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How Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance and Indulgence Affect Social Commerce Expenditure? An Investigation Based on Facebook

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Abstract

The increasing popularity of social networking sites (SNS) in recent years paved the way for the emergence of social commerce. As a subset of e-commerce, s-commerce establishes the communication between companies and consumers through SNS and allows online shopping. However, online shopping through s-commerce varies substantially between different regions. The differences observed in consumer behaviour stem from the different cultural background every society has. This study analyses the effects of Hofstede's cultural dimensions; uncertainty avoidance (UAI), power distance (PDI) and indulgence (ING), on s-commerce expenditure. With this purpose, the total amount of online expenditure for 53 countries chosen from different regions, their total number of internet and Facebook users, and data related to their cultural dimensions have been collected. In an effort to better understand the current state of s-commerce, annual average expenditure of per Facebook user in each country has been calculated through total online expenditure. Correlation and regression analysis have also been performed together with cultural dimensions. Following these findings, it has been concluded while UAI and PDI reduce s-commerce expenditure, ING increases it. Consequently, the findings demonstrate while consumer willingness to do online shopping decreases in the context of uncertainty and risk; increases when safety is provided.

Keywords: social commerce; culture; uncertainty avoidance; power distance; indulgence

Introduction

Developments in information technologies made the Internet an indispensable part of daily life (Zhang and Zhao, 2014). The widespread use of Internet in a large number of areas changed the structure of the traditional markets and spawned a wide range of e-commerce opportunities. Thanks to this system which narrows the gap between producers and consumers (Gomez-Herrera et al., 2014), producers are able to reach consumers more quickly and easily (Chang and Chen, 2008; Lee et al., 2010). E-commerce has also reduced the costs by eliminating some of the agents in the supply-chain which attracted a larger number of businesses to practise it. Moreover, it also contributed to increase sales and promote competition (Harris and Goode, 2010).

The increase in the number of businesses and competition between them have led to a remarkable development in e-commerce over the last ten years and driven consumers to do online shopping rather than traditional shopping (Fang et al., 2014; Lin, 2014). The convenience of delivery service and easy access to the products, the opportunity of purchasing a limitless range of products, the possibility to compare them and find the most favourable one played key roles in this (Liu and Forsythe, 2010; Demirel, 2010; Mokhtarian, 2004). Web sites which had been set up to promote the products and services of companies enabled a virtual marketplace to transact business (Zhang et al., 2013). On the other hand, consumers had the opportunity to do online shopping thanks to the content based on buying and selling products as well as services in these virtual markets.

With the explosive growth of social media in recent years it is possible to talk about the presence of a shift from business-generated content towards user-generated content (Hajli, 2014; Yoo et al., 2013). As social networking sites facilitated information sharing and the access to information (Chen et al., 2011), it led to the emergence of social commerce as a subset of e-commerce (Lee, 2013; Zheng et al., 2013). Social commerce, which has emerged through the integration of online shopping and social networks (Tedeschi, 2006), refers to the use of social media which enables consumers and communities connected to each other with a network to create and share information with the purpose to facilitate the process of purchase decision (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008; Huang and Benyoucef, 2013). The evolution of social commerce reintroduces the social aspect in online interaction which enables consumers to find correct information and a better price about the related products as they share their shopping experiences (Kim and Park, 2013).

However, despite these advantages consumers take a negative attitude to online shopping because of reasons such as impossibility of trying the products out, prejudice against software and computer technologies, problems during payment, spending long time to find information and the risk of being scammed or theft of personal information (Lian and Yen, 2013; Rudolph et al., 2004; Simicevic et al., 2012). Despite the developments in e-commerce and the inclusion of s-commerce, these facts pose a major obstacle in terms of the total volume of online shopping (Pradas et al., 2013). From this point of view, we can reach the conclusion that there have been substantial developments in e-commerce over the last few years and there will be more developments if barriers faced by consumers are broken down. In time, the volume of global e-commerce and therefore s-commerce will increase significantly.

