hofstede model. In reality, there are several well-known models that are frequently used in cross-cultural studies: Hofstede, GLOBE and Schwartz. However, these three models are served for a different purpose. For example, GLOBE model could be more useful in studying intergroup relations, while Hofstede is more suitable for predicting behavior and segmenting customers on a country level. Moreover, Hofstede model is often used to analyze market entry modes and advertising. (de Mooij, 2010:149.) Thus, we believe that Hofstede model is more appropriate to serve purpose of this study. This model would be used to analyze if differences in dimensions scores can cause differences in motivational factors to initiate an e-WOM. Moreover, we would deliberately focus only on five out of six Hofstede's dimensions. This limitation is introduced due to the questionable understanding of such dimension as Long-/Short-term orientation. Due to its Confucian origin and many debates around its meaning, we would not use this dimension in our analysis in order to avoid the influence of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of its meaning on the quality of data.

In order to understand more comprehensive spectrum of factors that may affect a decision about e-WOM initiation, we have decided to use a model that serves to predict consumers' behavior such as Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This model is believed to be especially useful for applied researchers or practitioners (Taylor & Todd, 1995:151). The TPB model evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Actions (TRA) and the latter is based on the assumptions that people perform an intended behavior or otherwise behave reasonably (Ajzen, 1985:12). In our belief, the act of e-WOM initiation is an intended behavior with certain motives and factors that guides it. In addition, it is supported in consumer behavior theory that assumes information sharing and receiving to be a goal oriented behavior (Blazevic et al., 2013:296). Thus, the theory that predicts a deliberate behavior could shows us more comprehensive picture of factors that my influence a behavior.

The sampling would be limited to a specific group that would consist of students and/or young professionals from generation Y. This limitation is chosen deliberately in order to

reduce a possible moderating effect of generational differences on the findings and quality of research.

One of the main purpose is to contribute in the empirical studies of relatively new topic, such as electronic word of mouth by investigating a consumer motivation to initiate e-WOM in comparison of two distinct cultures. Thus, the research would be conducted from the consumer perspective. Moreover, we would not deliberately focus on any certain type of e-WOM, likewise positive or negative, in order to leave an opportunity to find distinct cross-cultural differences, or for findings that would not be defined in our theoretical framework.

Moreover, with this paper we aim to contribute to cross-cultural research in the area that is currently represented by very few works. We believe that cross-cultural research on the motivation in e-WOM initiation may have a valuable managerial implication especially consider an importance of e-WOM communication channel and global-local dilemma of international companies. Thus, we have decided to focus on two countries of choice that represent polar results on many Hofstede's dimensions, especially on Power distance, Individualism/Collectivism and Indulgence/Restraint. The decision to focus on two polar countries that represents western and non-western culture is a consequence of lacking research in this area from non-western point of view. Thus, we expect cultural differences, if they exist in motives for e-WOM initiation, to be more obvious due to significant distance between chosen cultures. Furthermore, if these differences would be found, these findings would contribute to the non-western point of view in research in the area of motivation to initiate an e-WOM.

This paper mainly aims to understand, if the national culture has a substantial influence on the motives to initiate e-WOM. If the influence would be discovered this would provide an additional insight on cultural influence in marketing communications and certain guidelines for local adaptation of encouraging a positive e-WOM or discouraging a negative one.

1.4. Structure of the study

This study consists of six different chapters starts from background information to theoretical framework and empirical findings. The first chapter is an introductory part. This chapter includes background information, research question and objectives, as well as limitations of the research.

The second chapter describes core concepts for this study. It would include the definition of e-WOM concept and other concepts related to this type of marketing communications, as well as the definition of the theory of planned behavior. Moreover, this chapter consists of the literature review of previous studies on motivation in WOM or e-WOM initiation and definition of generation Y.

The third chapter reviews Hofstede's model and its cultural dimensions. Furthermore, it includes the analysis of countries that were chosen for the current research. This chapter also includes a theoretical framework that is based on theories from chapter two and three.

The fourth chapter consists of the research methodology. In this chapter, we describe in details the process of data collection and analysis. Meantime the analysis of empirical data is included in the chapter five. In this chapter, we reveal and analyze empirical findings.

The final chapter is chapter six. This chapter consists of the summary and conclusion. In this part, we summarize our research, suggest managerial implication of findings and define areas for future research. The structure can be found in Figure 1.

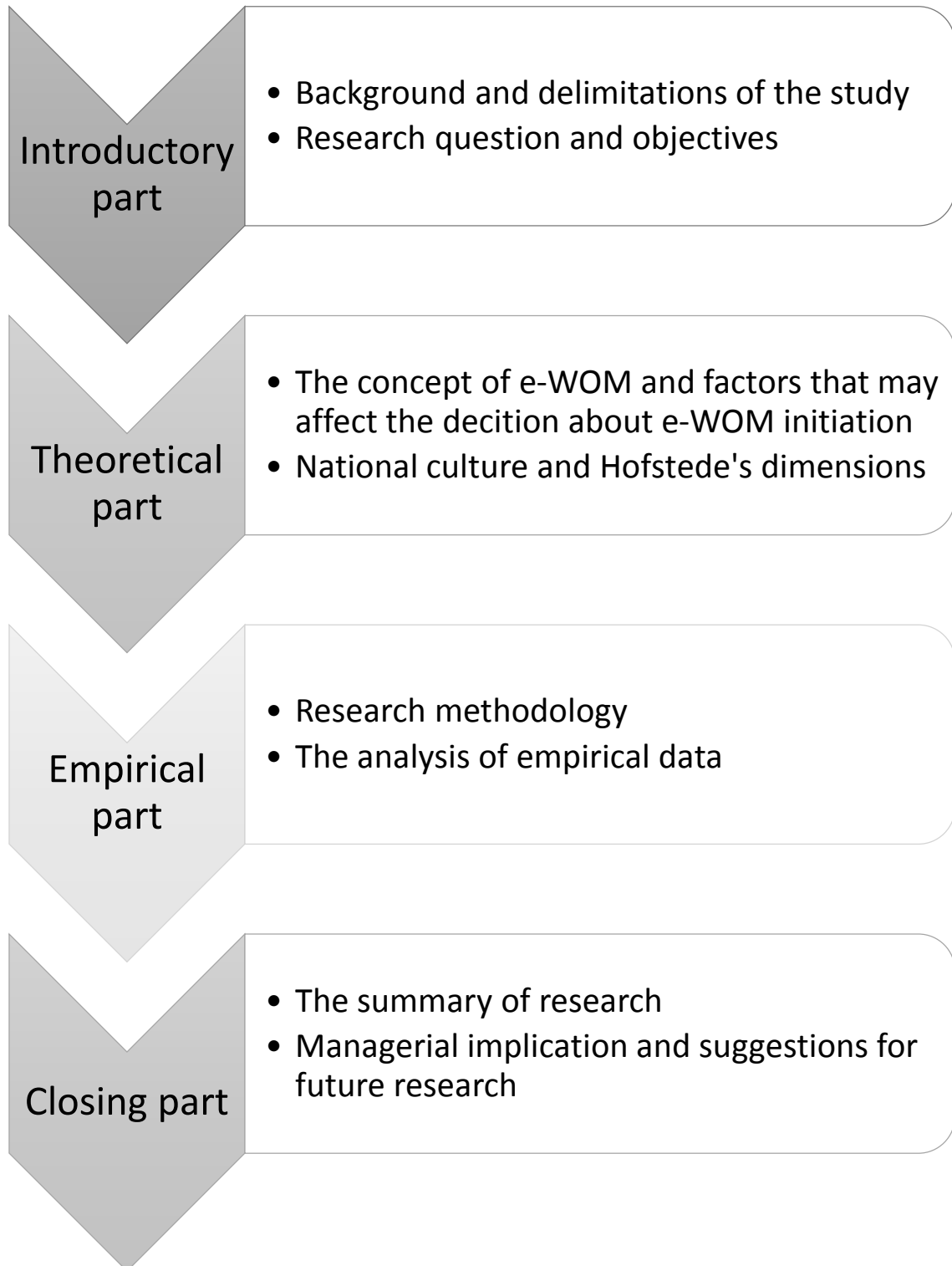


Figure 1. Structure of the study.

2. THE DEFINITION OF E-WOM AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE A DECISION ABOUT E-WOM INITIATION

In this part, we would focus on studies about motivation in both e-WOM as well as WOM participation and User Generated Content (UGC). Due to close connection between concepts we can assume that factors that drives consumer for participation in one or another way of communication are similar, if not the same. There are few classical studies on the motivational factors, like study by Dichter (1966) and Sundaram et al. (1998). Quite often, these studies are taken as a basis for further research in the area. However, both of them are done on the WOM communication. Another interesting study that we have found and that is done in the area of electronic word-of-mouth is study by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), where authors went further and segmented consumers according to the possible motives they might follow when they are engaging in e-WOM.

There is a comprehensive study on differences in consumer motivation to initiate WOM in Chinese and USA markets. In this study, authors have found few motivational factors that are differ between two cultures. Moreover, these factors correlate to the Hofstede dimensions, especially the one of individualism and collectivism in the society. (Cheung et al., 2007). Compare cultures of choice in current study, we can also say that Russian culture is more collectivistic compare to Scandinavian countries. Therefore, we assume that the study of Cheung et al. (2007) that reveals differences between collectivistic and individualistic society might be applicable in current research as well.

2.1. Concepts of WOM, e-WOM and UGC

Word of Mouth (WOM)

Word of Mouth communication is an informal communication between people in order to transmit ideas, comments, opinions and other product- or service-related information, neither one of them should be a marketer (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2006:533; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2013:422). As was mentioned earlier, this type of communication is often seen as more reliable and trustworthy. However, a traditional advertisement is still important for creating awareness and/or reinforce consumers'

opinion about brands, products or services, because WOM is often used on the last stages of decision-making process such as evaluation and adoption of product (Solomon et al., 2013:423). We use this type of communication on a daily basis when we want to make a decision what music to listen, which movie to watch, what travel agency is the best in the city, where to go on Saturday night and in many other occasions.

Traditional WOM is seen as a dyad communication between two associates – receiver and sender. Both of them pursue certain benefits from this type of communication. Receiver gains the information, which is valuable in the decision-making about purchase of products or services, while a sender increase his/her confidence, receives psychological and other benefits. (Blackwell et al., 2006:533–535.)

Blackwell et al. (2006) in their book distinguish several types of senders such as opinion leaders, market mavens and surrogate consumers. The latter represents rather a middleman between end-user of the product and company, or point-of-sales, in other word it is those whom consumer higher to get help in a decision-making about purchase (Solomon et al., 2013:417). At the same time, opinion leaders and markets mavens are conceptually similar to each other (Blackwell et al., 2006:535–536). The main difference is that opinion leaders usually spread the information about those products and services that they are highly involved with, while the latter covers also low- and middle-involvement products in their messages (Blackwell et al., 2006:535–536). Opinion leaders could also be classified as polymorphic, or those who has expertise in several fields, and as monomorphic opinion leaders, or experts in a limited field (Solomon et al., 2013:414).

The concept of opinion leaders could be especially important in fashion industry. For example in the work on WOM initiation motives among fashion consumers, authors acknowledge the shift in trend setting from fashion magazines and designers to fashion bloggers (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:576). However, if we think about our daily experience, fairly often average consumers share their opinion about one or another product or service with their fellows, friends, families and other consumers in private talks or in the internet. Thus, we suggest that it might be more important to understand an average consumer, or sometimes referred as non-opinion leader and his/her involvement in WOM. This

suggestion could find a support in the model of influence of opinion leadership (Figure 2).

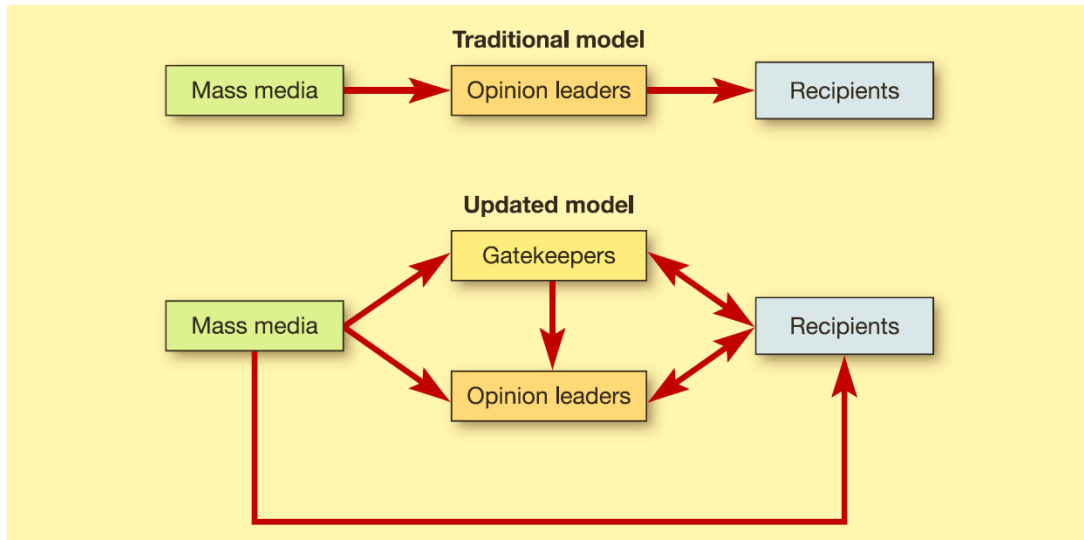


Figure 2. Traditional and updated opinion leadership model (Solomon et al., 2013:416).

It is found that most product-related conversations exist in a format of dialogue, thus, making sender and receiver both influential associates in WOM conversations. Moreover, authors of the traditional model, when running a computer simulation of their model, found that influence is more often driven by interaction among those who are influenced, rather than influential themselves. (Solomon et al., 2013:415–416.) Therefore, we see it as a justification for a decision not to focus our study on motivation of opinion leaders per se.

Furthermore, some opinion leaders could belong to a very limited local groups what makes them irrelevant on a large scale such as a market level (Solomon et al., 2013:417). Thus, it might be difficult to distinguish between opinion and non-opinion leaders and would demand the additional definition of scale for measuring the level of opinion leadership.

Another important factor in WOM concept is to understand what shapes the WOM and what could be the consequences of it. Blackwell et al. (2006) indicate that consumers' satisfaction shapes WOM. While satisfied consumers would become most likely a

retained customers and willing to spread a positive information and thus, would have a positive influence on recruitment of new customers. Similarly, those who are unsatisfied more likely would share their dissatisfaction with others and, consequently, not only would never buy this product again, but they would also prevent company from recruitment of new customers. (Blackwell et al., 2006:214–217.)

Negative WOM never goes away by itself (Blackwell et al., 2006:544). Moreover, according to some sources negative WOM have even bigger influence on consumers than positive, especially in consideration of new products or services (Solomon et al., 2013:423–424). Thus, company always have to monitor the content of WOM and not only facilitate a positive WOM but more importantly address and manage a negative one.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth or Word of Mouse is basically the same concept of spreading information from consumer to consumer or customer to customer as conventional WOM but with minor differences. For example, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004:39) defined it as a communication between “potential, actual or former consumer” and “a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet”. Thus, we can summarize these differences into two points. First, it is the space where communication is happening. As we can see from the definition by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) the use of internet stays behind the addition of word “electronic”. Second, it is the audience that the initiator is communicating with. The use of internet allowed to wider the audience to the large number of simultaneous receivers, while in conventional WOM this number was limited (Blackwell et al., 2006:214–217). Hence, this concept has an excessive power compare to conventional WOM (Blackwell et al., 2006:214–217). However, since the concept of e-WOM is based on the concept of WOM, it has similar features, consequences and is shaped by similar factors to the one discussed above. Thus, further we will focus only on difference between traditional WOM and e-WOM.

In e-WOM sender and receiver can communicate in many ways, likewise boycott website, news groups, opinion platforms, discussion forums (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004:39), social media, e-commerce websites etc. Most of these platforms requires a publicly available post what means that most of the people who would receive this information

probably are unfamiliar with the sender. Unlike conventional WOM, the concept of e-WOM assumes a communication between people who has little or no prior knowledge about each other (Lin, Lu, & Wu, 2012:9). Thus, we argue that absence of any former connection between receiver and sender might play a moderating role on many factors related to this type of communications. For example, the influence of the source and transmitted information on or perception of these source and information by receiver could vary depending on the closeness of ties between sender and receiver. Indeed, some researchers acknowledged differences between relationships with the strong or weak ties (Goldenberg, Libai, & Muller, 2001:213–214; Tang, 2010:46; Blazevic et al., 2013:302). For example in one research it was found that effect of strong and weak ties may depend on different factors and vary accordingly, for example with influence of certain factors weak ties may have a greater impact on information dissemination than strong ties (Goldenberg et al., 2001:221). Thus, presumably, the internet moderation of communication process may have an effect on the antecedents and consequences of e-WOM compare to traditional WOM.

The support for this assumption can be found in the work of Shen et al. (2011), where authors discover that advice seeking motive has no support among Chinese consumers to initiate an e-WOM. They argue that collectivistic societies tend to seek an advice from their close ties (in-groups) rather than strangers on the internet (out-group) (Shen et al., 2011:6). While in another study of Chinese consumers authors found an advice seeking as one of the motives to initiate traditional WOM (Cheung et al., 2007:241). Thus, this difference may occur due to difference in the nature of both phenomena. Hence, this difference may have an impact on the outcome of current study, especially in relation to those expected outcomes that are defined by the theories on traditional WOM phenomenon.

Another distinctive feature of e-WOM is an emergence of non-verbal communication. While the traditional WOM presumed mainly a verbal communication, the non-verbal expression of attitudes has gained popularity in e-WOM communication with the rise of social media (Blazevic et al., 2013:295). The non-verbal communication assumes usage of visuals, likewise videos or pictures. There are certain evidence that use of visuals might have a moderating effect on the receiver's perception of message and product itself (Lin

et al., 2012:20–22). Thus, the concept has become broader and added few dimensions that has to be taken into account when studying e-WOM.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that taking into consideration the influence of WOM concept on consumers' attitude towards product, service or company and excessive power that e-WOM possesses due to use of cyber space, we would assume a high relevance of the latter concept for modern marketing.

