TITLE:

HOW DOES CULTURE SHAPE CONSUMERS' SHARING BEHAVIORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

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How Does Culture Shape Consumers' Sharing Behaviors on Social Media?

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research investigates how self-construal influences consumers' timing (before vs. after) of sharing information about an event on social media. It also investigates the moderating the role of regulatory foci in the aforementioned sharing behavior.

Design/methodology/approach: To test two hypotheses, we conducted an online survey. The analyses included content analysis, regression, t-tests, and an ANOVA.

Findings: This research shows an individual in an independent (interdependent) mind state is more likely to post on their social media about the event before (after) it has occurred. The study did not find the regulatory foci as a mediator between INDCOL and the time of sharing.

Practical implications: Companies conducting social media campaigns in other countries should account for the different behavior of individuals when sharing information online when measuring their key performance indicators. This will allow them to have a better read on the efficiency/efficacy of their campaign(s).

Originality/value: This research adds to the sectors of international advertising and existing marketing research through our concentration on cultural influences on social media, specifically on consumer online sharing behavior.

Keywords: Self-construal, regulatory foci, culture, social media, sharing

INTRODUCTION (Patrick) [Andrea]

With over 3.6 billion active users (Statista, 2020), social media is a vital medium for companies to share and market their products or services. While there are multiple benefits of using social media there are also several challenges companies need to address. Some of the main challenges involve measuring ROI (Return on Investment), determining which platform(s) to use, creating engaging content, finding ideas for new content, and creating content that generates leads (Forsey, 2021). Thus, it is essential for marketers to comprehend how individuals make use of social media in order to understand their marketing efforts. This challenge is even greater with companies/brands doing business abroad since they have to, in many cases, acculturate to their host countries.

Kietzmann and colleagues (2011) presented a honeycomb framework of seven social media building blocks. These building blocks can be presented both individually and in combinations on social media. Our study will be focusing on the sharing function building block, which is defined as the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content using social media. It furthermore explains that social media consists of people connecting by a shared object (i.e., text, video, picture). Previous research states that sharing information is a cultural cognitive function that is distinct to human beings (Tomasello et al., 2005). Other studies have found that culture affects how individuals share information (e.g., aspirations, personal data, etc.) within a society (Hofstede, 2001; Hall, 1976).

However, little is known about how culture influences the way consumers share content through social media (e.g. timing). To better understand the effect culture has on social media and its functional block sharing, we need to understand how the sharing function fits in social media. Our research objectives are to investigate how self-construal influences consumers'

timing of sharing information about an event (before vs. after). It also investigates the role of regulatory foci– a self-regulatory theory (Higgins, 1997) that proposes two different motivations to approach different types of desired end-states. The regulatory foci differentiate into a Promotion Focus, which involves a concern with advancement, growth, and accomplishment. In contrast, a Prevention Focus consists of a concern with protection, safety, and responsibilities. We propose that the regulatory foci will act as a mediator between the self-construal and the timing of sharing.

This research adds to the sectors of international advertising and existing marketing research through our concentration on cultural influences on social media, specifically on consumer sharing habits. Additionally, our research aims to provide global marketing practitioners with vital information that may be integral in developing social media strategies. Through this, practitioners may construct effective social media marketing strategies to target different cultural regions.

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

SM Sharing function (Claire) [Andrea]

Social networking sites (SNS) are services that allow users to build a profile, network with other users, and view their own and other users' networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). These sites are platforms where users can connect and interact with others, share information, and discuss topics generated from their information (original content) (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social media is all about sharing and interaction, and its users have the desire to engage actively and become both producers and consumers of information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Due to

this need, many social media platforms can share information on other platforms, making the process of information sharing more flexible. Some examples of such sites include photo-sharing application and social network platform like Instagram, social network sites like Facebook, micro-blogging sites like Twitter and Weibo, and video-sharing social networks like TikTok. According to Kietzmann and colleagues' (2011) honeycomb framework, social media sites are made up of seven functional building blocks: presence, relationships, reputation, groups, conversations, sharing, and identity. The presence and use of each building block vary depending on each social media platform. For our study's purposes, we will be focusing on the sharing function, which is a function encompassing the degree to which users exchange, distribute and receive content on a specific social media site. The sharing of content has provided marketers with an unlimited amount of data from users. This type of data can help marketers in developing effective marketing campaigns, as all users may not share in the exact same ways. Understanding these differences in sharing behaviors and utilizing them to one's favor is essential for succeeding in social media marketing campaigns.