E-commerce volumes on a global scale vary from country to country. For example, while a turnover of approximately €96 billion B2C volume was recorded in the UK this amount is only €5,5 billion in Turkey (Ecommerce Europe, 2013). It can be stated that the development stage of countries as well as their cultural background lead to these differences. As a

differentiating element between countries, cultural background affects the use of information technologies by consumers and their online shopping behaviours (Gong, 2009; Dwyer et al., 2005). In other words, culture shapes the attitudes of consumers towards e-commerce and therefore s-commerce. The cultural values of consumers influence their expectations and perceptions of products and services (Yoon, 2009; Pookulangara and Koesler, 2011). Individuals in different countries respond to new products and innovations differently. In this context, we can argue that culture affects purchase behaviour and purchase preferences as well (Kueh and Voon, 2007; Kumar and Krishnan, 2002).

The purpose of this study is to determine whether cultural values have any effect on social commerce expenditure of countries which have differences in terms of population, region and upbringing. In this context, Hofstede's cultural variables; uncertainty avoidance, power distance and indulgence are evaluated as independent variables and their effects on s-commerce expenditure have been analysed through the model constructed.

The structure of this study is planned as follows: the following chapter deals with a brief overview of s-commerce as well as the relationship between cultural background and consumer behaviour. After that, the relationship between each cultural variable and s-commerce have been analysed to develop research hypotheses with the contribution of the literature. The research model constructed with the assistance of hypotheses is tested in the following chapter and various findings have been reported. Finally, the results of the study are revealed in light of the findings. The study ends with the discussion and recommendation sections.

Social Commerce

Social commerce is an e-commerce model based on social media as it offers the opportunity to buy and sell various products and services on the Internet (Kim and Park, 2013; Wang and Zhang, 2012; Hajli, 2015). Social networks such as Blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter and Second Life (Baghdadi, 2013) provide users the opportunity to connect to each other through social media systems which have open or half-open infrastructure (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). The integration of these systems with Web 2.0 applications led to significant developments in s-commerce (Lee et al., 2008; Zhou et al., 2013; Shin, 2013). This infrastructure based on communication mediated by social commerce allows people to share their shopping experiences and give each other recommendations (Huang and Benyoucef, 2013; Leitner and Grechenig, 2009). The advantages of communication and sharing between users mediated by social commerce contributed to marketing activities thanks to the concept of e-WoM (See-Pui Ng, 2013).

Businesses take advantage of social commerce to communicate with consumers through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (Stephen and Toubia, 2010). Therefore, the products and services of companies are readily accessible to consumers who can also share their own content they generated about them. In contrast to e-commerce, social commerce allows user-generated content which introduced a paradigm shift. Consumers started to take active roles and firms are compelled to change their business procedures and adopt a customer-based orientation (Liang and Turban, 2012; Hajli, 2015; Zhou et al., 2013). The consumer community, which share their experiences on social media instantly rather than traditionally on the web sites of these firms (Liang et al., 2012), have become more powerful in the relationship with them thanks to informative role of social commerce. A negative or

positive experience voiced by any consumer is distributed rapidly among both user-generated sharing groups and social media groups.

While the primary purpose of a retailer is to establish a personal relationship with consumers to make them a supporter of the brand and to attract them, the aim of the consumers is to ensure a safer purchase process through the interactive environment provided by social commerce (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Marsden, 2011; Curty and Zhang, 2011). In this context, we can define social commerce as a system supporting e-commerce which is based on creating a collective affiliation among users to ensure safety. In short, social commerce is an e-commerce system which allows active participation of consumers through the convergence of social media technologies, community interaction and marketing activities (Liang and Turban, 2012; Curty and Zhang, 2013; Hajli, 2013).

Culture and Consumer Behaviour

Hofstede (2001) defines culture as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another. Mind here is signified as the collective opinions, emotions and behaviours shared by the members of a group as a result of common beliefs, attitudes and capabilities. In other words culture is the totality of values that members of a group have in common (Hofstede, 1998; Hofstede, 2003). Analyzing the cultural values of different countries, Hofstede put forward 4 cultural dimensions; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Although only four dimensions were determined between 1990-2002, today the number of these dimensions is 6 as long as short term orientation and indulgence vs. restraint have been added over time (Minkov and Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede, 2014a).