User-Generated Content (UGC)

Another concept that can be considered as a part of e-WOM concept by its definition. UGC refers to the content that is created by user to share with other users on the internet (Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2007:2; Tang, Fang, & Wang, 2014:41). Therefore, we can see that definition is based on the same principle as an e-WOM concept, which is a content that is created and shared by people who has no professional connection to the promotion of product or services. Thus, the UGC in this work would not be considered as a different concept, but rather as a part of e-WOM concept.

The effect of UGC is often studied from the point of two extremes that are positive or negative UGC. Nevertheless, researchers acknowledge the existence of neutral UGC, its effect did not attract a sufficient attention and often considered as having no effect on consumers. (Tang et al., 2014.)

However, Tang et al. (2014) in their research found evidence that neutral UGC has an equally strong effect on consumers as its extremes. First, they differentiated two types of neutral UGC, likewise mixed and indifferent. The mixed UGC contains an equal amount of positive and negative claims about the product or service. Meantime, the latter type of UGC consist no assessment of the product or service. Authors argue that these two types are likely to be perceived differently by consumers. According to their findings, the existence of neutral UGC can change consumers' perception of negative and positive UGC about the same products or services. For example, authors reveal that mixed UGC amplifies the effect from positive or negative UGC while indifferent UGC works an opposite way and weaken this effect. This mainly happens because mixed UGC increase the curiosity of consumers about the object of content, while indifferent UGC lowering a

motivation to process information and consequently reduce consumers' curiosity. (Tang et al., 2014.)

Neutral UGC as a part of e-WOM concept may affect the attitude towards neutral e-WOM and its consideration not only among researchers, but also among practitioners. According to our literature review, most of the studies consider only two extremes of e-WOM, which are positive and negative. We have not found research that would study motivation to initiate a neutral e-WOM. However, as we have discussed above, studying neutral e-WOM may open a completely new perspective in this area of marketing communications.

2.2. Theory of Planned Behavior

The purpose of this study is to explore if there are differences in motivational factors that influence a decision about active engagement in e-WOM between two distinct cultures. Therefore, one of the main model could be a model that predicts consumers' behavior.

This model is believed to be a Theory of Planned Behavior. As its author suggests this theory is especially useful for applied research and practitioners who could use it as a guidance (Taylor & Todd, 1995:151). One of the most recent research that is applied this model and of particular interest for current study is a research of Girona & Korgaonkar (2014). Authors used this theory to study consumers' intentions and behavior in relation to the use of social networking sites (SNS), likewise *"a general SNS usage, the joining of a business's SNS page and clicking on an advertisement on a SNS"* (Girona & Korgaonkar, 2014:572). This study is perceived to be of a particular interest due to several reasons. First, authors study a social networking related behavior what corresponds with the core idea of this study, which is to explore the motivational factors of e-WOM initiation, because social network sites are one of the e-WOM channels. Thus, it suggests a possibility for making certain assumptions about consumers' behavior based on the study of Girona & Korgaonkar (2014). Second, one of the studied activities is *"a joining business's SNS"*. This activity is believed to be the antecedent of active engagement in e-WOM in the SNS channel.

Moreover, authors conducted a research in two stages. First, they have investigated relationships between antecedents to the behavior by using a quantitative method. Second, they have conducted a qualitative research in order to deeper explore reasons to perform a certain activities. (Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014:571.)

Results of the study that were discovered by using different methods were found to be slightly different (Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014:597). The qualitative method showed a higher significance for two antecedents than it was found by using a quantitative method (Gironda & Korgaonkar, 2014:597). Therefore, due to the fact that our study is of exploratory type and aims for deeper understanding the e-WOM initiation motives we may justify our choice of qualitative method and use of the current theory base on the study of Gironda & Korgaonkar (2014).

The TPB theory itself is the evolution of Theory of Reasoned Actions. The TRA was created to predict an intended behavior and was based on the assumption that human beings behave reasonably, take into account available information and consider consequences of their actions (Ajzen, 1985:12). According to the theory, an intention is a determinant of actions, while it is a function of two other determinants – attitude and subjective norm (Figure 3).

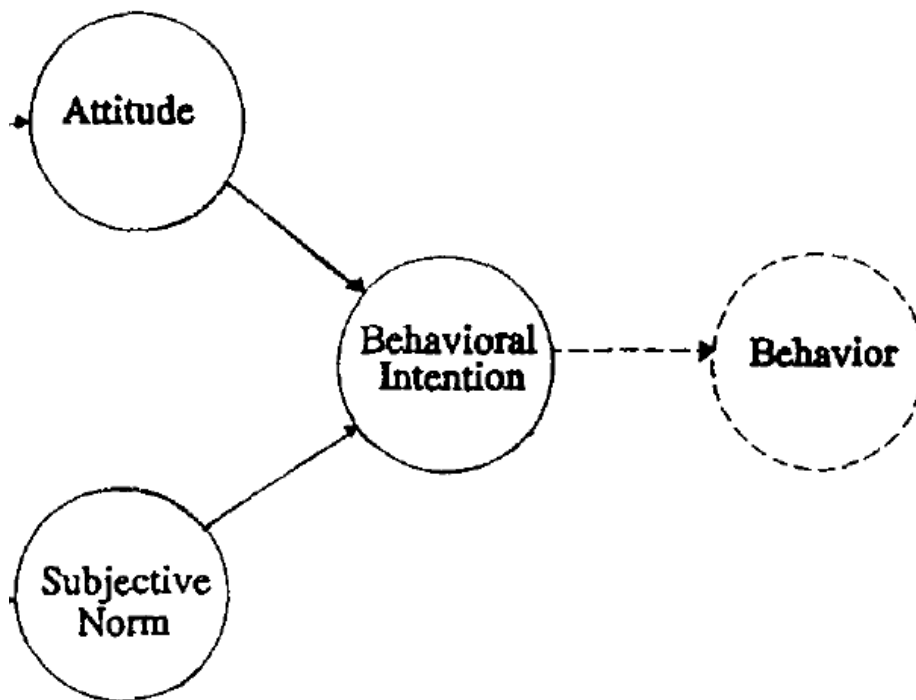


Figure 3. The Theory of Reasoned Actions (Taylor & Todd, 1995:138).

The attitude here is defined as a personal factor that indicates individual's positive or negative evaluation of his/her behavior (Ajzen, 1985:12). While the second determinant is an individual's perception of social pressure that is put on him/her in order to persuade individual to perform or not perform a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1985:12). The demographic characteristics and personal traits were not taken into consideration due to insignificant influence of these factors on beliefs that form attitudinal or normative determinants of the behavior (Ajzen, 1985:14). However, consumers' national culture is rather geographical factor, than demographical due to its tight connection to the country of living instead of any demographical factors, like race or gender etc. Furthermore, Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov (2010:46) argue that concept of gender for example represents a different cluster of culture and thus, should be described in its own way. Therefore, this theory is assumed to be suitable for the study purpose. We emphasize this fact in relation to the TRA because, as was mentioned earlier, the TPB is based on the TRA.

Next stage of the development of TRA was a Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Figure 4). The latter is different from the TRA only in its addition of a new determinant of behavior and intention, which is a perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991:183). The main assumption behind this extension is that the performance of behavior largely depends on the availability of resources and opportunities, likewise time, money, skills etc. (Ajzen, 1991:182).

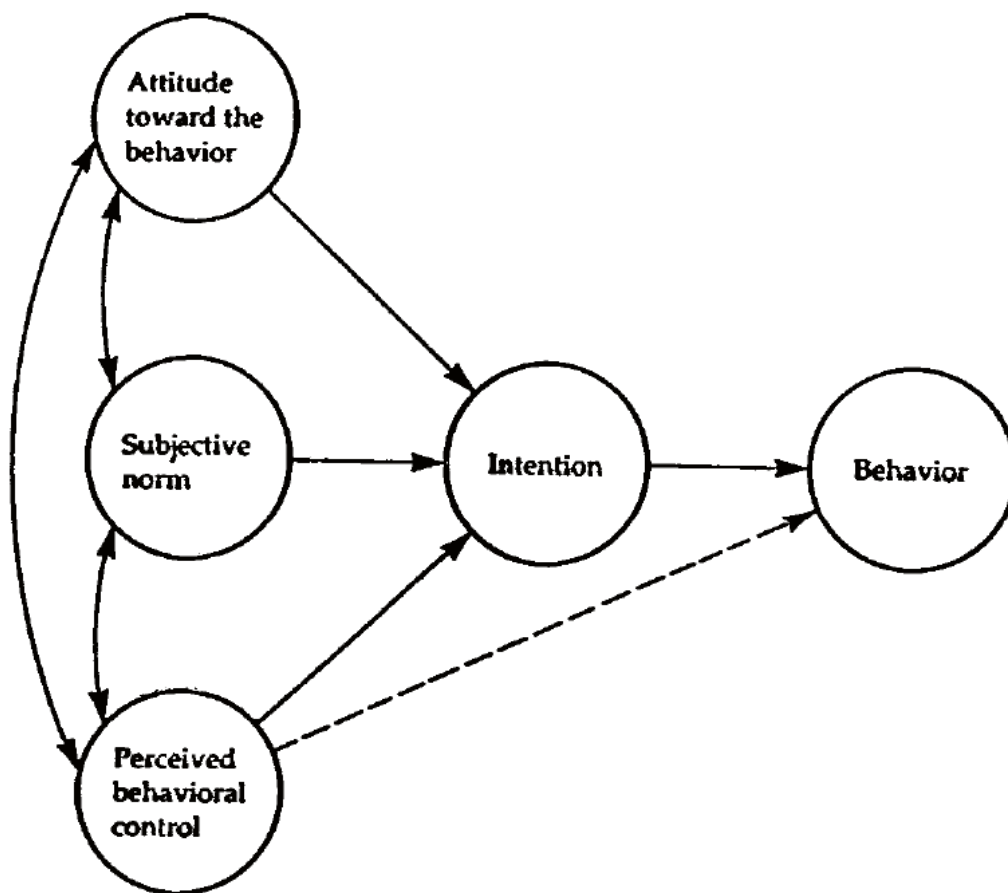


Figure 4. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991:182).

Another assumption is that intentions and behavioral control would interact in terms of influence on the actual behavior. The author states that the performance of behavior would increase with increased intention to the extent that the person has a behavioral control and vice versa. (Ajzen, 1991:183.)

The next extend of the Theory of Planned Behavior is decomposition of the model and crossover effect between its components (Taylor & Todd, 1995). In this work we would not focus on neither of extensions such as the crossover effect and decomposition. However it might be helpful for our study to understand the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) due to the fact that it provides a set of beliefs that clarifies the relationship of model's components and indicates specific factors that may influence behavior (Taylor & Todd, 1995:140).

Decomposition of TPB represents a TPB model, which is extended with attitudinal, normative and control beliefs. Attitudinal beliefs were derived from the literature on adoption of innovations. Authors define three attitudinal beliefs, likewise relative advantage, complexity and compatibility. Relative advantage refers to the benefits that innovation provides compare to its preceding product and may consist of such factors as economic benefits, image enhancement, satisfaction and convenience. Complexity refers to the degree of difficulty that customer will face in order to use and understand the product. The last belief, compatibility, refers to the fit of the product with customer's needs, values and previous experience. (Taylor & Todd, 1995:141.)

Unlike the attitudinal beliefs, control belief consists of two dimensions such as facilitating conditions (time, money and resources) and self-efficacy, which is a degree of confidence in personal ability to make the use of innovation. Meantime, the normative belief remained as a unidimensional determinant and was connected to the opinion of referent groups. (Taylor & Todd, 1995:141, 144.) The model of DTPB can be found in Appendix 1.

However, in another source we found that the normative belief was extended to two dimensions. In the book of Solomon et al. (2013) on consumer behavior, authors argue that subjective norm, which is a function of normative belief, is defined by two factors. One is the intensity of normative belief, or belief that certain actions should be taken or not taken. Another is the motivation to comply with that belief, or degree to which consumer takes into account a possible reaction of others while evaluating a potential course of actions. (Solomon et al., 2013:309.)

Therefore, we would point out that the TPB is not defined by attitude, subjective norm and behavioral control alone, but could also include factors that lay behind these elements of behavior.

2.3. Studies on motivation for engagement in WOM/ e-WOM behavior

As was mentioned above, fewer studies were done in relation to the concept of e-WOM, however, since the core meaning of concepts of WOM, e-WOM and UGC are fairly similar we have decided to consider all relevant information. Moreover, not all of these studies were conducted on motivational factors of average consumers to engage in initiation of a product- or service-related information. As we discussed earlier there are different types of consumers that initiates an information sharing, likewise opinion leaders, market maven etc. however, as we justified in the first sub-chapter of current chapter we would focus our study on non-opinion leaders. Thus, we have focused on studies of motivational factors in WOM, e-WOM and UGC that were not referring to the opinion leaders of populated communities.

Before, we already made a short overview of the relevant literature. However, in this part we would like to focus more detailed on every significant study that was conducted in this area. In every communication, we have two types of participants, those who listen (listener or consumer of the content) and those who speak (speaker or producer of the content). Thus, research on motivation in WOM is divided into the motivation of speaker and the motivation of listener. For example, Dichter (1966) in his research has studied motivation for both speaker and listener in WOM. Since this research aims for cross-cultural study on motivation in e-WOM initiation, thus, we would focus only on those studies that are related to the speaker, or content producer motivation.

Dichter (1966) in his work formed four distinct groups of motivational factors that were based on unstructured interviews that were conducted with over 200 consumers. He named these groups as involvement categories, which are product-involvement, self-involvement, other-involvement and message involvement. The product-involvement was a reason for WOM spreading in 33 per cent of cases, while the self-involvement that

assumes self-confirmation were second popular category and constituted 24 per cent of cases. Another category of involvement was other-involvement and was found in 20 per cent of all cases, where the dominant attitudes were the need and intent to help and to share with others enthusiasm about and the benefits of product. The ultimate category is a message-involvement, which assumes three attitudes that makes WOM “sell” the product – the similarity of claims, the conspicuousness of advertisement of product and the intrusion of this advertisement into most aspects of life. In the conclusion author stated that speakers will always expect something in return to the information they share. However, in case of WOM the benefits are purely psychological and have no material intentions. (Dichter, 1966:149–152, 157.)

Another research that is considered to be classical in this area was done by Sundaram et al. (1998). In this study, unlike Dichter (1966), author have studied both types of WOM, positive and negative word of mouth. Motivational factors in this study were grouped in several categories that were differ for positive and negative WOM, except one category – altruism. Other categories were product-involvement, self-enhancement, help the company for the positive WOM and anxiety reduction, vengeance and advice seeking for the negative WOM respectively. (Sundaram et al., 1998:529.)

We can see that some of the categories are similar or represent similar function as those in Dichter's (1966) study. For example, self-enhancement is perceived to be an analogue of self-involvement. Another example would be such category as altruism that is considered as an act of doing something for others (Sundaram et al., 1998:529). Thus, this category would be seen as equal to the other-involvement of Dichter (1966). Helping the company would fall to the same category as altruism, because it assumes a help to others what includes organizations and businesses. Moreover, authors admit that helping the company is a sub-category of altruism. However, they separate it from one another in order to distinguish the meaning of one as a help to other consumers, while another one is about helping the actual owner of the product. (Sundaram et al., 1998:529–530.) Would be logical to assume that categories of the negative WOM are not falling into categories of Dichter (1966), because latter was not studying the phenomenon of negative WOM. However, there are two categories of motives to initiate a negative e-WOM in the study

of Sundaram et al. (1998) that could match self-involvement and other-involvement of Dichter (1966) – altruism and advice seeking.

Apart from studying motivational factors, authors found that whatever the motivation of consumer is there are few main triggers that affect decision about generating a positive or negative WOM. These triggers are product performance, employee behavior, price-value perception and organization's response to problems. (Sundaram et al., 1998:530–531.) These findings might have an implication for such decisions as price-setting, product-related services and complain management etc.

Nearly every other study that have been used in this paper and that have been done on the motivational factors related to the negative and/or positive WOM or e-WOM was using two research that were described above. Thus, these works can be considered as a fundamental works on the motivation of consumers to initiate WOM or e-WOM.

For example, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) based their research on three fundamental works, where two of them were the ones that are described above and the third one was written by Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard (1993) (in Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). However, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) aimed to understand motives for e-WOM generating on consumer-opinion platform. Thus, they integrated general WOM motives with specific motives that were derived from the features of e-WOM initiation on consumer-opinion platform. Furthermore, authors grouped these motives according to the social interaction utilities types, likewise focus-related utility, consumption utility, approval utility, moderator-related utility and homeostase utility. Each of these utilities was described by certain motives, likewise concern for other consumers, helping the company, social benefits and exerting power (focus-related utility); advise seeking (consumption utility); self-enhancement and economic rewards (approval utility); convenience and problem-solving support (moderator related utility); expressing positive emotions and venting negative feelings (homeostase utility). (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004:41–44.)

Their empirical research allowed authors to provide the motive-based segmentation of consumers who could be described as e-WOM communication initiators. Based on their findings, they distinguish four main segments: self-interested helpers, multiple-motive consumers, consumer advocates and true altruists. These findings provide a foundation

for creating a platform based on more customer-oriented approach, providing specific features to address the motives of each customer segment. (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004:49–51.) Thus, this research provides an important managerial implication that could be taken into consideration while creating a customer-opinion platform.

Further, research has become more specialized. For example, Alexandrov et al. (2013) in their research focused specifically on social- and self-motives and their interaction in terms of influence on positive and negative WOM spreading. Authors argue that WOM behavior is the consequences of intention to engage in a social interactions, which is the result of intention to satisfy self-needs (Alexandrov et al., 2013:531). Thus, they believed that intention to engage in WOM is driven by the self- and social-motives (Alexandrov et al., 2013:531). Findings in this research shows that negative and positive WOM have different routes of activation (Alexandrov et al., 2013:542). Thus, it assumes that positive and negative WOM are consequences of different motives or combination of motives. According to the results, needs for self-enhancement and social bonding are affecting only positive WOM, while negative WOM is affected mainly by the need for self-affirmation and intentions to help others and share social information (Alexandrov et al., 2013:531). The need for social comparison were found to affect both valences (Alexandrov et al., 2013:531). These findings may help companies to encourage a positive WOM about their products and/or services and discourage negative one.