Culture (Claire) [Andrea]

Culture is one of the many things that bring us together in this world, and at the same time make us different. For this study we will be using a definition of culture influenced by Hofested (1991): Culture is a psychological programming of a collective of people that classify them into groups and distinguishes them unique from other groups.

Hofstede (2001) suggested a systematic mechanism that can explain patterns within cultures. At the center of this mechanism is the societal norms that consist of the value systems shared by the majority of the population in that culture. Their value system is molded by factors influencing

the physical and societal environment. Societal norms lead and shape institutions' development within cultures with specific functions and responsibilities regarding family, education systems, political systems, and legislation. Mentioned institutions reinforce societal norms, which are derived from their value system.

Thus, cultures have adopted different ideas and different values (Hofstede, 2001). A perfect example is Hofstede's (1988) cultural framework theory, which states that culture can be analyzed and classified into six unique dimensions. The dimensions are Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Femininity vs. Masculinity, Short-term vs. Long-term Orientation, and Restraint vs. Indulgence (Hofstede et al., 2010). Our research will focus on the Individualism vs. Collectivism (INDCOL) dimension within this framework because it is the most widely used in social science research.

According to Hofstede (2001), individualism emphasizes the individual's worth, where ideologies of individuals prevail over those of collective interests. In an individualist culture, the use of "I" is encouraged, as it is a culture focused on the self. Individualism tends to encourage expressing emotions more than collectivism, as the expression of these emotions can assert one's autonomy (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Regarding childhood develpment patterns, dividualist parents tend to teach their kids more about independence, self -reliance, and finding yourself (Triandis, 1989). Conversely, collectivism prioritizes the group's values over self, exhibiting harmony, and consensus as ultimate goals. In a collectivistic culture, the use of "I" is discouraged, as the culture focuses on collective views. A collectivistic culture tends to be more introverted and does not encourage showcasing strong and intense emotions, as the disruption of harmony may occur (Hofstede, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Losing one's temper is also discouraged, while moderation is encouraged in all things (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). This can be

attributed to values taught to individuals as children. Child-rearning patterns in collectivist cultures focused on conformity, obediance, and reliability (Triandis, 1989).

Cultures Influence on Social Media Sharing Function. (Claire) [Andrea]

Cultural differences due to the INDCOL dimension are prominent and can be seen in SNS's use. Jackson and Wang (2013) suggest that users in Eastern cultures should spend less time on SNS due to their greater investment in family, friends, and groups. Doing this may create a greater focus on real-world interaction. However, those who do use SNSs sites do so to strengthen their real life social networks and engage in social support (Kim et al., 2011). Eastern cultures tend to have smaller groups of close friends with lasting relationships in contrast to Western cultures. This behavior is rooted in the "historical, political, and religious foundation of Confucianism and Taoism" (Jackson & Wang 2013; Chiu et al., 2010; Fu, Xu, Cameron, Heyman, & Lee, 2007).

In contrast, individuals in Western cultures spend more time on SNS because they invest significantly in themselves, and SNSs are a perfect medium to engage in self-promotion. While individuals in Western cultures tend to have more friends, their friendships tend to be less enduring and superficial. Western SNSs provide its users with wider social groups, online activities, and a direct communication style, all which pomote a bolder self-disclosure online (Jacksone & Wang, 2013; Tan, 2008). This established behavior is due to their embrace of individualism, the self, and freedom of choice, all of which are characteristics of Western cultures (Jackson & Wang, 2013). Their study supports their conclusion that the online culture reflects the offline culture in which it is embedded.

Another study further shows that the features available on SNSs reflect those accepted by the culture in which it is used. For example, MySpace (USA) makes members' pictures viewable

to non-members. In contrast, the social media platform Mixi (Japan) does not make the

members' information available to non-members. These features are congruent with Western

cultures that encourage individuals to self-promote and Eastern cultures that value modesty

(Marcus & Krishnamurthi, 2009). The study also corroborates with the idea that individuals in

individualistic cultures strive to be unique, while in collective cultures, they prefer to fit in and

be more discreet. These behaviors are reflected in the users' profile pictures, wherein the USA,

the users tend to use their pictures of themselves. In Japan, the use of animals, toys, and even

celebrities are used instead.