Culture is an institution constructed by human beings (McCort and Malhotra, 1993) and it includes values such as beliefs, art and spirituality (McCort and Malhotra, 1993), it has its unique rules, standards and norms (Erez and Earley, 1993) and finally it influences the opinions, feelings and behaviours of the community it belongs through certain patterns (Sojka and Tansuhaj, 1995). Based on these definitions, we can argue that each group and sub group has its unique characteristics and these characteristics shape their daily lives and behaviours. Although globalisation poses a risk to the uniqueness of various cultures as borders between countries lose their significance leading to the homogenisation of individuals (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007; Zou and Cavusgil, 1996), it can be argued that the effects of cultural identities, their habits, values, traditions and norms are maintained in a number of ways (Zhu et al., 2006; Usunier, 1997).

The analysis of studies on culture demonstrates that various research data confirms culture has an impact on the attitudes and preferences of consumers; therefore, it shapes consumer behaviour and purchase decisions (Briley and Aaker, 2006; Moon et al., 2008; Legoherel et al., 2009; Datta, 2009; Bahhouth et al., 2012; Gentina et al., 2014). Different consumer behaviour patterns stem from different purposes and desires that their cultural backgrounds constitute (Kim and Drolet, 2003). These differences affect the perceptions and expectations of consumers about products and services (Yoon, 2009; Pookulangara and Koesler, 2011). In light of this context, we can argue that culture which surrounds the daily lives of individuals with various rules and norms, shape their purchase decisions and preferences when they are considered as consumers.

Not only does culture influence the life style and purchase behaviour of individuals but it also influences the use of Internet and information technologies (Brandtzaeg, 2010). Different reactions of consumers with various cultural backgrounds to information technologies and innovations lead to divergent attitudes towards online shopping (Gong, 2009; Dwyer et al., 2005). Studies conducted by various researchers demonstrate that culture affects the expectations and perceptions of consumers on e-commerce (Moon et al., 2008; Yoon, 2009; Pookulangara and Koesler, 2011) and it differentiates their attitudes to transactions encountered during online shopping such as purchase, payment, delivery etc (Sakarya and Soyer, 2013; Burgmann et al., 2006). Therefore it is obvious that firms have to take various cultures into account when they determine their strategies despite the homogenization of markets due to unprecedented access to all around the world with only "one click" (Capece et al., 2013; Mazaheri et al., 2014).

Since culture, besides influencing consumer behaviour, shapes online experiences and communication patterns of consumers as a preliminary determinant (Chen and Dubinsky, 2008; Cleveland and Chang, 2009; Brandtzaeg, 2010), social networks has become more strategic in terms of online shopping (Pookulangara and Koesler, 2011). It is possible to argue that social commerce is not independent from culture when we take into account how consumers with different cultural backgrounds from all around the world communicate with each other through social networks, share their experiences and shape the purchase behaviour of each other (Evans and Chi, 2010; Morris et al., 2010). In other words, the impacts of culture on social commerce expenditure can be easily observed. The next section discusses the relationship between social commerce expenditure and Hofstede's cultural dimensions uncertainty avoidance, power distance and indulgence in order to assess the abovementioned impacts.

Hypotheses Development

Uncertainty Avoidance and Social Commerce

Uncertainty avoidance stands for the beliefs of individuals who belong to a group structured to minimize anxiety and avoid ambiguity (Hofstede, 2001). Individuals with a high level of uncertainty avoidance are more anxious and stressed about an ambiguous future (Ayoun and Moreo, 2008; Ko et al., 2015). In this context, it can be argued that consumers with lower levels of uncertainty avoidance are more comfortable and have a tendency to take more risks (Hwa-Froelich and Vigil, 2004; Lee et al., 2007). Due to the ambiguity of the future, individuals with higher levels of uncertainty avoidance feel worried about the promises people give to them and about fair treatment of themselves (Minkov and Hofstede, 2014). In other words, it is possible to claim that individuals have a tendency to offer advantages to each other. This uncertainty and the construction of advantages stem from information asymmetry emerging as individuals have different types of information about a particular issue (Sandmo, 1999). Since it is impossible to have absolute access to information due to information asymmetry and complexity a state of insecurity emerges (Ronteltap et al., 2007).