Some of the researchers, like Wolny & Mueller (2013) were studying motives for e-WOM initiation in relation to a specific industry. The above-mentioned authors for example conducted a research on fashion consumers. Thus, they expanded an existing WOM motives by including context-specific variables, likewise fashion- and brand-involvement. (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:562.)

They took four types of involvement that were proposed by Dichter (1966), extended them with two more context-specific involvement, likewise brand-involvement and fashion-involvement and added two motivational factors: advice seeking and need for social interaction (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:570). Moreover, they added a theory of reasoned actions (TRA) to their theoretical framework in order to test it as a moderating factor (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:570). The results confirmed that fashion-involvement, which authors define as a “category-level interest”, and brand-involvement have a

significant influence on brand-related e-WOM initiations (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:574). Moreover, findings show that need for social interaction is connected to the frequency of e-WOM initiation, while advice seeking has no impact on frequency of brand-related e-WOM creation (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:574). As authors assumed the TRA had a moderating effect on the relation between consumer traits and e-WOM engagement, however, the study does not specify the interaction effect (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:574).

Another interesting research on motivation studied a consumption and creation of user-generated content (UGC) and factors that have an influence on consumers' actions (Daugherty et al., 2007). Authors based their work on the functional theory that is based on the assumption that attitudes serve certain functions for the person (Solomon et al., 2013:293). According to the theory attitude serves one or more personality functions, likewise utilitarian, knowledge, ego-defensive and value-expressive functions. Utilitarian function means that people act upon their personal interests in order to gain reward or avoid punishment. While knowledge function assumes that people are driven by the need to understand their environment, therefore, they would generate a UGC in order to learn and understand their experiences. Ego-defensive function serves to minimize people's doubts, give a sense of belonging, reduce guilty feeling about not contributing and on the general level defend their self-image. Value-expressive function implies attitudes that facilitate an opportunity to express person's values and self-concept, which may enhance their image in the eyes of others. Some researchers also claim that this function is also related to the motivation for social adjustment, when people are trying to conform to society and its rules. Authors also determine an additional function, which is considered to have a significant influence on attitude towards creating a UGC content in particular – social function. Further, authors hypothesized that these functional sources of motivation positively connected with attitudes towards creation of UGC content. (Daugherty et al., 2007:5–7.)

The test of hypothesis demonstrate a positive correlation between functions and attitude (Daugherty et al., 2007:14–15). However, significant positive relationship were found only for two functions, likewise ego-defensive and social function (Daugherty et al., 2007:14–15). The ego-defensive function assumes protecting people from internal insecurities and external threats, in that sense UGC content creation helps to minimize

self-doubts and have a sense of a community bonding (Daugherty et al., 2007:16). The social function at the other hand help with searching for activities to conform to reference groups and gives an opportunity to associate with friends (Daugherty et al., 2007:16). Concerning UGC content creation, it gives people an opportunity to connect with others and feel important (Daugherty et al., 2007:16).

Nevertheless, first, we should not forget that the knowledge of attitude is not an actual predictor of the behavior alone; there are might be some uncontrolled factors that influence consumers' behavior (Solomon et al., 2013:308). Second, according to the attitudinal model description, it aims to measure an attitude towards object of behavior rather than process (Solomon et al., 2013:293). However, researchers in one of the hypothesis were trying to assess the attitude towards actions of consumption and creation of UGC and only with another one the attitude towards UGC per se and how it moderates the relationship between consumption and creation of content (Daugherty et al., 2007:7,10). Thus, the results might be not accurate or inconsistent due to the questionable application of model.

As we mentioned earlier not many cross-cultural research can be found in this area. However, we decided also to consider a research that was done from non-western perspective in order to understand possible differences between cultures and what dimensions could influence these differences. Thus, we would analyze two research; one is a cross-cultural comparison of Chinese and USA consumers, while another is analyzing Chinese consumers' behavior related to e-WOM. Nevertheless, the analysis in this sub-chapter would be focused on motives, rather than possible cultural differences. While the analysis of cultural influence could be found in the sub-chapter about theoretical framework.

The study of Cheung et al. (2007) investigates the internal motivation of Chinese and USA consumers in WOM initiation. They discovered both similarities and differences in motivation between consumer groups from different nations (Cheung et al., 2007:235). Most of the motives were similar to both nations likewise, strength of social ties, altruism towards family and friends, fellow consumers and companies, expressing sense of achievement and seeking a therapeutic effect. However, they also found some differences.

For example, when generating a positive WOM Chinese consumers are driven by two additional motives, such as seeking confirmation of own judgments and seeking advice (Cheung et al., 2007:241–243). Nevertheless, these motives were found in other works on WOM/ e-WOM initiating motivation that were conducted from western perspective. Dichter (1966:150) in his work mentioned a seeking confirmation of own judgment as one of the self-involvement motive. While seeking of advice was found in works of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004:48) and Sundaram et al. (1998:530). However, Sundaram et al. (1998:530) in their study of western consumers suggested that seeking of advice drives a negative WOM, rather than positive. Moreover, this motive did not show a significant influence on the frequency of fashion brand-related e-WOM involvement (Wolny & Mueller, 2013:575).

Other differences were in motives that are influencing a negative WOM initiation. One of the reason for negative WOM generating for Chinese consumers was seeking retaliation, however, this factors did not find a support among consumers from US. Yet, US consumers were using a negative WOM as a way to gain a bargaining power, correct an unpleasant situation and/or to get a compensation. (Cheung et al., 2007:243–244.)

Another study that were conducted in the content of Chinese culture is a study by Shen et al. (2011). In this study the support for influence of such motive as seeking confirmation of own judgment was found. However, unlike Cheung et al. (2007), authors did not find a significant influence of advice seeking. This fact was explained due to the differences in the subject of study. According to the Shen et al. (2011) people in such collectivistic country as China would not search an advice from the stranger but rather from their close ties. Thus, taking into consideration that study explores motives for initiation of electronic WOM, advice seeking on the internet space would be irrelevant. Moreover, authors also found that the type of the platform for engagement, network community versus retail web site, has an influence on the types of motives that drives consumers. (Shen et al., 2011:5–6.)

Nevertheless, as we discussed earlier in this paper there are certain differences between WOM and e-WOM concepts that are related to the audience of communication and space where the communication takes place. Yet, in the review of previous studies on WOM, e-WOM and UGC initiation motives, we did not find any significant evidence that would

reflect the influence of these differences. According to our review, only one study indicates this difference. The study by Shen et al. (2011) described above where authors found a difference in the existing of such motive as advice seeking for Chinese consumers in e-WOM initiation motives compare to WOM initiation motives that were studied in the research of Cheung et al. (2007). The summary of studies can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. The summary of studies on motivation of WOM, e-WOM and UGC initiation.

Author	Year of publication	Type of marketing communication	Motives	Research type	Research methodology	Country of study
<i>E.Dichter</i>	1966	WOM	Product-involvement, other-involvement, self-involvement, message-involvement	Qualitative	In-depth interviews	USA
<i>D.S.Sundaram, K.Mitra & C.Webster</i>	1998	WOM	Altruistic, product involvement, self-enhancement, anxiety reduction, vengeance, advice seeking, help the company	Qualitative	Critical incident technique	USA
<i>T. Hennig - Thurau, K.P. Gwinner, G. Walsh & D.D. Gremler</i>	2004	e-WOM	Focus-related utilities; consumption utility; approval utility; moderator-related utility; homeostase utility	Quantitative	Online questionnaire	Germany
<i>A.Alexandrov, B.Lilly & E.Babakus</i>	2013	WOM	Social motives and self-motivation	Quantitative	Test of hypotheses based on the scenario	USA
<i>J.Wolny & C.Mueller</i>	2013	e-WOM	Fashion involvement, brand involvement, product involvement, self-involvement, involvement of others,	Quantitative	Test of hypotheses based on the self-administrated	UK

			advice seeking, need for social interaction		internet-based questionnaire	
<i>T.Daugherty, M.S.Eastin & L.Bright</i>	2008	UGC	Utilitarian function; knowledge function; value-expressive function; ego-defensive function, social function	Quantitative	Test of hypotheses based on the online survey	USA
<i>M-S.Cheung, M.M.Anital & I.Anital</i>	2007	WOM	Strength of social ties; altruism towards family, friends and businesses; experiencing sense of achievement; seeking confirmation of own judgment; seeking advice; seeking therapeutic effect; seeking retaliation; seeking correction/compensation; seeking bargaining power	Qualitative	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China
<i>W.Shen, J.Cai & L.Li</i>	2011	e-WOM	Seeking confirmation of own judgements, expressing or sharing positive feelings, helping companies, web convenience, negative experience	Quantitative	Test of hypotheses based on the questionnaire	China

2.4. Generation Y, or millennials

Previously we have discussed the reason why distinguishing between generation can be important for this particular study. Moreover, we have explained the generation's time frame of our choice. Further, we would review detailed information on generation's distinctive characteristics in order to understand its possible influence on e-WOM initiation.

This generation like shopping more than the previous. Moreover, they have a high need to be on top of trends and be accepted by their peers. This fact makes them more prone for switching preferences. In terms of advertising, they expect marketers to be honest, use humor and be clear in message. (Blackwell et al., 2006:246.)

The generation Y is considered as a “digital natives” because they are the first generation who spent their entire life in a digital environment. Moreover, they are the most active users of the social media platforms and this affects them in many different ways. The use of social media has a quite significant influence on the formation of their identity, habits and values; as well as their products use, brand engagement and loyalty, as well as purchase behavior and expectations about services. (Bolton et al., 2013:245–246.)

This generation experience increasing availability of personalized products and services. This and other external factors led them to form the “*want it all*” and “*want it now*” attitude towards all aspects of their life, starts from consumption to private life or work experience. (Bolton et al., 2013:247.) Therefore, it is important to understand how the media are used by this generation in order to benefit from the implication of this knowledge.

Bolton et al. (2013:249) in their work propose an antecedents and consequences of social media use that are relevant for millennials (Appendix 2). As we can see from the graph consequences cover all aspects of society starts from personal level to business and more general societal-level. Moreover, authors point that consequences may be both beneficial and disadvantageous. (Bolton et al., 2013:249, 252–256.) Thus, it is important to understand the mechanisms that have influence on the use of social media and consequent outcome that affects not only millennials themselves, but also other levels of society.

Moreover, there is exist an opinion that millennials are the force that will change the world (Jacobs, 2013). Thus, it is crucially important to understand this generation better for future success of the business.

The work of Bolton et al. (2013:249) includes two particular types of the use of media that we are interested in. These are types are contributing and sharing (Bolton et al., 2013:249). Both of these types correlate with the aim of this paper, likewise to explore

motivational factors in e-WOM initiation. In practice, the e-WOM initiation would mean either a creation of information by consumer, or sharing information that was created by someone else. Thus, contributing and sharing would reflect the meaning of e-WOM initiation in the context of social media use.

Due to the globalization and widespread of the internet, together with the high level of involvement of millennials in the latter, there is a consequent question about how different or similar millennials are across borders. How significant the differences are? Is it still relevant to talk about cultural differences and apply cultural dimensions to study this generation?

In order to find answers on similar questions Schewe, Debevec, Madden, Diamond, Parment & Murphy (2013) conducted a research where they have studied values of millennials from USA, New Zealand and Sweden. The set of values was first explored through content analysis and qualitative interviews with USA millennials. Afterwards authors conducted a questioner with millennials from USA, New Zealand and Sweden where questions were based on the set of values discovered in the preceding exploratory study. (Schewe et al., 2013:8.)

Some of the findings were consistent with Hofstede model and thus, showed that differences exist and they are mainly defined by culture. For example, authors found differences in such values like relationship with others, materialism, gender equality and family values, as well as many other. However, the research also shows that the more similar countries are according to Hofstede model, the more similar values of millennials in these countries. (Schewe et al., 2013:11–13.)

Despite the results of Hofstede research, millennials in this study were also found to possess similar values regardless to their culture, likewise accomplishment and self-actualization. They would like to be able to express creativity and pursue the job they would be passionate about. Moreover, they prefer simplicity in life and seek for experience rather than material things. Furthermore, they value life-long education and working in teams. Millennials from all three countries value independency and control of their own life, while seek for psychological and personal safety, as well as financial security. Nevertheless, all three groups see themselves as part of “global village”.

Therefore, authors suggest that marketers should still consider cultural difference when target millennials, especially for culturally distant countries. (Schewe et al., 2013:13–14.) Despite these findings, we would assume that the trend of homogeneity should not be neither overlooked, nor lack of attention due to its obvious existence and probability for further development.

3. CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several fundamental studies exist in the area of cross-cultural research: Hofstede, GLOBE and Schwartz. Each of these studies led to the development of particular model that consists of cultural dimensions discovered in a corresponding study. Nevertheless, all three models serves for a different purpose. GLOBE model is often used in studying intergroup relations, while Hofstede is more suitable for predicting behavior and segmenting customers on a country level, as well as market entry modes analysis and advertising. (de Mooij, 2010:149.)

The main idea of Hofstede study is to compare countries, rather than individuals. His dimensions are aim to understand how different countries deal with similar issues. Moreover, there are strong evidence that even though practices may change daily, the society values patterns change slowly through centuries and across many generations. (Hofstede & Hofstede.) This study has found implication in many other cross-cultural studies and can be considered as a one of the most reliable studies in this area (The Hofstede Centre).

Another significant study in this area is a Swartz model. Swartz, as well as most of the studies in this area, based his work on the Hofstede model. However, he was focused on the values that present the desired goals that guide individuals through their life. Furthermore, he studied these values through the cross-cultural comparison. This fact allowed Swartz to distinguish a difference between individuals' desired goals on a cultural level. (Kanto, 2011:32.)

The last but not least important study in cross-cultural area is a GLOBE study. Main focus of the GLOBE study was to research the global leadership and organizational behavior effectiveness. The study itself consists of two phases: in the first phase, it aims to develop right instruments that would be used to assess culture and leadership in society; second phase is based on the first and point nine dimensions of culture, which consist of nine main attributes of societal and organizational cultures. Here we are more interested in the second phase due to the fact that it shows differences between cultures on the measurable scale that can be applied to analyze and understand differences in perceptions between representative of different countries. The dimensions have two different scores: one

represents the actual behavior in a society and another one – the desirable behavior. (Kanto, 2011:35–36.)

In current study, as was mentioned above, our purpose is to discover an influence of culture on the consumer motivation, thus, we believe that most suitable theory would be Hofstede due to its focus on national cultures.

3.1. National culture and Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Culture has a broad meaning and implication. For example, talking about culture we can refer to the culture at the working place, or street culture, we also can assume a culture of certain nations or, for example, culture that is defined by religion, like Christian or Muslim culture. The Oxford dictionary suggest two definition of the word "culture": *"culture – is the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively"*; *"culture – is the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society"*.

Hofstede et al. (2010) refer to the culture as a software of the mind, or otherwise patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting that person learns through the lifetime. Culture is a collective phenomenon and is learnt by human. Since it is easier to learn from the scratch rather than undo previous learning and learn again, the most important years for learning a culture is a childhood. This is a time when human learns patterns of feeling, thinking and acting for the first time. (Hofstede et al., 2010:4–7.) Thus, in a global world when one intends to study a national culture he/she should consider a sample of those individuals who spent their childhood and youth among members of this particular nation.

According to Hofstede et al. (2010) culture consist of few layers (Figure 5). At the core of its heart is values. Values are usually acquired early in life, thus most of them are not visible for outsiders and are subconscious. However, these values can be drawn from the way people act and react under different circumstances. Other layers of culture are practices that can be seen from outside. These are symbols, heroes and rituals. These layers might be easily changed or adopted from other cultures. Even though, parents tend to reproduce what they have learnt through their life, the environment, such as teachers,

fellows, TV idols etc. have an influence on the cultural education as well. (Hofstede et al., 2010:7–11.)

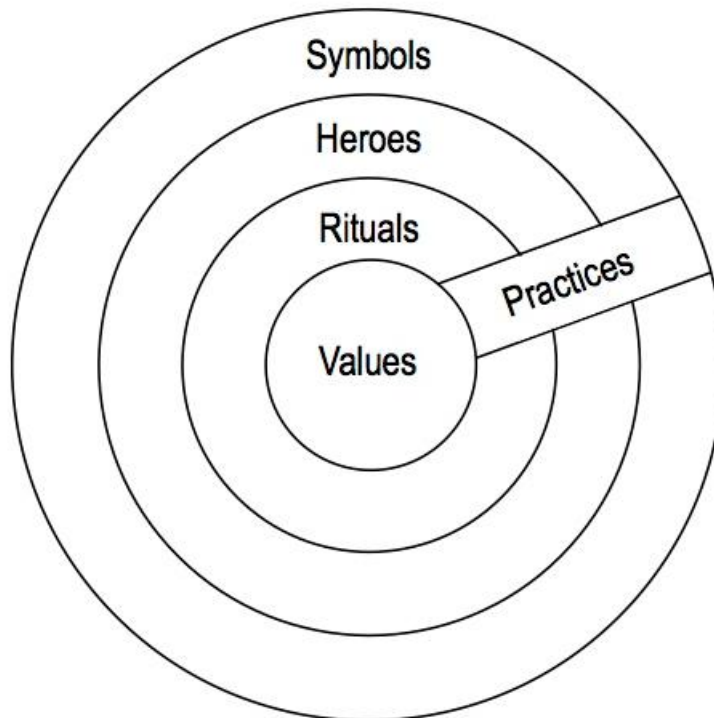


Figure 5. Layers of culture (Hofstede et al., 2010:8).

Often we can notice that people divide others around according to the basic rule “we” and “they”, or otherwise in-group and out-group. Clearly each of us belong to certain groups that would be an in-group for us, while those who does not belong to these groups would form an out-group. Therefore, the groups we belong to constitute different levels of culture. For example there are such levels as national level, regional and/or ethnic level, gender and generation level, social class and corporate and/or department level. (Hofstede et al., 2010:16–18.) This research aims to understand if there are differences in motives in e-WOM creation between representatives of two different countries. Therefore, we would focus on the national level of culture and dimensions that could describe it.

The national culture is claimed to be slowly changeable. The values that are at the core are nearly unchangeable; however, the practices, likewise symbols, heroes and rituals are possible to change. Hofstede et al. (2010) argue that values are learnt at the very early stage of our life and usually transferred from our parents. While practices are acquired at the later stage and are affected by our environment, such as teachers, fellows etc. (Hofstede et al., 2010:18–20.) Therefore, although there are some claims about globalization and, consequently, diminishing of cultural differences, we should expect a generation Y still be mostly different from each other depending on their national identity. This assumption has found a support in the study of Schewe et al. (2013) where authors studied millennials from three different countries. They have concluded that, even though there are some similar values between all of them, on more general level cultural differences remains the same as it is described by Hofstede model.