Another aspect in which culture affects the usage of SNSs is the way individuals use and

acquire information to make purchasing decisions. In Western cultures, individuals are active

information seekers, focus on facts, and use personal contacts to serve as information sources

(Goodrich & De Mooij, 2013). On the other hand, feelings rather than facts are used to make

purchasing decision in some Eastern cultures; individuals are less active to search for

information online and use their personal contacts to form opinions (Goodrich & De Mooij,

2013). Individuals in individualistic cultures will use social media to seek out people who might

have the right information to solve their problems. In collective cultures, social media tends to

reinforce the sharing of feelings and ideas (Goodrich & De Mooij, 2013; Boase et al., 2006).

Self Construal (Andrea)

Unlike INDCOL, which describes societies and cultures (Hofstede, 1988), self-construal

is used to describe the individual. Self-construal refers to how individuals define and make

meaning of the self (Cross, Hardin, & Gercek-Swing, 2011). Markus & Kitayama (1991)

distinguished the self-construal concept and coined the terms independent and interdependent

self-construal. According to the authors, the independent self-construal considers the individual as the basic unit of society, prioritizing personal needs and goals. This self-construal sees society as a medium to promote the well-being of the individual and is most prominent in American and Western European cultures. Ideals of "self-actualization," "realizing oneself," or "developing one's distinct potential" exist within this construct (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For this reason, one with an independent self-construal will often lean towards goals that center around autonomy and achievement - a desire to succeed relative to others (Heine et al., 1999).

In contrast, the interdependent self-construal considers the group as the core unit of society in which individuals must fit in, thus prioritizing social relationships (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). This self-construal is most prominent in Asian, Latin-American, African, and many southern European cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Goals are characterized by belonging, mandating fulfilling obligations and responsibilities to others (Heine et al., 1999).

Impact of Self-Consrual on Timing of Sharing (before or after) (Patrick) [Andrea]

The cultural differences in arousal levels are that Western cultures (individualists) tend to experience higher affective arousal than Eastern cultures (collectivists), who experience lower affective arousal. Additionally, Tsai (2007) argued that in individualistic cultures, the ideal state of high affective arousal would motivate individuals to seek high levels of emotion (e.g., elated, enthusiastic, excited) and promote activities that will achieve the high arousal emotions. One way that individualists can increase arousal is to place more emphasis on the thought of the future. Prior studies reveal that the future is always tied to arousal (Weingarten and Berger, 2017), and events taking place in the future are more affectively arousing than equivalent past events (Caruso, 2010; Caruso & Wilson, 2008; Van Boven & Ashworth, 2007). Future events

evoke more arousal as the future is more indeterminate (i.e., unknown) and requires greater action readiness (i.e., mental stimulation) (Frijda, 1988; Holmes & Mathews, 2005; Lazarus 1991; Van Boven & Ashworth, 2007). As a result, high affective arousal increases sharing about the future (Berger, 2011; Berger & Milkman, 2012). With individualists' desire to achieve and maintain a higher affective arousal state, they will likely engage in thinking and sharing more about their future than collectivists.

Supplemental research also supports the idea that promotion individuals view their future more favorably and compare themselves to their future self. In contrast, prevention-focused individuals did not compare themselves to their future selves as much (Corcoran & Peetz, 2014). It suggests that individualists (promotion orientation) develop stronger feelings by embracing thoughts about the future than collectivists (prevention orientation). This logic is reinforced as collectivists differ from individualists in that they encourage low arousal emotions versus high arousal emotions (Tsai, 2007). Low arousal emotions are enervated states that prepare for inaction or rest (Russel, 2003). Collectivists emphasize restraint and encourage showing sadness and thus promoting low affective arousal. Therefore the thought of future events will more likely not evoke high-level arousal.