It is possible to observe the impacts of uncertainty on e-commerce. Information asymmetry and computer-mediated nature of these transactions trigger the emergence of risks (Tan and Thoen, 2010; Liu and Wei, 2003). While the retailer has full information about the product/service, the consumer is never completely sure whether the product or service will be delivered as it is marketed online because of information asymmetry. This fact suggests as

Minkov and Hofstede (2014) stated that vendors might take advantage of the purchasing process to make opportunistic profits. In addition, the computer-mediated nature of online shopping means it is impossible for users to see, smell or test the products directly (Mazaheri et al., 2014; Wan et al., 2012). Therefore reaching a decision entails uncertainty and both conditions affect the attitudes of consumers to online shopping.

Uncertainty avoidance which can be associated with risk tolerance (Tolba and Mourad, 2011; Frijns et al., 2013) has an impact both on e-commerce and social commerce. Privacy concerns about the theft of personal information and the possibility that third parties with abusive intentions might be involved in the system hinders social commerce purchases (Patterson, 2012; Petrova and Valles, 2012). As these risks lead to a lack of trust in social commerce (Hajli et al., 2014) consumers start to display a tendency to refrain from such a risky environment (Greenberg et al., 2008). From this point of view, it can be argued that communities with high level of uncertainty avoidance feel more uncomfortable during the process of social commerce and they are less willing to purchase a product online. In other words, if the tendency of uncertainty avoidance is higher social commerce expenditure will be lower.

H1: Uncertainty avoidance has a negative effect on social commerce expenditure.

Power Distance and Social Commerce

Power distance signifies the unequal distribution of power among individuals that create a particular society. Unequal distribution of power in a society leads to hierarchy (Hofstede, 2001). In other words, individuals are separated into different groups such as those who have power and who do not. These groups lead to divisions within the society in terms of levels of power (Katz and Rice, 2002; Hofstede, 2013). Societies with higher level of power distance are characterized by a centralized power (Pavlou and Chai, 2002; Baghci et al., 2003). On the other hand, it can be argued that power is distributed more equally in societies with lower power distance.

Low power distance societies are more independent of hierarchy and have a higher tendency to change, innovation and the use of information technologies (Zakour, 2004; Matusitz and Musambira, 2013; Sadeghi et al., 2014). In contrast, high power distance societies expect a sign from their leaders or people who have authority in organizational hierarchy when information technologies are to be used (Gong et al., 2007). As they are dependent on a sign from a person who has a higher position in a vertical hierarchy their behaviour will take place within limited boundaries and it will be controlled (Doney et al., 1998). The limited nature of those behaviours influences their beliefs and perceptions about the convenience of using computers (Sadeghi et al., 2014).

Power distance which hinders the experience of using computers (Srite, 1999) has an adverse effect on the acceptance and use of Internet (Matusitz and Musambira, 2013; Sadeghi et al., 2014). In other words there is a negative correlation between the use of Internet and power distance (Gong et al., 2007; Yeniyurt and Townsend, 2003; La Ferle et al., 2002). From this point of view, we can conclude that the level of power distance is a significant determinant in online shopping. A positive perception should be developed to encourage consumers to do online shopping and engage in social commerce in high power distance societies where trust in technology is lower and the possibility of incorrect transactions are higher (Srite, 1999; Downey et al., 2005; Tan et al., 2007). Therefore, it is possible to argue that power distance is a significant factor in terms of triggering insecurity and risk (Srite, 1999) similar to

uncertainty avoidance, and decreasing the willingness to social commerce expenditure. Furthermore, it leads the consumers to refrain from s-commerce.

H2: Power distance has a negative effect on social commerce expenditure.

Indulgence and Social Commerce

Indulgence stands for the tendency to allow free gratification of basic and natural desires to enjoy life and have fun (Hofstede, 2014a). Societies with a high level of indulgence consists of individuals with positive emotions, educated people who see freedom of speech as important and get pleasure out of life (Hofstede, 2011). While a higher level of indulgence indicates a tendency to happiness (Yaseen and Omoush, 2012; Yaşar, 2014), a lower level of indulgence indicates a tendency to pessimism and cynicism (Hofstede, 2014b). In other words it is possible to characterize high-indulgent societies as optimist (Mackintosh, 2013). Individuals who have positive feelings about life are more likely to display behaviour accordingly. Likewise, consumers express that they feel happy about their shopping experiences and spending (Yaseen and Omoush, 2012; Korsakiene and Gurina, 2012).