In the chapter on collectivism Hofstede et al. (2010) acknowledge that cultures shift over the time, however their relativity remains the same. They propose that development happening with most of the countries simultaneously. They take a growth of wealth as an example: if developing countries become wealthier, so do developed countries even though the speed might be slower. Thus, the relative difference on the dimensions would remain similar to the original one. (Hofstede et al., 2010:134.) Thus, consider that all dimensions are measured relatively to each other, we would argue that regardless to the cultural shift over generations the relative differences in cultures would be nearly the same for baby boomers, generation X, or generation Y when they are compared across cultures, not across generations.

As was mentioned earlier, there are exist several models that can be used in cross-cultural studies. However, the Hofstede model is used more frequently than others are (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:87). The Mooij & Hofstede (2010:88) declares several reasons of this phenomenon, likewise classification that is based on the measurement of large amount of countries and easy to understand dimensions. Nevertheless, one should not forget the initial purpose of the research. The research was done as a company-wide study for IBM and aimed to discover country influence on employees' values (Migliore, 2011:40). Therefore, it did not aim to research cultural influence on consumer behavior (Mooij &

Hofstede, 2010:88). Hence, in order to use this model we will have to adapt dimensions to the consumer behavior in a way it would be relevant for the purpose of current research.

The model consist of six dimensions, likewise power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-/short-term orientation and indulgence/restraint, with the scales from zero to hundred for seventy six countries, where every country occupies a position in relation to other countries (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:88).

Power distance (PDI)

“This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” (The Hofstede Centre). Therefore, in terms of the consumer behavior in a large power distance countries the social status and all related attributes are important (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:88).

Individualism/ collectivism (IDV)

In individualistic societies *“individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families”*, while in collectivistic societies the situation is opposite and *“individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty”* (The Hofstede Centre). The individualistic countries are defined by low-context and explicit verbal communication, as well as assumption that their values are universal and equally valid around the world (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:89). While the collectivistic countries are characterized by high-context and indirect communication, where trust between parties and avoiding the loss of face are important (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:89).

Moreover, in individualistic societies the word “I” is used more often, there are more extraverts on average, they tend to show happiness over sadness, consumption shows self-supporting lifestyle, media is a primary source of information and they tend to spend more on health care. While all these points would have an opposite meaning for collectivistic societies, and the primary source of information in these societies would be a social network. (Hofstede et al., 2010:117.) Furthermore, people in individualistic societies more likely to have an access to the internet and e-mail and more often use computer for

shopping, banking and supplying information to public authorities (Hofstede et al., 2010:123).

Masculinity/femininity (MAS)

While societies that are more masculine are striving for “*achievements, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success*”, feminine societies prefer “*cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life*” (The Hofstede Centre). Therefore, in masculine societies the status and things that are connected or emphasizing it are important (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:89).

An interesting finding is that in the feminine countries the difference in values between genders is insignificant or absent, while in masculine countries the gap in gender value is larger (Hofstede et al., 2010:148). This fact could explain a possible difference in answers between male and female interviewee in masculine countries. However, it would be irrelevant in the case of current study, since both countries of interest are feminine.

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)

This dimension “*expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity*” (The Hofstede Centre). With a high score on the uncertainty avoidance there is a need for formalities and rules in society, which leads to a high trust, and belief in experts, while characterize a society as a less exposed to change and innovation (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:89).

In high anxiety cultures, people tend to use a lot of gestures while talking and raise a voice to show emotions, while low-anxiety cultures are less expressive (Hofstede et al., 2010:196). Moreover, in weak UAI societies an experience of novelties is encouraged, while in strong UAI countries people are trying to protect themselves from unknown situations (Hofstede et al., 2010:200–201). This fact could have an influence on platform-related factors. For example, if it would be a completely new platform or unknown tool for sharing and/or creating an e-WOM, consumers from stronger UAI cultures would probably see it as a threat and would be rather discouraged from communicating through this platform or using the tool. Although, cultures with high score on UAI tend to resist changes and be more careful with innovations, they found to perform better in

implementations of innovations (Hofstede et al., 2010:217). However, it does not reduce a level of presumable consciousness towards unfamiliar platforms or tools.

Long-/ short-term orientation (LTO)

This score define the attitude towards past and future of society. Societies that are more short-time oriented “*prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms*” and to avoid societal changes, while those that are more long-time oriented “*encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future*” (The Hofstede Centre).

This dimension is mainly based on the Chinese Value Survey (CVS) that defined 8 important values that were found to correlate with Confucian values (Hofstede et al., 2010:236–240). Due to its origin, this dimension seems to be somewhat confusing. For example, when authors talk about general norms and family, they argue that preserve of face is common to short-term oriented countries (Hofstede et al., 2010:243). However, China, which is famous for protection “one’s face” (Fang, 2003:355), is scored as a long-term oriented country (The Hofstede Centre). Furthermore, it is argued that face is one of the reason for economic growth and motivation behind Chinese hardworking (Fang, 2003:356–357). Furthermore, author indicates that “protecting of face” and sense of shame are connected to each other in Chinese philosophy (Fang, 2003:357), while Hofstede claims it as two opposite values (Hofstede et al., 2010:243). Thus, this aspect could be seen as a contradiction to the findings.

Although, the explanation of business-related differences and ways of thinking in two extremes (Hofstede et al., 2010:251) seems to be more consistent with reality. Furthermore, this dimension was extended based on the World Value Survey, which has western values at its foundation. Due to this change, the score for some countries has changed significantly. Moreover, the new edition of the dimension was measuring fairly different questions compare to the old one. (Hofstede et al., 2010:252–259.) Therefore, in our personal assumption this dimension might lack of consistency.

Our assumptions could find a support in the work of Fang (2003). Author suggests that values that were stated as opposite in Hofstede’s work are not seen as so in Chinese

culture. He also proposes that even if at some point China could be seen as a long-term oriented country, there are studies that shows the opposite orientation as well. Moreover, he points out that Chinese business is rather short-term oriented and respect for traditions is deeply routed in the Chinese philosophy as well as concept of gift giving and favors. (Fang, 2003:355-358.) Overall, the study finds few drawbacks that makes a fifth dimension per se questionable and its application in cross-cultural management limited (Fang, 2003:362–363).

Nevertheless, Minkov & Hofstede (2010) in their article object to Fang's criticism (2003) and reclaim that they did not intend to measure Chinese individuals, but rather how these values from the Chinese Value Survey correlates across different countries (Minkov & Hofstede, 2010:4). Yet, in order to avoid a possibility of negative influence on the quality of current study we would not use this dimension in the analysis of cultural influence.

Indulgence/ restraint (IND)

This dimension was added in 2010 and is based on the research of Michael Minkov (Hofstede & Hofstede). While high score on indulgence means tendency towards enjoying life and having fun, the high score on restraint (or low score on indulgence) shows the tendency towards strict social norms and suppressed needs in society (The Hofstede Centre). The level of indulgence is positively correlated with call for human rights, likewise freedom in opinion expression (Hofstede & Hofstede). Furthermore, it has a positive correlation with such personality traits as positive attitude/cynicism, extroverts/neurotics, optimism/pessimism and amount of people who feel healthy. Apparently, the higher score on indulgence the higher the average level of former trait in each pair of personality traits in society. In more restraint societies, there is a lower importance of leisure and having friends. Authors also found that acceptance of foreign music and films are higher in societies that are more indulgent, as well as more internet and e-mail contacts with foreigners. Moreover, the internet and e-mail is more often used for private contacts in indulgent societies. This dimension could also explain norms in society about smiling. For example in indulgent cultures smiling to stranger as well as smiling political figure who transmits optimism is a norm, while in a restraint cultures this may seems at least awkward or suspicious and at most as a rude mockery. Another aspect that is correlated with this dimension is freedom of speech and maintaining order

in the nation. The higher score on restraint shows the lower importance of freedom of speech and the higher importance of maintaining order in the nation. (Hofstede et al., 2010:280–297.)

Nevertheless this model is the most used for cross-cultural studies (Mooij, Hofstede, & Consultancy, 2011:181), one should always keep in mind certain warnings or drawbacks that might have an influence on the interpretation of results and general use in certain areas. First, some interpretations of dimensions are work-related, while other could be applied in unrelated areas, likewise advertising and consumer behavior (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:102). Sometimes the combination of various dimensions explains specific consumer behavior patterns rather than just one dimension independently (Mooij et al., 2011:182). Moreover, we should not forget such pitfalls like misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the results and/or dimensions and effect of the researcher's cultural bias (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:102).

3.2. Cross-cultural analysis of the chosen countries

According to the Hofstede model, Russian and Finnish cultures are very distant to each other (The Hofstede Centre). The utmost differences can be seen in such dimension as power distance, individualism, long-term orientation and indulgence (Appendix 3). Although, the score on uncertainty avoidance can be considered quite different, both countries are striving to avoid ambiguity. Thus, this difference would not play a significant role in terms of cultural differences. In this analysis, we would not consider a long-/short-term orientation dimension for the reasons that were mentioned in the previous sub-chapter. Visual comparison of the countries' scores on dimensions can be found in the Figure 6.

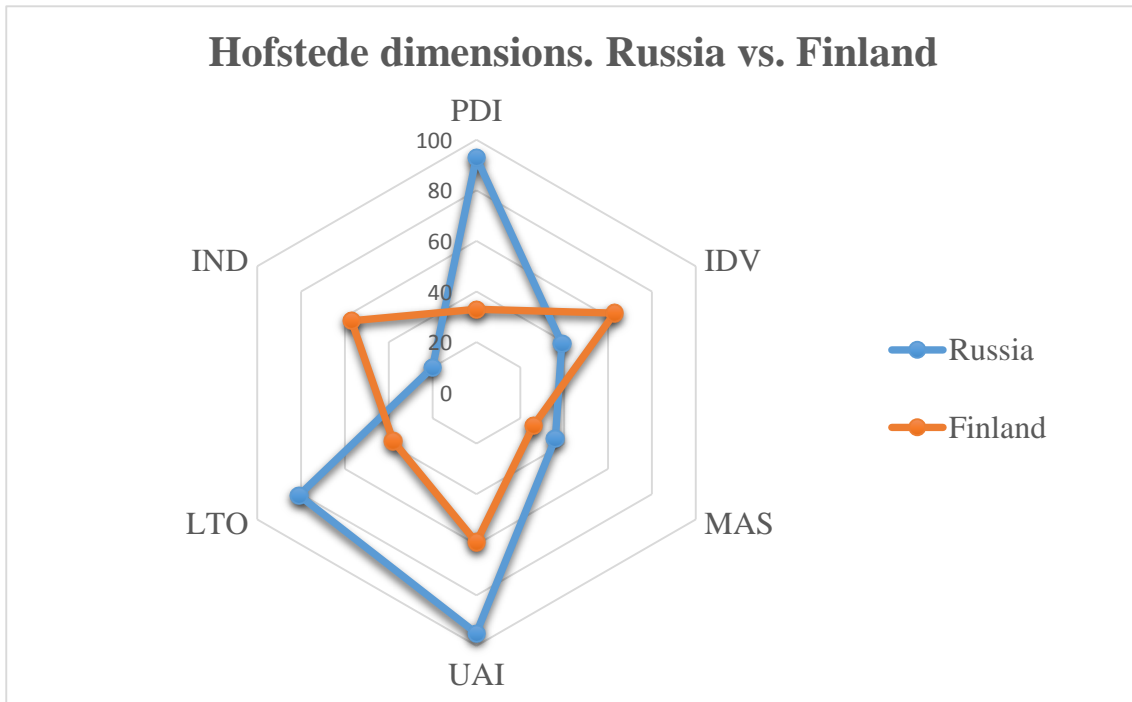


Figure 6. Hofstede dimensions for Russia in comparison with Finland (The Hofstede Centre).

Further, we will present analysis of both cultures based on the description of each dimension and information that is used on the “The Hofstede Centre” web-page to clarify descriptions against country’s scores.

The difference in PDI dimension tells us that while status symbols and related behavior are highly important in Russia, Finland favor a flat hierarchy, direct communication and equality (The Hofstede Centre). Thus, we might expect that Russian participants would be more likely driven by those motives that are related to the ego-defensiveness and image-enhancement, while for Finnish participants those motives would be less in numbers, or not a prior driving force.

With low score on IDV Russia is clearly a collectivistic country where relationships are important and likely to include not only a closest ties but also relationships with neighbors, colleagues and others. Finland, however, is an individualistic country what emphasize an importance of relationship with only immediate families and less importance of others. (The Hofstede Centre.) Thus, we would expect Finnish participants

have less motives related to the caring about others except their close ties, while Russians would probably be driven by different dimensions of altruism, such as caring for close ties, fellow consumers and even businesses.

Scores on the MAS dimensions are quite similar for both countries, what makes Russia and Finland rather feminine cultures (The Hofstede Centre). Nevertheless, this dimension in Finland is consistent with PDI, these two dimensions in combination would might increase a probability of altruistic and social-motives regardless the score on IDV dimension. Meantime, in Russia it might have a different moderate effect on motives of participants. In combination with high score on PDI, this would mean that even though the status is important in Russia, the dominance is not really accepted between peers that are on the same stage in a hierarchy (The Hofstede Centre). Thus, it could lessen the importance of motives that are related to the self- and image-enhancement and increase the probability of the social- and altruism-related motives.

With scores on UAI dimensions both countries have preferences for uncertainty avoidance what makes them striving for rules and being more rigid in terms of changes and innovations acceptance (The Hofstede Centre). This may have an influence on platform-related factors that may either prevent or facilitate information sharing. Moreover, consumers also might be striving for an advice seeking in case they have faced any difficulties that are related to the products or services. Nevertheless, with extremely high score for Russia and in combination with low score on IDV dimension it may also play an opposite role for an advice-seeking motive. The score on UAI dimension makes Russians very formal and distant with strangers, while the score on collectivism makes them prone to preserve their face especially in front of strangers (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010:89). Thus, they might show the same reaction as Chinese consumers that is described in the study by Shen et al. (2011:5–6) and reject a possibility to seek an advice from the stranger in the internet.

Scores on the IND dimension clear show that Russia in contrast to Finland is a restrained country. Thus, Russians are likely to be more influenced by society and social norms, while Finns are more inclined to act as they please (The Hofstede Centre). This fact could have an effect on the level of possible influence of reference groups on Russian and Finnish consumers. It also might have a reflection on motives for negative e-WOM

initiation and show a difference in motives similar to the one that was found in work of Cheung et al. (2007). Even though the study was done in context of China and USA, these countries show similar relativity in scores on IND dimension to Russia and Finland (The Hofstede Centre). The difference would be reflected in fact that Finnish consumers would probably pursue more materialistic motives, likewise seeking compensation, while Russian consumers would strive for more ego-defensive motives, like seeking retaliation.

To conclude, we would expect motives in e-WOM initiation to differ depending on the cultural identity of consumers we would conduct interviews with.

3.3. Theoretical framework

In this sub-chapter, we would combine a theory of planned behavior with existed motives of WOM and e-WOM initiation in order to define factors that might possibly influence a deliberate activity of e-WOM creation. Than we would assess these motives against cultural differences that might have a moderate effect on motives in question. Thus, it will give us an understanding of the possible motives for e-WOM generating that we would most likely find during interviews with consumers from two countries, Finland and Russia.

Blazevic et al. (2013:297) in their research have noted that self-enhancement recently was perceived as one of the fundamental motives for WOM initiation. Indeed, if we take a look at the motivational research that we have reviewed previously, we would find such motive as self-enhancement in nearly each of them (Sundaram et al., 1998; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Alexandrov et al., 2013). In some cases self-enhancement was included in or named as a self-involvement (Dichter, 1966; Wolny & Mueller, 2013); value-expressive function (Daugherty et al., 2007) or expressing sense of achievement (Cheung et al., 2007) might also be related to the self-enhancement motive. (Table 2).

Table 2. Studies that include a self-enhancement motive.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
<i>Self-enhancement</i>	<i>Self-enhancement</i>	Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E.	WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the scenario	USA
		Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany
		Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C.	WOM	Critical incident technique	USA
		Blazevic, V., Hammedi, W., Garnefeld, I., Rust, R. T., Keiningham, T., Andreassen, T. W., ... Carl, W.	WOM/e-WOM	Model of customer-driven influence, synthesis of theory	Europe
	<i>Self-involvement</i>	Dichter, E.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA
		Wolny, J., & Mueller, C	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the self-administrated internet-based questionnaire	UK
	<i>Value-expressing function</i>	Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S., & Bright, L	UGC	Test of hypotheses based on the online survey	USA
	<i>Expressing sense of achievement</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China

Another factor that is found to be influential is a group association, or in other words volunteering desire to conform to the norms of group that person wants to be associated with (Blazevic et al., 2013:298). This statement would be in accordance with the normative influence on the consumers' intention to perform a behavior in a theory of planned behavior. Thus, we would expect this factor to be emphasized by those people who would like to associate themselves with certain social groups. This factor also found a support in the study of Alexandrov et al. (2013) as a need for social bonding. (Table 3).

Table 3. Studies that are related to the subjective norm in the TPB.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
<i>Subjective norm</i>	<i>Group association</i>	Blazevic, V., Hammedi, W., Garnefeld, I., Rust, R. T., Keiningham, T., Andreassen, T. W., ... Carl, W.	WOM/e-WOM	Model of customer-driven influence, synthesis of theory	Europe
	<i>Need for social bonding</i>	Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E.	WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the scenario	USA

If companies are trying to encourage WOM by conducting different consumer programs that assumes a certain reward in return for the WOM initiation, clearly main motive here would be a material reward (Blazevic et al., 2013:298). This motive was found in the work of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) as an economic rewards, or in the cross-national study as motives for sharing a negative WOM by USA consumers, like seeking correction/compensation or seeking bargaining power (Cheung et al., 2007). However, we should note that neither a motive of seeking bargaining power nor the one of seeking correction/compensation necessarily mean an economic benefit, but any kind of gain that consumer would expect to obtain with the help of WOM or e-WOM initiation. Nevertheless, we would still consider such motives as a part of this group because any

kind of gain that is expected in return for the WOM or e-WOM initiation would be obtained from the company. Thus, this group includes consumer-company relationship alone. (Table 4).