In addition to affective arousal, self-presentation has an important impact on the *when* aspect of sharing information (Weingarten and Berger, 2017; Cheema and Kaikati 2010; De Angelis et al. 2012). Self-presentation is important to take into account when discussing the timing of sharing since individuals usually share information in self-enhancing ways (Weingarten and Berger, 2017). People do not like to share information if it will shine a negative light on them (Finkenauer and Rime 1998). A study conducted by Weingarten and Berger (2017), explored the connections between affective arousal, self-presentation, and word of

mouth. They show supporting evidence that although high affective arousal is associated with sharing information of future events, *when* an individual shares information depends on how the information reflects on them.

The Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997), is a motivational theory that displays an individuals motives to reach a desired endstate, this self-regulation is connected to the types of socially desriable responses (Laiwani et al., 2009; Heine, 2005). Laiwani and his collegues have found supporting evidence to suggest that individualism is tied to self-deceptive enhacment and not impression management and the results were reversed for collectivism. However, discussing the ways in which the regulatory foci (ie., promotion and prevention) and social dersiable response types shape the timing of sharing will not be examined in this study.

The circumplex model of affect, anticipation, or excitement over an event is considered high arousal emotion, which means that an individualist is more likely to feel this emotion than a collectivist. If the event in dicussion will portray an individual in self-enhancing ways (or is a neurtal event), we can focus on the relationships between culture, affect arousal, and timing of sharing. Thus, we hypothesize that collectivists will engage less with sharing events that deal with the future due to the encouragement of low affective arousal of their culture, also substantiated by research stating that collectivists are more likely to prefer inaction (Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999). In contrast, we expect individualists to be involved with pre-event posting behavior because pre-event posting behavior involves thinking about the future and increasing high arousal emotions. Furthermore, individualistic cultures encourage behavior that results in high arousal levels that encourage sharing about the future. This is due to individualists being more likely to take action in a given situation instead of remaining inactive (Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999). This guides our hypothesis that collectivists will post after the event, whereas

individualists will post before the event.

> *H1: Consumers with an independent self-construal will share the anticipation of events*
>
> *before the events occur, whereas consumers with an interdependent self-construal*
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> *will share the retrospection of events on social media at a higher rate after the*
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> *events end.*

Mediating Role of Regulatory Focus (Andrea)

Impact of self-construal on regulatory foci. According to the dualistic view of Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997), individuals behave according to their self-regulatory orientation when trying to fulfill their needs for nurturance (accomplishment and aspirations) and security (safety and responsibilities). The theory suggests that individuals who are characteristically driven by their desire for nurturance are guided with a promotion focus, while individuals driven by a desire for security are guided with a prevention focus. The independent self-construal characteristics, which focus on achievement and autonomy, are consistent with a promotional focus (Lee et al., 2000). Simply put, how an individual views themselves is linked to what motivatoinal goals they have. Due to the way in which caretakers in individualist culture vs. collectivist culture foster desirable characters for the children under their care – hopes and dreams vs. duties and responsibilities, individuals in individualist culture tend to develop promotion orientation, while those in collectivist culture tend to develop prevention orientation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Higgins, 1997).

Impact of regulatory foci on the timing of sharing. Higgins (1997) states that individuals with a promotion focus strive toward personal growth and accomplishments. These individuals focus on achieving strong ideals (hopes and aspirations) and pursue their goals with an eager approach. The acquisition or fulfillment of such goals leads to the other side of the

spectrum of dejected emotions when they fail to achieve the goals (Higgins, 1997; Lee et al., 2000; Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999). Individuals guided by a promotion focus can be expected to take more risks (Crowe & Higgins, 1997) due to their desire to maximize positive outcome. They are more likely to take action in a given situation instead of remaining inactive (Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999). Furthermore, promotion-oriented individuals tend to use more abstract language (e.g., use of adjectives) and think more about their future/future events at a more distal level (Semin et al., 2005; Förster & Higgins, 2005).

In contrast, individuals with a prevention focus strive towards safety and security and are primarily concerned with minimizing negative outcomes. These individuals are concerned with fulfilling their duties and responsibilities and prefer a vigilant goal pursuit strategy, avoiding making mistakes. Failure to do so is associated with agitated emotions, such as anxiety and nervousness, and its fulfillment can lead to the opposite end of the spectrum of anxiety - relaxation (Higgins, 1997; Lee et al., 2000). Individuals guided by a preventive focus prefer taking fewer risks (Crowe & Higgins, 1997) and maintaining the status quo (Liberman et al., 1999). They are more likely to prefer inaction because of their vigilant goal pursuit, their concern to fulfill their duties, and their desire to minimize risks (Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999). Furthermore, prevention-oriented individuals tend to use more concrete language (e.g., verbs of action) and think of the future/future events at a more proximal level (Semin et al., 2005; Förster & Higgins, 2005).