The feeling of optimism in indulgent societies decreases cynicism (Josang, 2007) and creates the basis of trust as there is a belief that the future will be better than today. The trust ensured by optimism has a significant and powerful role in online environment (Uslaner, 1998; Coppola et al., 2001; Lumsden and MacKay, 2006). Online trust is considerably effective in terms of building a positive attitude and increase willingness to e-commerce (Gefen, 2000; Tan and Thoen, 2002; Dahlberg et al., 2003). The risks perceived by consumers with respect to e-commerce (Patterson, 2012; Petrova and Valles, 2012) decreases when trust is involved; online transactions such as searching for information, purchase and payment are handled without any problems or interruption (Schaupp and Carter, 2010; Yildirim and Zeren, 2014).

Consumers make use of social networking sites in order to ensure trust in s-commerce. Social trust which is based on interpersonal relationships and built over time decreases the level of risk perceived by consumers (Qu and Yang, 2015). They develop an online interactive environment through social commerce which eliminates lack of trust (Petrova and Valles, 2012; Hajli et al., 2014). In short, because social networks provide the opportunity to share experiences and give recommendations with its structure based on communication and sharing (Huang and Benyoucef, 2013; Leitner and Grechenig, 2009; See-Pui Ng, 2013) they encourage the consumers to engage in s-commerce by building positive attitudes towards it. In this context, it is possible to argue that the increase in scores of indulgence lead consumers to s-commerce as high level of indulgence indicates an increasing optimism which builds trust for them.

H3: Indulgence has a positive effect on social commerce expenditure.

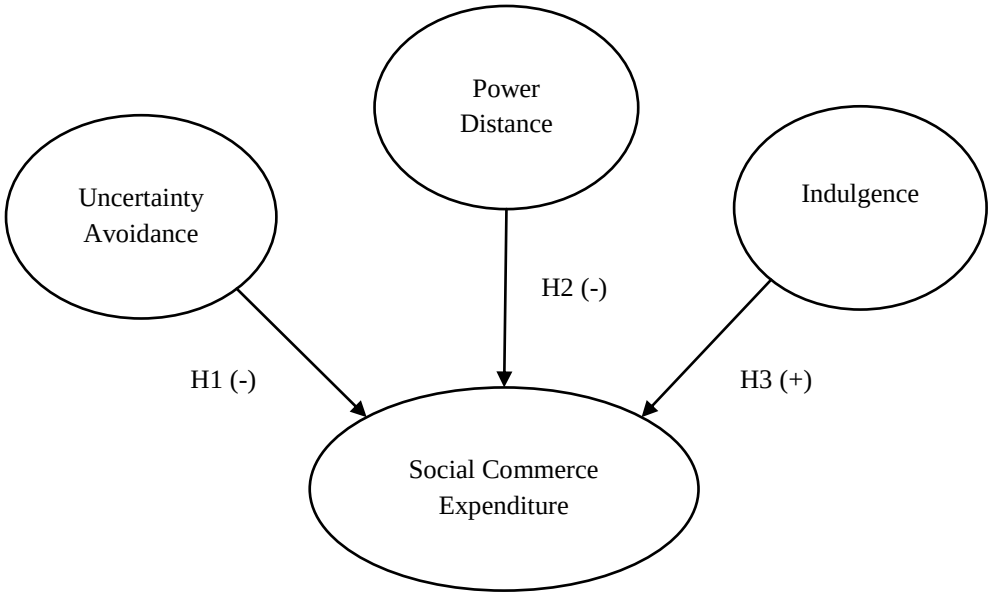


Figure 1. Research Model

Method

The data of 53 countries from different continents and regions is used in the study. The quantitative data with respect to the independent variables of the model is acquired from Hofstede's cultural dimensions; uncertainty avoidance (UAI), power distance (PDI) and indulgence (ING). In addition, social commerce expenditure as the dependent variable of the model is calculated on the basis of the total amount of B2C expenditure for each country in 2012 as well as the number of Internet users and Facebook users. The data related to B2C expenditure has been collected from e-commerce reports. Euro is determined as the currency of the data. Therefore, the data collected in Dollars has been changed into Euros according to the average rate of that year. The measurement model which is used to calculate social commerce expenditure is described below:

First of all, B2C expenditure per Internet user has been calculated.

$$Per\ B2C\ Expenditure\ (pB2CE) = \frac{Total\ B2C\ Expenditure\ (TB2CE)}{Total\ Internet\ Users\ (TIU)} * 1000000$$

Later on, total Facebook users among total Internet users have been determined.

$$Facebook\ Penetration\ (FP) = \frac{Total\ Facebook\ Users\ (TFU)}{Total\ Internet\ Users\ (TIU)}$$

Finally, the average expenditure of per Facebook user has been calculated to determine social commerce expenditure.

$$Per\ Social\ Commerce\ Expenditure\ (pSCE) = pB2CE * FP$$

Table 1. Data of Countries

Country	UAI	PDI	ING	TB2CE*	TIU	TFU	pB2CE	FP	pSCE
Argentina	86	49	62	6.560	28.000.000	20.594.680	234,29	0,74	172,32
Austria	70	11	63	9.800	6.559.355	2.915.240	1494,05	0,44	664,02
Australia	51	36	71	23.976	19.554.832	11.808.360	1226,09	0,60	740,39
Belgium	94	65	57	4.800	8.489.901	4.922.260	565,38	0,58	327,79
Brasil	76	69	59	19.197	88.494.756	64.878.260	216,93	0,73	159,04
Bulgaria	85	70	16	150	3.589.347	2.522.120	41,79	0,70	29,36
Canada	48	39	68	11.664	28.469.069	18.529.240	409,71	0,65	266,66
Chile	86	63	68	1.215	10.000.000	9.648.660	121,50	0,96	117,23
Colombia	80	67	83	810	26.936.343	17.505.920	30,07	0,65	19,54
Croatia	80	73	33	200	3.167.838	1.595.760	63,13	0,50	31,80
Czech Rep.	74	57	29	1.800	7.426.376	3.834.620	242,38	0,52	125,15
Denmark	23	18	70	7.388	4.989.108	3.037.700	1480,83	0,61	901,63
Egypt	80	70	4	2.592	29.809.724	12.173.540	86,95	0,41	35,51
Estonia	60	40	16	100	993.785	501.680	100,63	0,50	50,80
Finland	59	33	57	5.400	4.703.480	2.287.000	1148,09	0,49	558,24
France	86	68	48	45.000	52.228.905	25.624.760	861,59	0,49	422,72
Germany	65	35	40	50.000	67.483.860	25.332.440	740,92	0,38	278,13
Greece	100	60	50	2.900	5.706.948	3.845.820	508,15	0,67	342,44
Hungary	82	46	31	675	6.516.627	4.265.960	103,58	0,65	67,81
Iceland	50	30	67	200	304.129	227.000	657,62	0,75	490,84
India	40	77	26	15.550	137.000.000	62.713.680	113,50	0,46	51,96
Indonesia	48	78	38	2.511	55.000.000	51.096.860	45,65	0,93	42,41
Ireland	35	28	65	4.600	3.627.462	2.183.760	1268,10	0,60	763,41
Italy	75	50	30	9.582	35.800.000	23.202.640	267,65	0,65	173,47
Japan	92	54	42	59.373	101.228.736	17.196.080	586,52	0,17	99,63
Jordan	65	70	43	284	2.681.940	2.558.140	105,89	0,95	101,01
Latvia	63	44	13	150	1.570.925	414.520	95,49	0,26	25,20
Lebanon	50	75	25	162	2.152.950	1.587.060	75,25	0,74	55,47
Lithuania	65	42	16	300	2.293.508	1.118.500	130,80	0,49	63,79
Luxembourg	70	40	56	400	462.697	227.520	864,50	0,49	425,10
Malaysia	36	100	57	567	17.723.000	13.589.520	31,99	0,77	24,53
Malta	96	56	66	20	282.648	217.040	70,76	0,77	54,33
Mexico	82	81	97	5.832	42.000.000	40.150.340	138,86	0,96	132,74
Netherlands	53	38	68	9.800	15.549.787	7.554.940	630,23	0,49	306,20
New Zeland	49	22	75	2.349	3.810.144	2.291.240	616,51	0,60	370,74
Norway	50	31	55	7.900	4.560.572	2.771.480	1732,24	0,61	1052,69
Peru	87	64	46	486	10.785.573	9.856.600	45,06	0,91	41,18
Poland	93	68	29	4.181	24.940.902	9.863.380	167,64	0,40	66,30
Portugal	99	63	33	1.200	5.950.449	4.663.060	201,67	0,78	158,03
Romania	90	90	20	800	9.642.383	5.374.980	82,97	0,56	46,25
Russia	95	93	20	10.302	67.982.547	7.963.400	151,54	0,12	17,75
Saudi Arabia	80	95	52	648	13.000.000	5.852.520	49,85	0,45	22,44
Slovakia	51	100	28	500	4.337.868	2.032.200	115,26	0,47	54,00
Slovenia	88	71	48	250	1.440.066	730.160	173,60	0,51	88,02
South Africa	49	49	63	1.134	8.500.000	6.269.600	133,41	0,74	98,40
South Korea	85	60	29	18.873	40.329.660	10.012.400	467,97	0,25	116,18
Spain	86	57	44	12.969	31.606.233	17.590.500	410,33	0,56	228,37