Table 4. Studies that include a material reward as a motive.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
Material reward	<i>Material reward</i>	Blazevic, V., Hammedi, W., Garnefeld, I., Rust, R. T., Keiningham, T., Andreassen, T. W., ... Carl, W.	WOM/e-WOM	Model of customer-driven influence, synthesis of theory	Europe
	<i>Economic reward</i>	Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany
	<i>Seeking correction/compensation</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China
	<i>Seeking bargaining power</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China

One more reason to share an information about companies, products and/or services can be an expression of consumers' identity (Blazevic et al., 2013:298). Indeed, according to the self-concept, things that we possess or any other external objectives comprise our extended self (Solomon et al., 2013:160). As well as self-enhancement, this motive can be considered as a part of self-involvement (Dichter, 1966; Wolny & Mueller, 2013) or value-expressive function (Daugherty et al., 2007). However, the study of Daugherty et al. (2007) showed a negative correlation between value-expressive function of attitude and consumers' attitude towards UGC. Moreover, we did not find any other supportive motives in the reviewed studies, except possible relation of self-involvement that is

proposed by Dichter (1966). Yet, we would like to test if this motive is considered by any of interviewed consumers. (Table 5).

Table 5. Studies that include expression of one's identity motive.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
<i>Expression of one's identity</i>	<i>Expression of consumer's identity</i>	Blazevic, V., Hammedi, W., Garnefeld, I., Rust, R. T., Keiningham, T., Andreassen, T. W., ... Carl, W.	WOM/e-WOM	Model of customer-driven influence, synthesis of theory	Europe
	<i>Self-involvement</i>	Dichter, E.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA
		Wolny, J., & Mueller, C	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the self-administrated internet-based questionnaire	UK
	<i>Value-expressive function</i>	Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S., & Bright, L	UGC	Test of hypothesis based on the online survey	USA

Another big group of motives can be named as an altruism. Cheung et al. (2007) in their work argue that they identified three dimensions of altruism: towards those with close ties, fellow consumers and business. However, according to our review these types of altruism were also discovered in other works. For example, a desire to help the company was noted in works of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) and Sundaram et al. (1998), while

more general category like help to others, or altruism towards others was mentioned by Alexandrov et al. (2013), Dichter (1966) and Sundaram et al. (1998). Concern particularly for other consumers was found in study of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004). Besides, other-involvement that was found in the work of Dichter (1966) and later was used in the study on fashion consumers by Wolny & Mueller (2013) could be related to the altruism as well. According to Dichter (1966) this category of involvement includes need and intend to share the information with and to help others. Based on this summary, we would suggest that Cheung et al. (2007) combined these dimensions of altruism together in one research rather than actually identified them as new factors. Interesting discovery made Goldenberg et al. (2001:217) in their work, where they found that the speed of diffusion of product-, brand- or service-related information shared by consumers is at least equally affected by weak ties as well as strong ties. Thus, we could expect that one of altruism dimensions would be found for consumers from both cultures. (Table 6).

Table 6. Studies that include altruism motive.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
Altruism	<i>Towards company/business</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China
		Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany
		Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C.	WOM	Critical incident technique	USA
	<i>Towards others</i>	Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E.	WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the scenario	USA
		Dichter, E.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA
		Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C.	WOM	Critical incident technique	USA

<i>Towards fellow/other consumers</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China
	Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany
<i>Other-involvement</i>	Dichter, E.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA
	Wolny, J., & Mueller, C	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the self-administrated internet-based questionnaire	UK
<i>Towards those with strong ties</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China

Other motives could be arranged into two major groups such as social- and self-motives as was done in the work of Alexandrov et al. (2013). One of the component of other-involvement is a need or intend for sharing information (Dichter, 1966), similar motive, share social information, was found in the study of Alexandrov et al. (2013) as a part of social-motives. Another social motive that can be found in several works is a need for social interaction, or opportunity to interact with friends (Daugherty et al., 2007; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). In the social-motives could be also included such motives as need for social comparison (Alexandrov et al., 2013) and social benefits (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). (Table 7).

Table 7. Studies that include other social-motives.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
		Dichter, E.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA

Other social-motives	<i>Share (social) information</i>	Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E.	WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the scenario	USA
	<i>Social interaction/ interaction with friends</i>	Wolny, J., & Mueller, C	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the self-administrated internet-based questionnaire	UK
		Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S., & Bright, L	UGC	Test of hypothesis based on the online survey	USA
	<i>Need for social comparison</i>	Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E.	WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the scenario	USA
	<i>Social benefits</i>	Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany

The range of self-motives is wider than social one. One of the most common self-motive that could be found in literature is a seeking confirmation of own judgments, or self-affirmation (Dichter, 1966; Cheung et al., 2007; Shen et al., 2011; Alexandrov et al., 2013). Another widely known motive is advice seeking (Hennig- Sundaram et al., 1998; Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung et al., 2007; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). We could also include here a group of emotion- or feeling-related motives such as seeking therapeutic effect (Cheung et al., 2007), expressing or sharing positive feelings or emotions and venting negative one, or anxiety reduction (Sundaram et al., 1998; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Shen et al., 2011). (Table 8).

Table 8. Studies that include other self-motives.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
Other self-motives	<i>Seeking confirmation of own judgement/self-affirmation</i>	Alexandrov, A., Lilly, B., & Babakus, E.	WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the scenario	USA
		Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China
		Dichter, E.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA
		Shen, W., Cai, J., & Li, L.	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the questionnaire	China
	<i>Advice seeking</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China
		Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany
		Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C.	WOM	Critical incident technique	USA
		Wolny, J., & Mueller, C	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the self-administrated internet-based questionnaire	UK
	<i>Seeking therapeutic effect</i>	Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China
	<i>Expressing/sharing positive feelings/</i>	Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany

<i>emotions; venting negative feelings/emotions, anxiety reduction</i>	Shen, W., Cai, J., & Li, L.	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the questionnaire	China
	Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C.	WOM	Critical incident technique	USA

There is a common motive which is mentioned in the fundamental works of Dichter, (1966) and Sundaram et al. (1998) – product involvement. However, based on the study of fashion industry-specific motivations (Wolny & Mueller, 2013), we would like to make this group wider and name it more general as a category-related factors, which could evidently include brand-, product- and industry- (for example, fashion involvement (Wolny & Mueller, 2013)) involvement. (Table 9).

Table 9. Studies that include category-related factors.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
<i>Category-related factors</i>	<i>Brand-, product-, industry-involvement</i>	Dichter, E.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA
		Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C.	WOM	Critical incident technique	USA
		Wolny, J., & Mueller, C	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the self-administrated internet-based questionnaire	UK

There are also motives that are related to the negative WOM initiation and can be found in fundamental work of Sundaram et al. (1998) and later in a cross-national research of Cheung et al. (2007), which is vengeance or seeking retaliation. (Table 10).

Table 10. Studies that include vengeance-related motives.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
<i>Vengeance-related motives</i>	<i>Vengeance/ seeking retaliation</i>	Sundaram, D. S., Mitra, K., & Webster, C.	WOM	Critical incident technique	USA
		Cheung, M.-S., Anitsal, M., & Anitsal, I.	WOM	In-depth interviews	USA vs. China

Some research on e-WOM showed that the web-related factors, such as convenience or type of the platform could play a moderating role in the motivation for e-WOM initiation (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Shen et al., 2011). For example, Shen et al. (2011:5) noticed that motives could vary depending on the type of web-platform either it is a retail website or network community. We could relate these factors to the facilitating conditions of perceived behavioral control. Moreover, due to focus of our study on millennials and according to their definition as “digital natives” we would suggest that second dimension of the behavioral control, self-efficacy, would be irrelevant in this case. Thus, we would not consider it for drawing a model; however, we do not refuse an opportunity to discover it as a motive during interviews. (Table 11).

Table 11. Studies that are related to the perceived behavioral control from the TPB.

Group of motives	Motives	Author	Type of marketing communication	Research methodology	Country of study
<i>Perceived behavioral control</i>	<i>Convenience/ type of the platform</i>	Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D.	e-WOM	Online questionnaire	Germany
		Shen, W., Cai, J., & Li, L.	e-WOM	Test of hypotheses based on the questionnaire	China

As we mentioned earlier in this sub-chapter, here we would also discuss a possible cultural influence on the motivational factors. However, the assumed influence can be found in the cross-cultural analysis that we performed earlier. Nevertheless, in this sub-chapter we would list cultural influence on the motivation that were discovered in previous research. In the sub-chapter about previous studies on motivation, we have mentioned two main research that found a support for cultural influence on motives to initiate WOM or e-WOM.

One of these studies was a cross-cultural study of Cheung et al., (2007) where authors examined motives to initiate WOM for Chinese and American consumers. Most of these motives were similar and applied for both groups of consumers. However, authors also found that certain motives were different; or rather, Chinese consumers were driven by bigger number of motives in terms of positive WOM initiation, while Americans were motivated by additional factors when initiating a negative WOM. (Cheung et al., 2007:241.)

Apart from those motives that were even for both groups, Chinese consumers were also driven by two additional motives such as seeking confirmation of own judgment and advice seeking. Authors explained differences in a positive WOM due to collectivism/individualism dimension of Hofstede. According to the fact that China is a collectivistic country, authors argue that they are less inclined to pursue an independency in opinion and self-sufficiency. (Cheung et al., 2007:241, 244–245.) Thus, they tend to seek an opinion of others as an advice or confirmation of their own judgements.

Meantime, the difference in motives of negative WOM initiation reflected in seeking retaliation for Chinese consumers and in seeking correction/compensation or bargaining power for consumers from USA. On one hand, it was explained due to differences in the market development. However, on the other hand these differences were defined by difference in score on one of the GLOBE's dimensions, assertiveness. It is argued that USA consumers as an assertive society by initiating a negative WOM were trying to gain control over the situation and consequently get a compensation for an unpleasant situation, or simply use it in a bargaining means. While, less assertive society like China,

tend to pursue more fatalistic view on life events and, therefore, were searching for simple retaliation by initiating a negative WOM. (Cheung et al., 2007:241, 244–245.)

Another study that was aiming to understand a role of culture in motivation for e-WOM initiation was a research of Shen et al. (2011). In this research, authors studied a motivation for e-WOM initiation of Chinese consumers alone. This research was based on the study of Cheung et al. (2007). Thus, most of the similarities were explained as a means of same cultural differences. However, there was one significant difference; authors did not find a support for an advice-seeking motive. The explanation is derived from the combination of peculiarities of e-WOM concept and cultural specify. As it was discussed earlier, due to the fact that e-WOM takes place in the internet, the audience quite often is unfamiliar with each other. On the other hand, China, as a collectivistic country would strive for protection of “face” especially in front of the strangers. Thus, using an internet space for WOM initiation reduce the probability for Chinese consumers to seek an advice from strangers. (Shen et al., 2011.)

To conclude, we would like to note that these two studies provide an evidence of cultural influence on motivation for e-WOM initiation. Thus, we would expect to find this influence in our study as well.

In order to build a model that might suggest a possible outcome of the future study, we would like to relate motives that were discovered in other studies and are described above and TPB model that was analyzed earlier. According to the functional theory of attitudes, the attitudes serve certain functions for the person, or otherwise they are defined by motives (Solomon et al., 2013:293). Moreover, as was mentioned earlier, the TPB is based on the TRA, which assume that person performs reasoned actions, or have reasons in mind to perform a certain behavior. Thus, attitude as an antecedent of the behavior is formed according to those reasons. This fact is clearly shown in the statement that two people can have the same attitude for different reasons (Solomon et al., 2013:293).

To summarize, we would suggest that the groups of motives that were discussed above, as well as subjective norm and perceived behavioral control would be an assumed antecedents of positive and/or negative e-WOM initiation. Moreover, these factors would

be influenced by national culture as it was discussed earlier. A visual construction of the summary can be found in the Figure 7.

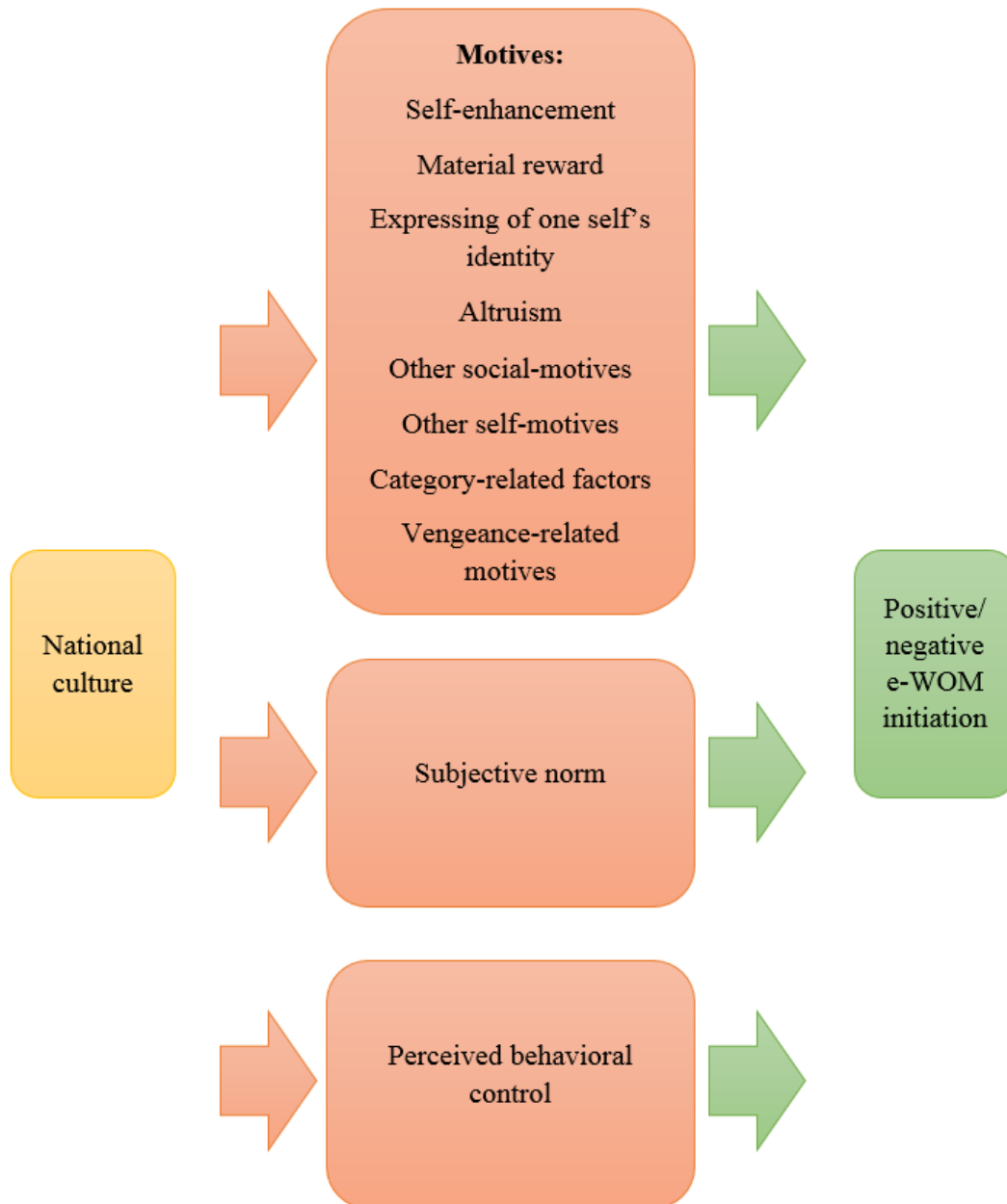


Figure 7. Theoretical framework.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to the research question and desire to discover the difference in consumer motivation between two national cultures, this study would be of exploratory type. We would like to understand why consumers create and/or share brand-, product- or service-related information with others on the internet and how does culture affects this desire. Thus, this would be classified as a qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009:321). One of the most suitable method for this type of research is semi-structured or in-depth interview (Saunders et al., 2009:320). The semi-structured interviews are guided by preliminary defined theme and questions, however these questions might be changed during the interview, as well as the order of questions (Saunders et al., 2009:320). The in-depth interviews sometimes are also referred as informant interviews, because they are guided by interviewee's perception (Saunders et al., 2009:321).

Our study would be based on motivational factors that were studied in previous research. However, since we are aiming to find a difference and/or similarities between two cultures in terms of motivation for e-WOM initiation, we would like to leave a space for uncontrolled variables that might define new angles or domination of certain factors, or even discover unknown motives.

There are two extreme of data analysis in qualitative research: deductive and inductive. In deductive approach, a researcher makes a use of existing theories to form research question and objectives before the data collection. The conducted research is based on the theoretical background. While the inductive approach is used in the opposite way. The researcher conducts data collection first and then extracts theory, hypothesis and research question from this data. (Saunders et al., 2009:489–490.)

However, we would suggest that the approach of current study would be a mix of deductive and inductive approaches (Saunders et al., 2009:127). As it was mentioned above, this study would be based on previous research in motivation in WOM, e-WOM or UGC initiation where a certain motivational factors have been defined. This paper would be more focused on exploring the cultural influence of motivation for e-WOM initiation rather than searching for new motives. However, there is a possibility to discover new motives or angles that were not found in previous research. Thus, even

though the study would be based on the existing theory, we would leave a room for the new discovery and possible addition of this theory.

Therefore, taking into consideration the specificity of our research, we think that the semi-structured interview would be the most suitable method. According to this method and our research question and objectives, the sampling would be chosen with a non-probability technic (Saunders et al., 2009:233). Moreover, taking into consideration an exploratory purpose of the research and difficulty with identifying a suitable sampling we would use a self-selected sampling technic (Saunders et al., 2009:234, 241).

4.1. Data collection

According to the methodology described above, we have focused on the self-selected sampling technic, which assumed to interview those participants who fits certain criteria and shows the willingness to participate in the interview. According to our theoretical framework, it supposed to be people from the same generation, generation Y, and represent two different cultures – Finnish and Russian cultures. Moreover, due to author's background, all respondents would have a university degree or about to obtain one. These respondents assumed to have an experience in posting any kind of products', services' or companies' reviews or repost product-, service- or company-related information or being involved in any other way in e-WOM initiation. Thus, we assumed that our sampling could be defined as fairly homogeneous and twelve interviews could be enough to produce a sufficient analysis (Saunders et al., 2009:235).