We believe the varying degree of regulatory foci should lead to individuals adopting a different timing of sharing for self-enhancing events (e.g., going to a favoriate artists' concerts) in their social media. Since promotion-oriented individuals are driven to achieve higher ideals and promote themselves in self-enhancing ways, they will share on their social medias the

information of an event before the event happens; when their hearts are filled with anticipation and excitement of going to the events. Since prevention orientated individuals focus on preventing negative outcomes, they will share such an event on their social media after it has occured; when they've had a chance to review their photos and reflect on the event. Thus, promotion-orientation (vs. prevention-orientation) should be positively related to posting the self-enhancing event prior to the event.

Taking the discussion so far,the impact of self construals on regulatory foci, the impact of regulatory foci on the timing of the sharing on social media, as well as the direct impact of self-construals on the timing of sharing (H1), we hypothesize the impact of Self-construal on the timing of sharing will in fact be mediated or determined by the regulatory foci.

H2: Regulatory foci will mediate the impact of self-construal on the timing of sharing such that (a) independent-self (interdependent-self) will be positively related to promotion-orientation (Prevention-orientation) and (b) promotion-orientation (prevention-orientation) is positively (negatively) related to posting the event prior to the event.

METHODOLOGY (Sebastian)

Samples

To collect the data we used MTurk, a crowdsourcing marketplace that facilitates individuals and businesses to outsource their processes and jobs to a distributed workforce who can perform these tasks virtually (survey participation). Each participant is anonymous and can only be identified by an alphanumeric ID which cannot be traced to a name. After eliminating participants for eligibility and attention check, the usable sample size 108 (mean age = 22.29, female = 51 percent). Almost all (99 percent) participants were born and raised in the United

States, and 72 percent were White. Each respondent was compensated $1.50 after completing a 15 minutes survey. In order to qualify for the study, participants had to use social media at least once per week and share content or information such as photos, videos, events, memes, news, etc. on social media. The study uses a single factor between-subjects design (self-construal) to test how self-construal affects an individual's timing of sharing on social media.

Procedure

To perform our study, a self-construal manipulation and a concert attendance preparation scenario were presented to respondents. The priming manipulation shown to respondents consisted of two versions of the same story (independent vs. interdependent). The story involves Sostaras, an ancient Somarian warrior who takes the same course of action, sending help to a neighboring country, but for different reasons (Trafimow et. al., 1991; Zhang and Mittal, 2007). All participants read:

> "I, Sostoras, a warrior in ancient Sumer, was largely responsible for the success of Sargon in conquering all of Mesopotamia. As a result, I was rewarded with a small kingdom to rule. About 10 years later, Sargon was conscripting warriors for a new war. I was obligated to send a detachment of soldiers to aid Sargon. I had to decide who to put in command of the detachment. After thinking about it for a long time, I eventually decided on Tiglath, who was a member of my family."

Then on, participants assigned to the *independent* scenario read:

> "This appointment had several advantages to me. I was able to make an excellent general, indebted to me. This would solidify my hold on my own dominion. In addition, the very fact of having a general such as Tiglath as my personal representative would greatly increase my prestige. Finally, sending my best general would be likely to make Sargon grateful. Consequently, there was the possibility of getting rewarded by Sargon."

In contrast, participants assigned the *interdependent* scenario read:

> "This appointment had several advantages. I was able to show my loyalty to my family. I was
> also able to cement their loyalty to me and have a stronger sense of "we." In addition, having
> Tiglath as the commander increased the power and prestige of my family. Finally, if Tiglath
> performed well, Sargon would be indebted to my family. In this way, our family as a group will
> share the benefits together."

Once participants finished reading through their versions of the story, they were asked about their attitudes toward the main character. The attitude questions asked were adopted from Zhang and Mittal (2007), and followed by the timing of sharing scenario.