Sweden	29	31	78	7.238	8.441.718	4.950.160	857,41	0,59	502,78
Switzerland	58	34	66	9.100	6.509.247	3.055.800	1398,01	0,47	656,30
Turkey	85	66	49	5.448	36.455.000	32.131.260	149,44	0,88	131,72
UK	35	35	69	96.193	52.731.209	32.950.400	1824,21	0,62	1139,91
USA	46	40	68	121.338	245.203.319	163.817.940	494,85	0,67	330,60
Venezuela	76	81	100	1.134	12.097.156	9.808.560	93,74	0,81	76,01

* billion €, Source: ecommerce-europe.eu; geert-hofstede.com; emarketer.com; ekosglobal.com; internetworldstats.com; visualizing.info.

Data Analysis and Results

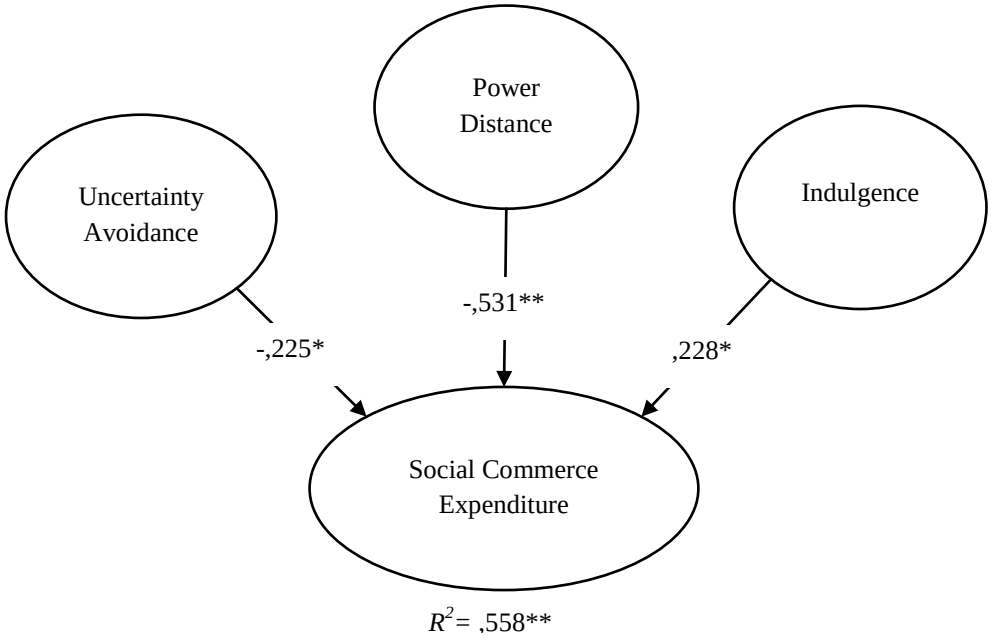
A correlation analysis has been performed to measure the relationship between dependent and independent variables. As demonstrated in Table 2, uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and power distance (PDI) has a negative relationship with social commerce expenditure (pSCE). The linear relationship between pSCE levels, UAI and PDI levels are statistically significant. When Pearson correlation coefficients of these two independent variables are analysed it is observed that the value of the relationship between PDI and pSCE is stronger than the value of the relationship between UAI and pSCE. On the other hand, the relationship between indulgence (ING) and pSCE is positive and statistically significant.