We have started to collect the information from Russian respondents. An announcement about research was transmitted through few different sources. We posted an announcement in different student groups on the Russian social network vk.com, a professor from the university where author obtained her Bachelor's Degree was contacted on this matter and we asked to spread the information a fellow professor from one of the university in Moscow. However, only the latter source appeared to be efficient and provided five out of six interviewees. Thus, five out of six respondents were currently residing in Moscow, while the only one respondent was from the author's hometown,

Kazan and was asked personally by interviewer. However, all of them were from the European part of Russia what makes a little possibility for respondents to belong to distant regional cultural sub-groups.

Four out of six interviewees appeared to be students of one of the university in Moscow, while two more respondents have graduated and were currently employed. Most of the interviewees in Russian group were females and their main platform for e-WOM initiation was Russian social network vk.com. (See Table 12.).

Table 12. Summary of the Russian respondents.

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Platform	Length of the interview
R1	male	21	student	banki.ru	13:47
R2	male	22	student	vk.com	20:38
R3	female	21	working student	vk.com	08:37
R4	female	27	young professional	vk.com	19:05
R5	female	21	working student	vk.com	10:35
R6	female	22	young professional	vk.com	16:38

We have decided to code every interview as you can see in Table 12. Further interviews with Finnish group would be coded as well. The code consists of the letter that represents a first letter of the country and a number of interview in chronological order. These codes would be used as a reference for quotations to make the data analysis more structured and clear.

Finnish respondents were searched through interviewer local network and students' groups and organizations on the facebook.com. However, only former source gave satisfactory results and we managed to find five interviewees, who was willing to give an

interview, instead of six as was intended. All respondents were either a former classmates of the interviewee or her fellows. Therefore, most of them were located in Vaasa what provided an opportunity to conduct face-to-face interviews. Except one interviewee, who resides in the eastern part of country. Thus, most of the interviews were face-to-face format, while only one was held via skype. All of them were either students or working students. The variety of platforms used by respondents for e-WOM initiation were wider than for Russian speaking group. Most of the respondents have used other platforms than their own social network pages. The gender composition was similar to Russian speaking group. One of the respondents could recall two completely different cases of the e-WOM initiation, one was about initiation of a positive e-WOM and another one was about negative one. Thus, we have decided to separate these two cases in our table that summarizes information about interviewees (see the interview F2 in the Table 13).

Table 13. Summary of the Finnish respondents.

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Platform	Length of the interview
F1	female	24	student	facebook.com	14:13
F2	male	24	student	airlinequality.com	15:08
				tripadvisor.com	
F3	male	26	working student	personal blog	15:39
F4	female	23	student	e-commerce web-site	15:55
F5	female	25	working student	facebook.com	19:51

Further with each participant was conducted a non-standardized one-to-one interview. The interviews with Russian participants were conducted via skype due to different geographical location of interviewer and interviewees. However, interviews with Finns were mainly face-to-face with only one exception. As was discussed above, interviews were semi-structured what assumed a list of questions to follow with adaptations made

depending on the conversation flow. Nevertheless, according to the theoretical framework, we had three main topics to explore – motives that lead an e-WOM initiation and the possible influence of platform characteristics and subjective norms on the decision of performing e-WOM initiation.

Every interview consisted of the open questions that were related to three main topics that we aimed to explore, likewise motives in e-WOM initiation and influence of the platform-related factors and subjective norms on the decision about e-WOM initiation. Participants were asked to talk freely about their experience; however, during the interview we were adding some probing questions. These questions were used when participants did not focus on matters that were interesting and important for the current research, or to clarify meanings and insights in their answers. Some closed questions were used as well. First, we used them in the beginning of every interview to obtain a demographic information about respondents. Second, we use them as well as probing questions to examine our conclusions. Interviews were recorded after obtaining a permission from interviewees. All respondents were agreed with the recording of interview. Shortly after each interview, record was transcribed into paper form.

The interviews were really short in time and took fifteen minutes on average (see Table 12 and Table 13). We explain this short time due to the fact that respondents could recall one significant case that they were referring to through the interview; otherwise, all cases were similar with similar motives. Another reason might be the fact that interviewer had a list of questions and themes that she was interested in, thus, the interview was focused around these topics and excluded possibility for conversations on vaguely related topics.

All interviews with Russian participants were held in Russian language, while interviews with Finns were held in English. The transcription was done in the language of interview. However, all quotations were translated in the language of current research in order to use it in the text as a support for our findings. The translation did not cause any additional obstacles since Russian language is a mother tongue of the interviewer and English is a language of studies. Thus, interviewer has a sufficient knowledge of both languages in order to translate freely the interviews. The list of questions and themes is provided in English and can be find in the Appendix 4. Russian respondents were asked exactly same questions but in their native language.

4.2. Data analysis

The data analysis would be based only on the data that was derived from the interviews. There would be no secondary data used in the analysis, neither there would be any specific software used to analyze the data. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter we would use a mix of deductive and inductive approach. Thus, data would be analyzed accordingly using a mixed method, likewise deductively and inductively based analytical procedures (Saunders et al., 2009:500–503).

Based on the theoretical framework the analysis would be divided into several parts. First, we would analyze motives that we derived from the interviews. These motives would be compared to the background theories. This part of the analysis would be based on the deductively based approach (Saunders et al., 2009:500–502). However, we would also analyze these motives in context of interviews what would represent an inductively based approach to the analysis of data (Saunders et al., 2009:502–503). Second, we would analyze the role of web platforms and subjective norms in the e-WOM initiation process. Third, information would be grouped according to the national culture of the respondents and any differences or similarities that would evolve from the interviews would be assessed according to the Hofstede cultural dimensions.

4.3. Reliability and validity

Certain data quality issues are related to the semi-structured interview, likewise reliability, forms of bias, validity and generalizability. Forms of bias are divided into two groups, the interviewer and interviewee bias. The former is related to the interviewer behavior during the interview. Everything matters here, likewise tone, comments or even non-verbal behavior. (Saunders et al., 2009:326.) Here we would provide detailed information about how the interviews were conducted.

First, we should point that interviewer did not give any comments on any answers that she received from the respondents in order to lower a risk of influencing the outcome

based on the way interviewer interacts with the interviewee (Saunders et al., 2009:324). Moreover, we were asking additional questions to clarify any vague answers if it was necessary. By doing so, we were trying to keep interviewees and their answers free from our personal knowledge and opinion and make sure that all insights were understood correctly.

Furthermore, interviews with Russian respondents were conducted via skype without video-call option. Therefore, the only bias option that could influence the interview was voice-related, likewise tone and intonation. However, with Finnish respondents the non-verbal behavior could also be an influential factor due to the face-to-face nature of interviews. However, all Finnish respondents and interviewer knew each other personally, what helped both sides, interviewer and respondent, to feel free during the interview and reduced a possibility for personal barriers between them.

Another bias is an interviewee bias that could be caused by perception of the interviewer and his/her behavior and perception of the research matter (Saunders et al., 2009:326–327). This bias could also be related to the sampling choice and the willingness of participants to interact due to the time consumption for example (Saunders et al., 2009:327). However, in case of current study this would be not relevant due to the self-selected sampling tactic, which means that participants choose for themselves to participate based on the description and requirements of research.

Another issue could be related to the language of the interview. The interviews with Russian participants were conducted in their native language (Russian) and the interviewer was a native speaker as well. Thus, no language issues could be related to this group of participants. Meanwhile, the situation with Finnish participants was different. The interviewer did not possess the sufficient knowledge of Finnish language; therefore, all interviews were conducted in English. However, all participants were either studying in English and/or had an experience of living in a foreign country with little or no knowledge of the local language what made English the main language for communication. Thus, the proficiency in English language for all participants was enough to conduct interviews freely and with clear understanding of information that is asked or expressed. To conclude, we would suggest that no language issues have influenced the data that was collected during interviews.

The reliability of the data could be a big issue in the non-standardized interviews. However, as was mentioned above, in order to clarify meanings and insights as well as our conclusions we used probing questions and closed questions. Therefore, everything that could have double or unclear meaning was clarified by respondents during interviews. Moreover, in order to increase credibility of the data at the beginning of every interview respondents were familiarized with the concept of e-WOM and how it could be related to their personal experience. They were also informed that they could ask any questions if any terms and/or questions of the interviewer would be unclear or unfamiliar. Moreover, the interview did not consist of any topics that could be considered as sensitive by the respondents and we deliberately avoided a use of specific terminology in order to reduce possible biases.

Moreover, in order to improve a research quality we applied several methods. First, we built a theoretical framework based on the previous research in the area. Upon this theoretical framework, we built our research. Thus, all findings are backed up with previous studies. Second, we recorded all interviews in order to make sure that we did not miss any important data at the stage of analysis and that the data is interpreted correctly. Third, we provide direct quotes from the interviews at the stage of analysis in order to reveal how we built up a data interpretation.

Nevertheless, we should admit that we could not obtain all possible cases of motivation for e-WOM initiation. First, we did not deliberately focus on certain type of e-WOM, thus we obtained only two cases of negative WOM and two cases of neutral out of twelve cases in total. Furthermore, most of the interviewees could recall only one significant case, or few nearly identical cases. Only one person out of eleven respondents could recall two completely different cases. Besides, due to the time and resource limitation we were not able to collect information until the data saturation. Thus, we admit that our data might be partly incomplete.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIVES, SUBJECTIVE NORM AND PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL

In this chapter, we would provide a detailed analysis of our findings in accordance with theoretical framework that was described in theoretical part of the current work. As was mentioned above, in order to enhance the quality of data we would provide quotes of answers from our interviewees on the related matters. Moreover, as we talked earlier, we would reference every quote with the code that was assigned to every interview in the tables of summary in the sub-chapter on data collection. The structure of presented analysis would repeat the structure of theoretical framework and consist of the analysis of each part, likewise motives, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and cultural influence.

5.1. Analysis of motives, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control

We should point that we have not found any new or undiscovered motives during our interviews. Moreover, according to the research question and objectives of the study we did not focus on any particular type of e-WOM, likewise positive or negative. Thus, we had both cases, although we found just two cases of negative e-WOM initiation out of the total twelve cases that we have researched. However, we found a minor difference in a type of e-WOM initiated by those who pursued an economic motive in their decision.

Analysis of motives

We would start with cases that are related to the initiation of the negative e-WOM. Both of the respondents were male students, but one was from Russia, while another respondent was Finn. Russian case was about one of the Russian banks. The platform that was used for this purpose was independent Russian platform that was collecting information and reviews about different banks in the country, as well as providing ratings based on different criteria and other bank-related information. The main motive here was outraged emotions that interviewee experienced due to poor customer service of the bank. He mentioned:

“I left a negative review not just because there was a problem, but this problem appeared because people have no idea how to work.” (R1)

However, when the interviewer asked about the goal of the negative review and what did he aim to reach, the respondent answered:

“Well, my purpose was to warn other people about poor customer service and help them to avoid such situations as I have faced by staying away from this bank.” (R1)

As we understood, the respondent did not even believe that could have an influence on the customer service of this bank with his negative review. On the question about bank’s reaction on his negative review, interviewee said:

“If the bank has such a poor customer service, you cannot expect anything from them. I have received some typical answer that they apologize and hope to continue cooperative relationship.” (R1)

Thus, we would assume that apart from venting negative feelings it was purely altruistic motivation. Both motives are consistent with previous research and could be found in the theoretical framework. One would be included in the group of altruistic motives, while venting negative feelings would belong to other self-motives group.

Another case of the initiation of negative e-WOM was found among Finnish interviewees. Participant that has told about this experience left a negative review of the main airport of one of the European countries. He was surprised main airport of the country has no free working Wi-Fi connection. The respondent was traveling through this airport and had spent there some hours due to the transit connection. He had some certain plans that were included the use of internet connection. Thus, he was disappointed with the fact that the airport did not have working Wi-Fi connection. He said:

“I think it is a prime problem when the main airport of the country has no working Wi-Fi connection. Wi-Fi connection is one of the main service that airport can offer to travelers.” (F2)

However, he did not experience outraged feelings about this fact; it was rather a disappointment because of the unrealized expectations. Thus, he did not aim to vent

negative feelings by providing a negative review, but rather use it as an argument in convincing company to fix the problem. He pointed:

“I felt like if I submit a review and also send a constructive feedback to the person who can actually do something about it, the problem would be fixed over time. I did both – send an e-mail and left a feedback. In the e-mail, I have mentioned the negative review that I have left.

Eventually they replied on my e-mail with acknowledgement that this problem needs to be fixed to prevent further negative reviews... I told them that if they would send me a follow up about fixing a problem I would delete my negative review.” (F2)

Thus, we would say that in this case the negative review served a purpose to gain a bargaining power in negotiations. This motive would fall into category of material reward motives, even though the respondent did not seek for an economic compensation, and would be in consistence with the seeking bargaining power motive in the work of Cheung et al. (2007). In this case, the interviewee had a purely rational and somewhat materialistic motive, he was pushing airport to fix the problem he has faced:

“I wanted to give a constructive feedback...I do not want to publicly scrutinize the company...I do not blame them I just want this problem to be fixed.” (F2)

For this purpose, the interviewee used an independent industry-related web site Skytrax that has a database of all airlines and airports, as well as providing reviews and ratings of those airlines and airports. This platform in its idea is similar to the one that was described by Russian respondent earlier, but it is related to another industry. (See Table 14).

Table 14. Summary of the interviews about negative e-WOM initiation.

#	Gender	Age	Nationality	Platform	Type Of e-WOM	Motive(s)
1	Male	21	Russian	Web site-database about banks	Negative	Venting negative feelings, altruism towards others

2	Male	24	Finnish	Web site-database about airlines and airports	Negative	Seeking bargaining power
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Another interesting group of interviews was related to those who followed an economic reward motives. We had two cases with interviewees from both Russian and Finnish speaking groups. Both of the respondents have used their own social network page for e-WOM initiation. Even though the main motive in both cases was economic reward, we should acknowledge that the background motive was product-involvement. For example, Finnish interviewee mentioned:

“There was a competition organized on the festival’s Facebook page. You could win two VIP tickets for the repost of information about festival on your own Facebook page. I really wanted to go there so I have decided to try luck.” (F1)

The Russian respondent acknowledged similar case:

“I was needed a new printed cover for my mobile phone, so I was searching for organization that is doing it through social network vk.com. When I found one, administrator told me that if I will make a repost of the information about them on my own social page, they would give me a discount.” (R3)

Thus, in these cases the former motive that forced both of the respondents to search for a relevant information was personal involvement with the product itself. However, the motive to initiate e-WOM was simply material interest. In case of Finnish participant, she was driven by the chance to win two VIP tickets on the festival, while Russian interviewee was promised a discount in exchange. Thus, we should emphasize that both respondents were driven by the only one motive, which was economic or material reward. This motive is consistent with our theoretical framework and could be found in the works of Blazevic et al. (2013) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004). However, the interesting thing that we found in both cases is that the information that participants have shared on their private social media pages was neither positive nor negative. We would define these messages as neutral, or neutral-indifferent as it was defined in the work of Tang et al. (2014), which

we discussed in the sub-chapter on the concept of e-WOM. Both of the participants shared information from social media pages of the appropriate organizations without adding any additional information that could define their personal opinion about the information. Thus, it is rather sharing of facts about certain object than positive or negative expression of opinion about this object. Studies that we have used for our theoretical framework were exploring either positive or negative e-WOM initiation; none of those studies deliberately researched a phenomenon of neutral e-WOM. (See Table 15).

Table 15. Summary of the interviews about neutral e-WOM initiation.

#	Gender	Age	Nationality	Platform	Type of e-WOM	Motive(s)
1	Female	21	Russian	Social media	Neutral	Economic reward
2	Female	24	Finnish	Social media	Neutral	Economic reward

Another interesting case that is related to the group of material reward motives was discovered among Russian respondents. This case was similar to other two described above. Interviewee shared information about concert on her private social media page and supposed to get a discount on the entrance fee in return:

“I have made a repost of information about upcoming concert in one of the bar in the city. In returned the organization promised a discount on the entrance fee. This is quite often practice, sometimes you can even get in for free.” (R4)

However, unlike previous two cases this interviewee added a positive comment to the reposted information. According to our assumption, the reason for that might be the fact that the decision about e-WOM initiation was driven by several motives instead of economic reward alone. The respondent stated, that in the end she did not go to the concert, but she always shares information about interesting events regardless her intention to go there, because she respects efforts of the organizing company and cares about friends who might be interested in this event:

“If the event or concert seems to be interesting, I always share an information about it regardless my intention to go...because those who organizes it put a lot of efforts. In addition, some of my friends might be interested in attending it, but they might never know about this upcoming event, because we do not have a good web site that would consolidate all upcoming events in the city.” (R4)

She also mentioned another than altruism and economic reward motives. The interviewee said that some of her friends shares an information about interesting events as well. According to her assessment, they all (including her) do it, because they would like to support these cultural developments with its interesting artists and events of a different kind:

“We share the information to support cultural developments in the city...because consumers of this kind of products (ex. concerts and other events) are passive, so everyone, who is related to this area somehow, are trying to promote it as much as we can.” (R4)

Therefore, we would conclude that three different motive groups drove this e-WOM initiation, which are economic reward, altruism and category-related factors, or precisely industry-involvement. The similar to the latter motive was found in the work of Wolny & Mueller (2013) on fashion consumers. In this work, they found that one of the driven factor of e-WOM initiation among fashion consumers could be an industry-involvement. (See Table 16).

Table 16. Summary of the interviews about positive e-WOM initiation.

#	Gender	Age	Nationality	Platform	Type of e-WOM	Motive(s)
1	Female	27	Russian	Social media	Positive	Economic reward, altruism towards business and altruism towards others, industry-involvement

The rest of the respondents have initiated a positive e-WOM. However, there are significant similarities between Russian respondents. All of them made a repost from company's social media page to their private page with added comment of a recommendation type. In two cases out of three, the foremost reason for this repost was a request of a help from their friends who are owners or employees in the mentioned organizations. However, none of them was promised any kind of compensation in return for the repost of the information.