The concert attendance preparation scenario was designed to prompt participants to post on their social media. The scenario described the anticipations of Alex, the main character, and how this individual has worked and saved to attend the concert of his or her favorite band (See Appendix for Scenario). At the end of the scenario, the participants are left pondering whether Alex should share about the event before or after it happens.

Measures

Self-Construal. As explained previously, the construct was manipulated with a priming method using a scenario and is treated as an independent variable (0 = independent self condition; 1 = interdependent self condition).

Self-Attitude Instrument Manipulation Check : An adapted version of the Twenty Statements Test (TST) from Khun and McPartland (1954) was used to measure both independent and interdependent constructs . The adaptation reduced participants' responses to a maximum of 15 instead of 20. In taking the TST, participants were prompted to ask themselves the question "Who am I?" and write down the first words that came to them. The responses were coded into

interdependent and independent variables using a binary code. The following definitions were adopted from Zhang and Mittal (2007):

Interdependent (0): Cognitions related to the quality of friendship and responsiveness to others (e.g., I am avoiding any argument). View their close relationships, social roles, and group memberships as central to their sense of self.

Independent (1): Cognitions related to personal qualities, attitudes, and beliefs that do not relate to others (e.g., I am creative). View internal attributes, such as traits, abilities, values, and attitudes as central to their sense of self.

A reliability test was performed for both coders' responses (Prerreult and Leigh, 1989), which resulted in an inter-reliability score of .80. The outcome was compared and agreed upon among both coders and any discrepancies were resolved by discussions between the coders and subsequent consensus.

Timing of sharing: A 7-point scale measured when they would post on social media *before/after* attending the event if the respondent were the actor in the given scenario.

Regulatory Focus: The Chronic Regulatory Focus Scale (RFS) created by Haws, Dholakia, & Bearden (2010), was adapted to measure Regulatory Focus. A total of 10 items with 7-point scales were used to form a 5-item prevention scale and a 5-item promotion scale. Items that had to be reverse coded had a negative effect on our overall scale reliability and had to be dropped. This changed our finalized prevention and promotion scales to 4-items each. Composite scales were created to measure promotion and prevention focus. The prevention scale showed a Cronbach alphas score of $\alpha = .66$, while the promotion scale showed a Cronbach's alpha score of $\alpha = .83$.

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

An ANOVA of self construals (independent self vs. interdependent self) on number of independent thoughts was conducted between the content analysis of our manipulation check and self-construal. Using respondents' interdependent proportions we found that those who were primed as interdependent had significantly more interdependent responses ($M = .36$, $SD = .22$) than those who were primed as independent, ($M = .27$, $SD = .22$), ($F(1, 104) = 4.34$, $p < .05$). Results using respondents' independent proportions showed favorable to our manipulation check as well. Those who were primed to be independent had significantly more independent responses ($M = .73$, $SD = .22$) than those who were primed interdependent ($M = .64$, $SD = .23$), $F(1, 104) = 4.48$, $p < .05$). This evidence means that our manipulation was in fact successful. Overall, we did see significantly more independent responses from our participants. This is to be expected since almost all respondents self-described as American and were born in the United States.

Timing of Sharing Association (H1)

For hypothesis 1, we suspected to find that individuals with an indepenent self-construal post more on social in anticipation to an event than those with an interdependent self-construal. On the contrary, individuals with an interdependent self-construal will post more on their social media in restrospect to an event. To test this hypothesis, we ran a t-test on the expected timing of sharing. An effect of self-construal on the expected timing of sharing was significant ($t(106) = 3.14$, $p < .01$ Thus, we can fully support our hypothesis 1.

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Meditation Role of Regulatory Foci (H2)

The second hypothesis was designed to show the mediation effect regulatory focus has on self-construal. To test this a series of regression analyses as shown in Baron and Kenny's (1986) study were conducted. To our surprise, we did not see any conclusive evidence that supports the hypothesis, and therefore cannot conclude that regulatory focus has a mediation effect on self-construal.

The inconclusive result might have been delivered due to the improper measurements of the chronic regulatory focus. The original scale had 18 items to measure regulatory focus. This study only used 10 items, 5 to measure promotion focus and 5 to measure prevention focus. This action was taken to reduce the total time respondents would take to finish our survey.