Table 2. Correlations

	UAI	PDI	ING	pSCE
UAI	1			
PDI	,295*	1		
ING	- ,193	- ,315*	1	
pSCE	- ,411**	- ,697**	,455**	1

* sig. < ,05; ** sig. < ,01

The analysis of the regression model revealed that independent variables; uncertainty avoidance (UAI), power distance (PDI) and indulgence (ING) has an impact on social commerce expenditure. The analysis of these impacts indicates while UAI and PDI decreases pSCE, conversely ING increases it. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the hypotheses of H1, H2 and H3 are supported. Similarly, the results of the analysis indicate the negative impact of PDI on pSCE (-,531) is stronger than the impact of UAI on pSCE (-,225). This proves among cultural dimensions, PDI is relatively more significant than UAI in terms of consumer behaviour and therefore social commerce expenditure. It can also be suggested that the impact of ING (,228) increases social commerce expenditure which balances the negative impact of the other two variables. The total impact of these three independent variables on pSCE is measured to be R^2 = ,558. Therefore, the explanatory rate of this variable set (UAI, PDI and ING) for pSCE is estimated to be around % 56.



* sig. < ,05; ** sig. < ,01

Figure 2. Results of the Full Model

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study we researched the impacts of Hofstede's cultural dimensions; uncertainty avoidance (UAI), power distance (PDI) and indulgence (ING) on social commerce expenditure and found out that statistically there are significant relationships between the variables. It is observed that UAI and PDI have negative impacts on pSCE. In other words, pSCE decreases in societies with high scores of UAI and PDI. As Patterson, 2012 and Petrova and Valles, 2012 stated, the theft personal information on the Internet, the possibility that third parties with abusive intentions might be involved in the system poses a risk for social commerce. Consumers display a tendency to refrain from these environments which triggers insecurity and risks as they endanger the social commerce trust (Hajli et al., 2014; Greenberg et al., 2008; Srite, 1999). Similar to online shopping, trust in the system and trust in firms play a significant role in terms of the sustainability of social commerce; because individuals inherently have the desire to test the product they intend to purchase through their senses. As they lack the opportunity to test the products directly on the Internet a state of uncertainty emerges which influences their purchase decision and therefore spending.

Indulgence (ING) from cultural dimensions has an impact of increasing pSCE. Societies with high levels of ING have a more optimistic attitude towards life which is reflected in their behaviour. The feeling of optimism as stated in studies of Uslaner, 1998, Coppola et al., 2001, Lumsden and MacKay, 2006, Gefen, 2000 and, Tan and Thoen, 2002 leads consumers to build a positive attitude and trust in social commerce expenditure. Consumers who communicate with other users through social networking sites share their shopping experiences and benefits from the experiences of other users to eliminate risks and lack of trust (Petrova and Valles, 2012; Hajli et al., 2014). Therefore, it will be to the point to note that ING has a balancing power when UAI and PDI manifest a decreasing impact on it. In

other words, consumers balance the negative impact of UAI and PDI on social commerce through ING.

In conclusion, risk and trust are vital concepts that drive online purchase activities in s-commerce as an expanding market. As long as consumers do not feel themselves safe from invisible threats, system gaps, fraud etc. they will not engage in online purchase transactions. Undoubtedly, this varies between different cultures; because every culture has its own unique perception and expectations. Furthermore, their threshold levels for risk and trust which influences their behaviour varies as well. Raising the awareness of consumers and efforts to build positive attitudes to s-commerce might help to ameliorate the differences arising from cultural backgrounds.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interest.

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