For example, one of the interviewees pointed:

“My friend owns a cafe and they had a theme night there, so he asked me to share this information on my page.” (R2)

On our question if he was promised anything in return, he said:

“No, I have done it on my goodwill.” (R2)

Furthermore, during the interviews with these three respondents all of them admitted that they tried these services or places themselves, so they know it from the consumers' perspective. Moreover, all of them had a positive experience, thus, they were willing to advice it to other friends. One of the respondents claimed about the repost she made about language courses:

“I used to take these courses as well, so I knew that this is good and useful information. Thus, I have done it with all my pleasure.” (R6)

Another interviewee noted:

“I liked this place myself, so I could really recommend it to my friends.” (R5)

Thus, all of them admitted that apart from the desire to help an organization, they also pursued such motive as sharing information. In study of Dichter (1966) author mentioned such motive as intention to share with others enthusiasm in, and benefits of, things enjoyed, which was a part of other-involvement motives (Dichter, 1966:151). Thus, we would argue that all three interviewees were led by the motive mentioned above, which

is included in the group of other social-motives in our theoretical framework. (See Table 17). For example, one of the respondents, who shared an information about cafe noted:

“I did not share this information just because my friend has asked me, but rather this was an excuse to share to tell to my friends about nice place to spend time in.” (R2)

While another respondent replied on our question about reasons behind the decision to make a repost about different café:

“I did not do it to share my positive feelings about this place. I think you can share your feeling with your close ties, but when you do it on your social media page, it is rather to make other people aware about interesting place that worth visiting.” (R5)

Table 17. Summary of the interviews about positive e-WOM initiation.

#	Gender	Age	Nationality	Platform	Type of e-WOM	Motive(s)
1	Male	22	Russian	Social media	Positive	Altruism towards business, share information
2	Female	21	Russian	Social media	Positive	Altruism towards business, share information
3	Female	22	Russian	Social media	Positive	Altruism towards business, share information

The group of Finnish respondents who initiated a positive e-WOM was more diverse in most of the factors. First, they have used different platforms. One of the respondents wrote a post on his own blog about mobile phone that he has recently bought. Another respondent left a product review on the e-commerce web site where she has bought a clothing item. While the third one used tripadvisor.com for this purpose. Finally, one of them used her own social media page to share a positive e-WOM. They also were guided

by different motives. (See Table 18). For example, the interviewee who used tripadvisor.com to leave his positive review declared:

“We have discovered a really cool small scale hotel in Austria and wanted to give a good feedback, because the current one was unfairly low.” (F2)

Thus, we would argue that this was an altruistic desire to help the business. The interviewee admitted:

“If you had an experience that is exceeded your expectations, why not to leave a good review? For me it does not cost anything and for them it is money.” (F2)

While another respondent who left a review on the e-commerce web site were led by altruism towards both business and fellow consumers. She said:

“Previously I had a bad experience with similar item but from another brand, and this time the product was really good and I was really happy about it. Thus, I wanted them (company) to know that. Actually, I also think that I wanted to help other consumers as well. Sometimes it is really difficult to make a choice especially if it is an expensive product, so I wanted other people know that this is a really good product and help them to make their choice.” (F4)

The reason to write a post for the third interviewee on the one hand was sharing the information. He noted:

“...my goodwill to share the information, because for someone these technical details might be a common knowledge, while for others it is not.” (F3)

Besides, the respondent was deeply involved in the industry and the product:

“It is my personal interest to write about technological devices. I would like to keep up with new trends and constantly improve my knowledge in this area, because it is an area of my specialization. I am studying and working in related (IT) area, so it is an entertaining way to develop yourself as a professional... the blog post was regarding my current mobile phone.” (F3)

For the latter interviewee, who made a post on her social media about one of the cafeteria in Vaasa, it was a mixture of different motives. First, she was guided by altruism towards business. During the conversation, she mentioned:

“It is a really good place, so I wanted to tell others that more people would come there.”
(F5)

Further, she added a comment that reveal a second motive such as sharing information from the group of other-social motives:

“I wanted to recommend it to other people, because it is a really good place and I know that such places are not very popular in Vaasa.” (F5)

Later, while answering on the question about place itself, the interviewee admitted her involvement with this place:

“The whole idea behind the cafeteria is different than usual places. This idea appeals to me, so I would like to promote this philosophy, to be a part of it. It is more than just a cafeteria for me.” (F5)

Therefore, we would argue that person was guided by three motives such as altruism towards business, share information and product involvement.

Table 18. Summary of the interviews about positive e-WOM initiation.

#	Gender	Age	Nationality	Platform	Type of e-WOM	Motive(s)
1	Male	24	Finnish	Web site-database about hotels and other travelling-related information	Positive	Altruism towards business
2	Male	26	Finnish	Personal blog	Positive	Industry- and product-involvement, share information

3	Female	23	Finnish	E-commerce web site	Positive	Altruism towards business and altruism towards fellow consumers
4	Female	25	Finnish	Social media	Positive	Altruism towards business, share information and product-involvement

Perceived behavioral control

In consistence with our expectations that were based on the distinctive characteristic of millennials, we have not found any factors that could be related to the self-efficacy dimension of behavioral control. However, we found the affirmation of influence of platform-related factors on the decision-making process about e-WOM initiation. For example, those, who used web sites of a database-type, mentioned such factors as audience size of the web site, convenience and trustworthiness of the information on this web site and consequently of the platform itself. For instance, the interviewee who left a review about bank, answered on the question why he has chosen this platform:

“I found out that all comments on this web site are checked by administrators, which means that all comments are real and you can trust them. Moreover, it is very convenient source – you can find any kind of information, likewise ratings, reviews, descriptions and comments of other users.” (R1)

Another respondent, who used similar web site but about airlines and airports noted on the same question:

“I think this web site is one of the most popular in this area. Moreover, they have a lot of information in one place, including ratings and reviews.” (F2)

During conversation with the same interviewee but about another experience of e-WOM initiation when he used the same type of web site but about traveling-related information, he mentioned:

“I think they were the first one to enter the market...when you have so many users it is difficult to fake this amount of reviews, so it is trustworthy resource.” (F2)

While those who used social media for e-WOM initiation mainly mentioned the convenience of reposting from the company’s social media page. One of the respondents, who was promised a discount in return for repost, noted:

“I found them on vk.com, so it was easy and convenient just to make a repost from their page on vk.com.” (R3)

While another interviewee admitted:

“It is very easy to make a repost on vk.com – someone have created a group or event related to the organization and you just make a repost on your own page. Moreover, many people use vk.com on a daily basis, so the probability that they will notice your repost is really high.” (R5)

One of the respondents, who made a repost in order to have a chance to win two VIP tickets for a festival, even said:

“I actually saw this announcement because one of my friends made a repost.” (F1)

Sometimes it is not just convenient but there is no other choice to share the information. One of our interviewees, who made a repost about language courses, claimed:

“Well, there was no other choice, because as far as I know these courses are not presented in any other social media, so vk.com was the only option.” (R6)

Another interviewee, who has shared information about upcoming concert, stated:

“Among my friends and fellows is more common to use vk.com to share information about upcoming events in the city.” (R4)

Meanwhile, those interviewees who used platforms other than those mentioned above were more focused on the convenience and appropriateness of the platform and the audience. The interviewee, who used e-commerce web-site, expressed:

“I was thinking about Facebook as an alternative platform, but then I have decided to use the web site, because those people, who are interested in this product and additional information about it, are there, not on my Facebook page.” (F4)

The interviewee who used his own blog added:

“I could have posted a link on my Facebook page but I think that people who would be interested in this information are not there. Moreover, blogs are popular for technological devices reviews.” (F3)

Subjective norm

Another factor that was included in our theoretical framework was subjective norms, or otherwise volunteering desire to conform to the social norms of certain social groups (Blazevic et al., 2013:298). Motives that could be related to this factor were found in the works of Alexandrov et al. (2013) and Blazevic et al. (2013). However, this factor was not confirmed to have a significant influence on the e-WOM initiation decision. None of the interviewees mentioned any factors related to the opinion of their close ties or other members of social groups in relation to their decision about e-WOM initiation. For example, one of the respondent who was asked to make a repost, mentioned:

“I ignore 70 percent of requests from my friends and fellows to make a repost of any kind of information on my own social page.

...If the same friend will ask me again to post an information about the same language school, I would refuse regardless my involvement with this school. ” (R6)

Another interviewee answered on the direct question about possible influence of the opinion of her close ties on her decision about e-WOM initiation:

“I got used to make independent decision, if the information worth sharing I would do it without anyone’s affirmation, but if it is not than I would never share it no matter what.”

(R5)

The interviewee, who was posting on his own blog, added:

“Sometimes people ask me why I am spending my personal time on it if I am not paid for this... I would say if I want to spend certain amount of time on this kind of hobby (ex. blogging) I would do it for myself.” (F3)

One of the interviewee even noted:

“My elder sister unfollowed me on Facebook because I was posting too much in Spanish. ...I have stopped posting that much in Spanish but because I am back to Finland, not because of this accident.” (F1)

Thus, we would assume that social norms and opinions plays lesser role in e-WOM initiation decision among our respondents regardless their national culture. This would be consistent with findings of Schewe et al. (2013), where they found that regardless cultural differences millennials in their study valued independency and control of their own life. Thus, independency and control over one’s life might lesser strength of influence of social norms on one’s life. Hence, consequently it will lesser a possibility to influence a decision about e-WOM initiation.

Nevertheless, we found another interesting sequence among Finnish interviewees. On average they more rare used own social media pages compare to Russian interviewees and in some cases even preferred to stay anonymous on other platforms when initiating an e-WOM. For example, the interviewee, who left a negative review, stated:

“I would not even post a review if I would have to connect my profile instead of posting it anonymously.” (F2)

Another respondent mentioned in her answer on the reason to choose e-commerce web site to post a review:

“I was thinking about Facebook as well... I am not an active user of the Facebook and every one from my contacts would know that I made a post there and I thought that it is not really their business...I left an anonymous review.” (F4)

However, this desire to stay anonymous is not related to the desire to conform to any social norms, but rather related to the peculiarities of national culture. Therefore, we could conclude that subjective norms have no influence on the decision about e-WOM initiation among the representatives of Generation Y. Nevertheless, the rest of the factors from our theoretical framework found a support in the conducted research.

5.2. Analysis of cultural influence

The first obvious difference in motives were found among negative e-WOM initiators. While Russian participant was mainly driven by altruistic motive such as altruism towards others, Finnish interviewee sought a bargaining power in order to use in negotiations about the correction of inconvenience that he has experienced. This difference most likely would be affected by IDV dimension of Hofstede model. As we mentioned in our cross-cultural analysis, Finnish participants unlike Russians would be driven by social or altruistic motives to a lesser extent. Moreover, this difference finds a support in the study of Cheung et al. (2007). Authors found that only participants from individualistic country (ex. USA) were led by such motive as seeking bargaining power in negative e-WOM initiation (Cheung et al., 2007:241). Furthermore, according to our cross-cultural analysis the IND dimension could also have an influence on this difference. As we assumed earlier, the difference in IND dimension might influence motives of negative e-WOM initiation in a way that Finns would be driven by more materialistic motives, such as seeking bargaining power for example. However, it does not find a support for our assumption about Russian interviewees. In our study, the Russian counterpart was driven mostly by altruism towards others rather than any ego-defensive motives. Nevertheless, the second motive that led this respondent to initiate a negative e-WOM was venting negative feelings. According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) venting negative feelings help consumer to reduce tension that they feel because of the negative consumption experience (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004:44). Thus, we could assume that venting negative feelings plays partly an ego-defensive role and helps to reduce this tension. Therefore, we could say that one of the motives that led Russian interviewee to initiate a negative e-

WOM was playing a role of ego-defensive motive. Moreover, the USA as well as Finland scores high on IND, while China, similarly to Russia, scores low on this dimension (The Hofstede Centre). Hence, we would argue that the influence could be from the combination of IDV and IND dimensions rather than the IDV alone.

Another interesting difference that could be explained by the combination of IDV and MAS dimensions is the number of altruistic or social-related motives that were declared by interviewees. On average, the altruistic or social-related motives were more common for Russian interviewees in comparison with Finns. For example, five out of six cases with Russian participants included at least one altruistic motive, while in case of Finnish interviewees it was only half of the total amount of cases. Thus, as we assumed in the cross-cultural analysis for Russians with their extremely high score on PDI the combination of IDV and MAS dimensions would have a stronger influence on consumers' behavior rather than IDV alone and make them rather concerned with other than themselves. Meantime the combination of these dimensions would make Finns less concerned with others as an individualistic society; however, leave a possibility for altruism and social concern not only for their immediate family as a feminine culture. Therefore, we argue that the relative prevalence of altruistic and social-related motives among Russian respondents compare to Finns is a consequences of combination of IDV and MAS dimensions for both cultures.

Nonetheless, there is an obvious difference in IND dimension scores; we have not found an influence of this dimension on the desire to conform to social norms. Unlike we have defined in our cross-cultural analysis we did not find a support for the strong influence of reference groups and as a consequences a desire to conform for social norms. Moreover, the influence of reference groups was not supported among all interviewees regardless their culture. Therefore, as we stated above, this is rather an outcome of the generation peculiarities than influence of the national culture.

Another obvious difference that we have noticed is that Russian respondents tend to use their own social media page for e-WOM initiation, while Finnish interviewees prefer to use other platforms and sometimes even stay anonymous. A desire of Finnish interviewees to not involve their social network in e-WOM initiation could be defined by a combination of two dimensions, likewise IDV and MAS. As a feminine nation, Finns

are expected to be modest and as an individualistic nation sees media as a primary source of information, unlike Russians, who supposedly use social network for this purpose (The Hofstede Centre). Thus, this combination could explain a desire of Finnish interviewees to stay anonymous and spread information in the sources other than their social media page. While, for Russian participants the intention to use their social media is related to the IDV dimension and supported by the definition of collectivistic societies, which assume a use of social network as a primary source of information (The Hofstede Centre).

Besides cultural differences, we also found similarities among respondents. However, all of them are found in relation to the platform use and, therefore, to the behavioral control factor. For example, most of the participants have chosen a particular platform for its convenience and enlarged audience, which presumably would be interested in the information. Moreover, those who used database-type platforms also noted its trustworthiness and popularity. Moreover, those who initiated a negative e-WOM precisely chose platforms with unlimited amount of visitors that are incisively interested in the information that was mentioned in e-WOM message. Hence, we would assume that culture does not affect platform-related factors.

5.3. Summary of findings

In this sub-chapter, we would summarize our findings described above and draw a modified theoretical framework in accordance with these findings.

We would start from comparison of findings based on the country of respondents and type of e-WOM that was initiated (Table 19).

Table 19. Summary of findings.

	Russia	Finland
Negative e-WOM	venting negative feelings and altruism towards others	seeking bargaining power

Neutral e-WOM	economic reward	economic reward
Positive e-WOM	altruism towards business, altruism towards others, share information, economic reward, industry-involvement	altruism towards business, altruism towards fellow consumers, share information, industry-involvement and product-involvement

According to the Table 19, the most visible difference is in motives for negative e-WOM initiation. In this case, the difference is clearly consistent with cultural differences between respondent and is in accordance with our expectations and previous research on collectivistic societies. The difference is explained above and is consistent with differences in scores on IDV and IND dimensions.

A less obvious difference is in altruistic motives. According to our interviews in five cases out of six Russian respondents mentioned at least one altruistic motive. While for Finns these motives were found in three out of six cases. This difference is explained by the cultural differences and analyzed earlier in this chapter. The influential dimensions here are IDV and MAS.

Moreover, we can clear see that there is a similarity in terms of neutral e-WOM motive, which is economic reward for the representatives of both cultures. Since, our study is limited in scope it is difficult to say what is the cause and what is a consequences. Thus, we would suggest this finding for further research and analysis.

Moreover, as we discussed earlier, we did not find any influence of subjective norm on the decision about e-WOM initiation. We argue that this is a consequence of generation specificity. Our assumption is consistent with previous study on difference and similarities between millennials from different countries. The detailed analysis was provided earlier in this chapter.

We also did not find any cultural influence on behavioral control. However, we found a support for behavioral control playing a role in the choice of platform for e-WOM initiation. Thus, we would assume that platform characteristics might promote a two-way

relationship between behavioral control and decision about e-WOM initiation. For example, in terms of negative e-WOM initiation respondents regardless their country of birth have chosen specific platforms with certain features that were discussed above and that would fit a purpose of negative e-WOM initiation. Hence, we would argue that the decision about negative e-WOM initiation came first and only afterwards, participants have chosen a platform based on its characteristics. Meanwhile, those who initiated neutral e-WOM were following organizations' guidelines how to obtain a prize or a discount. Finally, positive e-WOM was initiated on different kinds of platforms where it was convenient and could reach the target audience of e-WOM message. Therefore, in this case the platform characteristics clearly played a role in decision about e-WOM initiation. Participants initiated an e-WOM because it was convenient to do and because they would reach the right audience, instead of choosing the platform because they have decided to initiate e-WOM like in the case of negative e-WOM initiation.

To conclude we would like to present a modified framework (Figure 8). This framework consists of only those motives that were found during interviews and that are divided by groups according to our theoretical framework. Moreover, it will include reviewed relationships between culture, influential factors and decision about e-WOM initiation.