Insert Table 1 about here

Discussion

As expected, the self-construal did have an effect on respondents' timing of sharing. Hypothesis 1 predicted that those with an independent self-construal would be more likely to post on their social media about an event before the event happened than those with an interdependent self-construal. However, we failed to provide evidence for Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 predicts that regulatory focus mediates the effect of self-construal on participants' timing of sharing. Although this was the outcome, we still believe that regulatory focus has the mediation effect we expected as it is supported in studies such as Zhang and Mittal (2007). In the case of this study, the use of MTurk alongside the modifications made to the regulatory focus scale might have affected the final results.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

Through the examination of one study, our research shows that self-construal plays an important role in when an individual chooses to post on their social media about an event in their life, whether that be before or after the event. An individual in an independent mind state is more likely to post on their social media about the event before it has occurred (as opposed to after the event has occurred). An individual in an interdependent mind state is more likely to post about an event after it occurred (as opposed to before the event has occurred).

Theoretical Implications and Directions for Future Research

Our research presents evidence about how culture influences the way consumers may share content through social media, specifically on the time of sharing (pre vs. post behavior). This information, not only adds to cultural literature but also to social media usage which lacks in literature.

Another direction future researchers can take is exploring the connection between Self-Construal, Affective Arousal, and Timing of Sharing. Can affective arousal be a mediator for sharing. As we found in our literature individualistic cultures encouragement to act promotes high affective arousal (Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999). In contrast, collectivist cultures prefer inaction due to their promotion of low affective arousal (Roese, Hur, & Pennington, 1999). In psychology, affective states (emotional states) are split into the valence and arousal levels, coined by Russel (1980) as the circumplex model of affect. While many studies explore valence, or how positive or negative an experience is, our study will focus on the dimension of arousal and its influence to predict the timing of social media posting behavior. The feelings of vigor, energy, and tension are known as the psychological characteristics of arousal. Physiological symptoms would include the fight or flight response, noted by an increased heart rate and blood

pressure. Affective arousal, also known as emotional arousal, can be understood as the autonomic system's activation (Lim, 2006). In other terms, we could think about how calming (parasympathetic system in action) or exciting (sympathetic system in action) something affects an individual. High arousal emotions are energized states that prepare action, and these emotions correspond to situations where mobilization and energy are required (Russel, 2003). Research shows that there are cultural differences in arousal levels. Furthermore, cultures will promote behaviors that will lead to the desired state (high affective arousal vs. low affective arousal), termed the Ideal state (Tsai, 2007).

Implications to Practice

Through this study marketers can better understand why their pre-launch/pre-event marketing efforts are more effective in certain cultures (IND) in comparison to others (COL).

In the case for marketing in IND cultures, practitioners should focus on pre-event efforts such as, advertising, countdowns on social media, and trending efforts. This would allow immense buildup and anticipation leading up to the event. Practitioners can use the study to better understand the behavior of Collective cultures that underline their affinity to share information after an event. Marketers should create content that is easily re-sharable for individuals to share both before and after the event In IND countries, marketers could create sneak peek post at a setlist, exclusive tour merch, touch on key aspects of FOMO (Fear to miss out). In COL countries posting pictures or articles about past events success and popularity can provide a safety net for new to the event. Further, companies interested in digital marketing might be able to utilize the findings of the study by measuring consumers' level of self-construals with a short instrument and could suggest a different timing of sharing based on their self-construals even within a country.

Limitations

There are several limitations that future research can address. This study relied on the individual differences in self-construals induced by priming individuals with scenarios in the same country. Future research can extend this research to a cross-cultural level by drawing samples from two different cultures and showing the same results. In addition, there were plenty of limitations in our power to pick quality respondents in our online questionnaire. We believe that because of our use of Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), it is possible the data we received may have affected the reliability of the results. Furthermore, the use of a specific event (concert) might have affected the way respondents felt about sharing about the event. Research can be extended to other types of events that can produce a higher probability of sharing among participants.

We tried to connect various constructs through the mediation of regulatory focus, but we could not satisfactorily show the mediation effect regulatory focus has between self-construal (INDCOL) and a user's timing of sharing on social media. This limits our recommendation to practitioners since we cannot confidently conclude the connections we hypothesized earlier in this study.

Albeit we have a gap in our results, there is enough evidence that points to different cultures possibly sharing information in different ways. Further research can extend this idea beyond a simulated cross-cultural study to solidify what we hint at.

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Appendix A: Timing of Sharing Scenario

"Alex has been receiving reminders for the concert he/she is attending. Today, she/he couldn't believe that she/he now has only three days left before she/he sees his/her favorite band live! Ever since Alex became a fan of the band several years ago, he/she has been following the band on social media and has been longing to attend the band's concert. He/She remembered how hard he/she had to work to buy the expensive ticket and how long he/she waited online to buy it.

Alex ponders over when he/she should share about the event on his/her social media: "What should I post? Should I share now even before I attend the concert? Or should I wait until after the concert is over?""

FIGURE 1
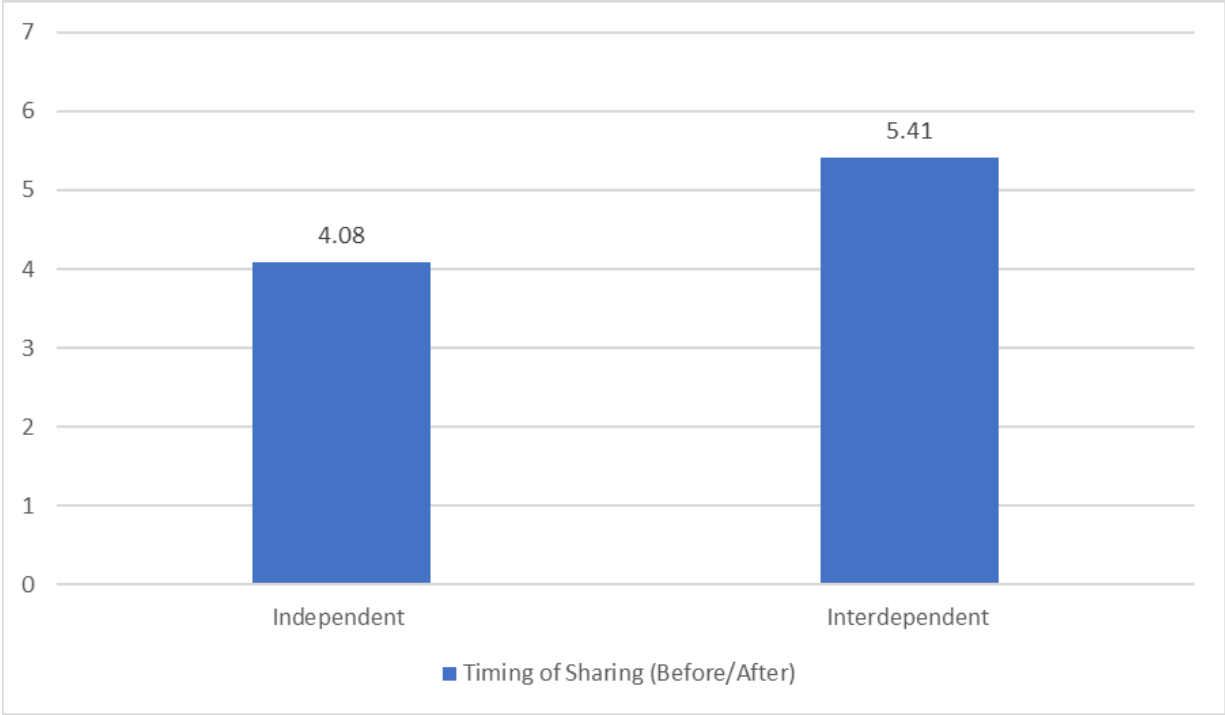Impact of Self-Construal on Timing of Sharing

Table 1. Results of Mediation Analysis

Variable		β	t	P
Regression 1	Dependent variable: Timing of Sharing (Before/After)			
	Self-Construal (SC)	.29	3.14	.002
Regression 2	Dependent variable: Regulatory Focus (RF)			
	SC	.001	.008	.99
Regression 3	Dependent variable: Timing of Sharing (Before/After)			
	SC	-.29	-3.14	.002
	RF	.04	.46	.65