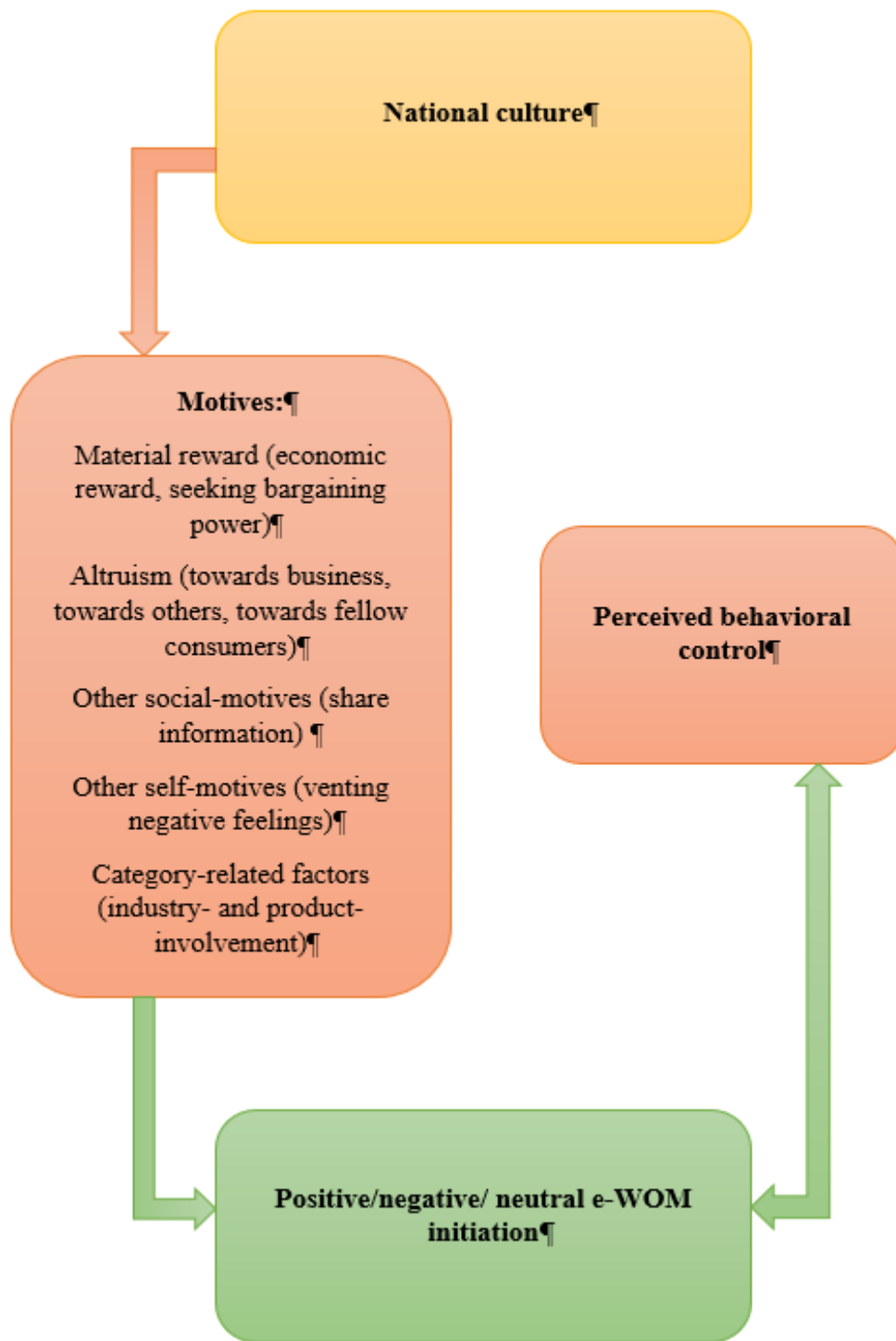


Figure 8. Reviewed theoretical framework.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we would provide summary of the study based on overview of both theoretical and empirical parts and conclusions that would include theoretical contribution compare to the previous studies in the area and practical implication of findings. Moreover, in the conclusion part we would make some suggestions about further research in the area.

6.1. Summary

The aim of this study was to understand why millennials are initiating e-WOM and what would be the differences and similarities between Russian and Finnish millennials motives. Thus, we focus our study on factors that could influence a decision about e-WOM initiation and possible cultural influence on these factors.

First, we started from definition of concept of e-WOM in order to understand what kind of examples of activity we would search in the interviews. This also helped us to understand how the concept of e-WOM could influence the motivation of consumers compare to the concept of conventional WOM. Further, we have focused on factors that could possibly influence the decision of millennials about e-WOM initiation.

In the next part, we focused on understanding cultural dimensions and analysis of cultural difference between Russia and Finland. Nevertheless, a national culture might have a wide implication in different spheres of life. Therefore, we produced the analysis through the lens of factors that might influence a decision about e-WOM initiation.

Further, we built a theoretical framework. This framework was built upon the integration of factors that could influence a decision about e-WOM initiation and possible cultural influence on these factors.

In order to answer on the last objective we conducted an empirical research. We collected data from the primary source and provided a detailed analysis of this data. First, we have analyzed all possible factors that could influence a decision about e-WOM initiation. Next, we analyzed the same data from cultural perspective. Afterwards, we compared

data that was obtained from Russian and Finnish respondents. From this comparison, we drew the summary of our findings and reviewed the theoretical framework. Therefore, we were able to analyze factors that could influence a decision about e-WOM initiation and a role of culture in this decision.

6.2. Conclusions

Consumer makes a decision about e-WOM initiation based on motives that drive them. Depending on these motives consumer would initiate positive, negative or neutral e-WOM. According to our findings, motives do not differ depending on generation. All motives that we found were consistent with previous research that are dated from 1966. This fact assumes that during the development of research in the area different generation were studied by different researchers. Yet, the findings are similar, thus, the features of generation does not influence the types of motives that guides there decision about e-WOM initiation.

However, the features of generation influence other factors. According to our findings, such factor as subjective norm was not supported in our theoretical framework. This factor was not mentioned by any of the respondents regardless their culture. This fact made us think that specific factors of millennials that differentiate them from previous cohorts could have an influence on this phenomenon. Indeed, according to the previous study on generation Y, millennials regardless their culture strive for independency in decision making. Therefore, subjective norm would not have an influence on decision about e-WOM initiation among representatives of generation Y.

Furthermore, the assumption about cultural influence on motives was supported. We found clear differences between motives of representatives from different cultures. These differences were in accordance with differences in Hofstede's dimensions and consistent with previous research. The most obvious differences were found in negative e-WOM initiation. In practical implication, these findings are important in those cases when companies are trying to manage e-WOM initiation. As it was discussed earlier, positive, negative and neutral e-WOM have certain consequences that may affect image of

products and companies and their sales. Thus, it is crucial to manage e-WOM initiation and understand its process. For instance, when Finnish respondent was initiating negative e-WOM he was led by materialistic motive, which was seeking a bargaining power, and was ready to delete his message as soon as the problem would be fixed. Meantime, Russian interviewee was led by purely altruistic intention and was trying to prevent other from getting into the same negative situation. He did not believe that this might have an influence on the situation inside organization, thus, he was trying to warn other fellow consumers. In practical implication, this would mean that in collectivistic countries, once initiated negative e-WOM would be difficult to erase even if the situation would be fixed. While in individualistic countries, it would be easier to negotiate with unsatisfied consumers a certain compensation in return for moderation of their negative message. Therefore, company might pursue different measures of negative e-WOM mitigation depending on the national culture of country of operation.

Another factor that was included in our theoretical framework was behavioral control. Here we studied possible influence of platform on decision about e-WOM initiation. It is appeared that relationship between this factor and decision about e-WOM initiation might be two-way. It was especially obvious on the example of negative e-WOM initiation, when interviewees deliberately chose those platforms where their message would have a bigger influence on fellow consumers. Moreover, the top characteristic of platform regardless the type of e-WOM initiated there was convenience. In practice, these findings give a hint about channels of communication. For example, if company strives for e-WOM facilitating on their own platform they should pay attention to its convenience and other characteristics that were mentioned in this paper. Moreover, if it aims to manage an e-WOM they might consider a collaboration with the most popular database-type platform in the industry in order to facilitate a positive e-WOM and diminish a negative one.

We also found that apart from negative and positive e-WOM consumers also initiate a neutral e-WOM. We would argue that this phenomenon did not receive a sufficient attention in previous studies. However, according to the previous research on neutral UGC it is important for companies to understand this phenomenon. According to this research there are two types of a neutral UGC, we found the one that is defined as neutral-

indifferent. The detailed discussion on this phenomenon was provided earlier in this work. However, taking into account its possible negative outcome we would argue that it is important for companies that the purpose of e-WOM facilitation would be consistent with the type of e-WOM that is initiated. For example, this type of WOM could be used for increasing an awareness about product or service, especially when it is initiated in isolation from other e-WOM about the same product or service. The isolation might be reached by promoting it through the social media. In this case, even if consumer initiates a neutral-indifferent e-WOM on their own social media page it would not have an adverse influence on other types of e-WOM about the same product, because would read it in isolation from other types. This adverse influence was found in previous research and discussed in the sub-chapter about e-WOM concept.

The main theoretical contribution of our research is related to the cross-cultural implication. As we argued earlier in this paper, this area of research on motivation for e-WOM initiation lacks of sufficient amount of studies. Moreover, we have discovered another type of e-WOM which importance was rather underestimated. Thus, we would suggest to research motivation for neutral e-WOM initiation in order to understand better, what drives consumers to initiate this type of e-WOM.

Moreover, as we mentioned in sub-chapter on research quality, the data here is incomplete. Due to our time and resource limitations, we were not able to reach a saturation of data on types of motives for e-WOM. Thus, we would suggest for further exploration of this topic with bigger scope of cross-cultural data.

Furthermore, as one could see from our findings, the negative e-WOM initiation stands alone for several reasons. First, it has evidence of obvious cultural influence on motives for negative e-WOM initiation. Second, it promotes a two-way relationship between platform characteristics and decision about negative e-WOM initiation. Thus, it would be interesting to explore this phenomenon separately from other types of e-WOM.

Finally, this was a qualitative study; hence, we did not test statistically those relationships that we assumed in our theoretical framework. Thus, for future generalizability and better understanding of these relationships it is advisable to conduct a quantitative research with test of relationships between different parts of current theoretical framework.

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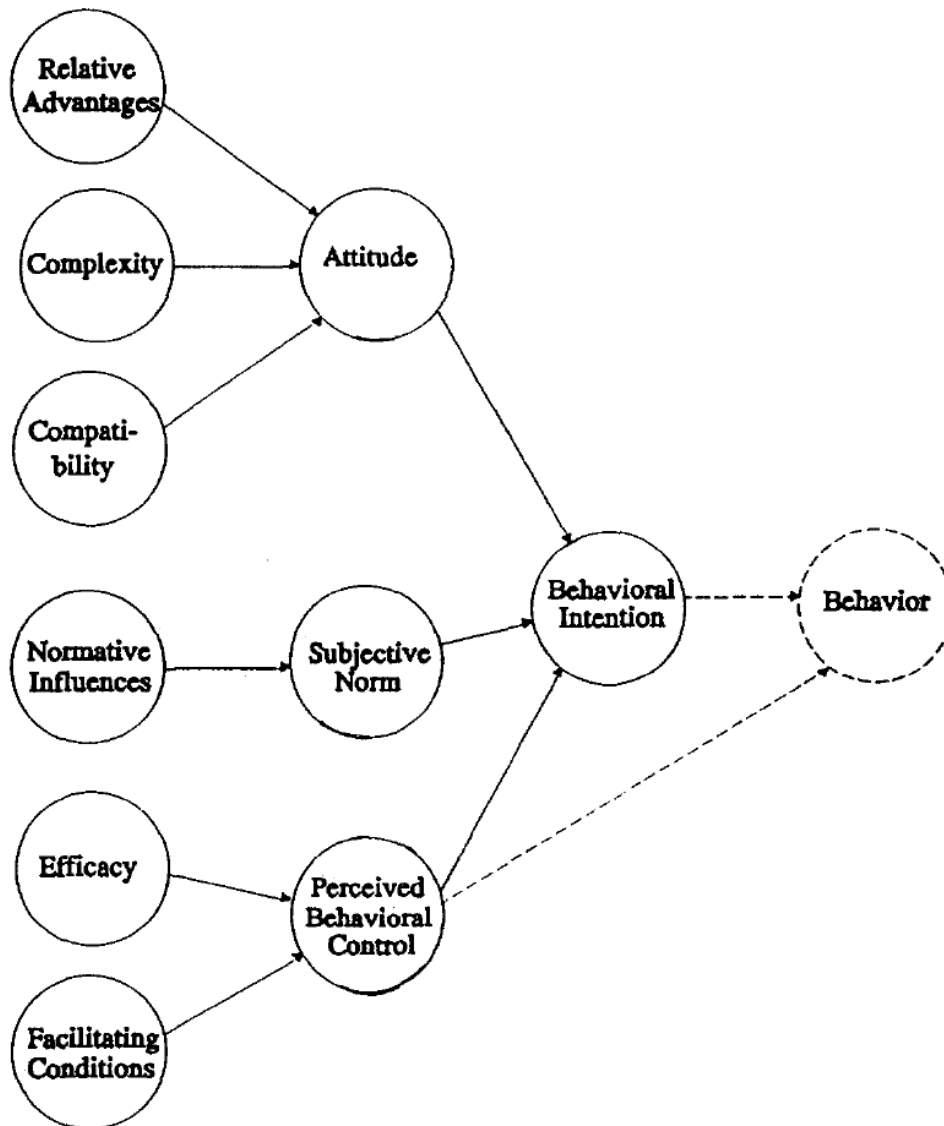
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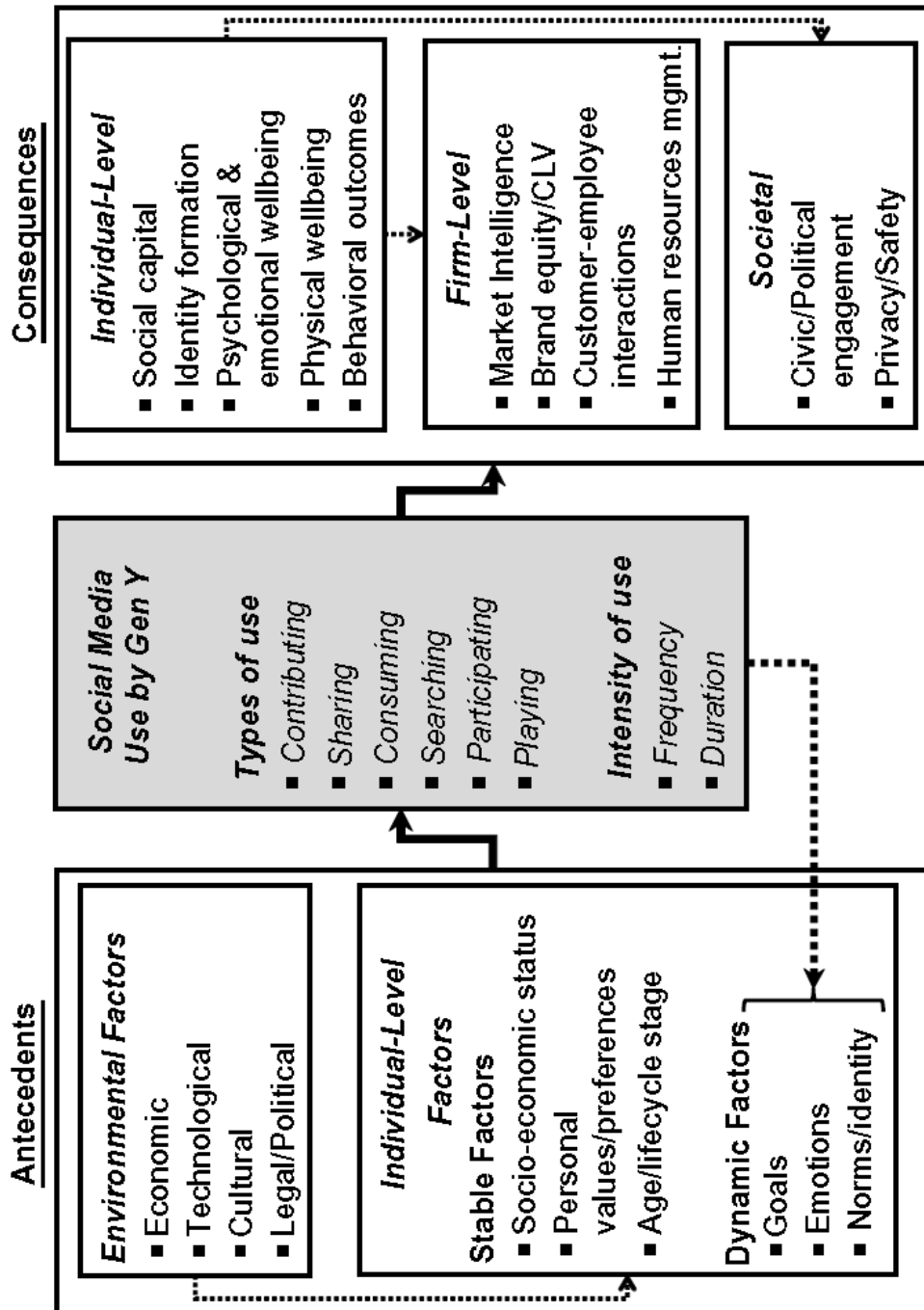
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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1. Theory of Planned Behavior with belief decomposition (Taylor & Todd, 1995:142).



Appendix 2. Antecedents and consequences of social media use by Gen Y (Bolton et al., 2013:249).



Appendix 3. Scores of Hofstede dimensions for Finland and Russia (The Hofstede Centre)

	<i>PDI</i>	<i>IDV</i>	<i>MAS</i>	<i>UAI</i>	<i>LTO</i>	<i>IND</i>
<i>Russia</i>	93	39	36	95	81	20
<i>Finland</i>	33	63	26	59	38	57

Appendix 4. List of questions for semi-structured interview.

Interview # _____ date _____

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Nationality
4. Occupation:
 - Student
 - working student
 - young professional
5. Area of specialization
6. Do you know a meaning of word-of-mouth phenomena?
7. Do you know a difference between word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth phenomenon?
8. Could you tell us about your last experience of creating/sharing a product-, brand- or service-related information with others on the internet:
 - a. What kind of information was it?
 - b. What was the brand/ product/ service?
 - c. Where did you do it – SM, corporate web site, blog, internet forum etc.?
 - d. When was it?
 - e. Why have you decided to do it?
 - f. Other questions depending on the information we were given
9. Could you tell us about the platform you used:
 - a. Why did you choose this particular platform?
 - b. Did you consider any other platforms for information creating/sharing?
 - c. If yes, what was it and what would be a reason to prefer those platforms to the one you used?
 - d. Other questions depending on the information we were given
10. Could you tell us about people whose opinion is important for you (friends/ family members/ fellows):
 - a. Do they create or share brand-, product- or service-related information?
 - b. If yes, what platforms do they usually use for this purpose?

- c. Did they find an information that you provided interesting and/or useful?
 - d. Other questions depending on the information we were given
11. Other questions depending on the information we were given
12. List of possible motives:
- Self-enhancement
 - Material reward
 - Expressing of one self's identity
 - Altruism
 - Other social-motives
 - Other self-motives
 - Category-related factors
 - Vengeance-related motives