



Assignment 1: Report

Section 1-3

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Section 1

1. My past educational study

The biggest obstacle in my DBA study seems to be my past educational studies have nothing to do with business administration. I majored in English Education in my undergraduate study and Ancient Chinese in my postgraduate.

However, Learning both English and Ancient Chinese enables me to view social phenomenon under different cultural context. As a lecturer working in a university for national minorities whose students covering over 40 national minorities in China, I am attracted by the discrepancy between the dominantly numerous Han Chinese and other minor ethnic groups.

As a language learner, I like to communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds and enjoy talking with them, observing their behaviours endowing me with the precondition of a good interviewer. As an amateur composer, lyricist and singer, I have a passion for anything creative and beautifully-designed. What I lack for a researcher is a massive literature review and rigorous academic training to beautifully design the methodology.

2. Sources consulted

2.1. what I am passionate about

Music definitely is where my passion belongs to. But after resourcing relating research in the business and management field, I realized the currency of this theme is limited. In the top journals, 3-starred or 4-starred journal of AJG, seldom did the relating research appear in recent 5 years. The most common relating research is about the role of digital consumption of music in the music business and the other is about the music festival. But the research seemingly possesses low validity and reliability due to the low impact factors of the publishing journal and low citing rates.

2.2. The topic I have read about in the media, TV, internet, press, movies, etc.

The problem of graduates' employability is frequently reported in China news report with 8.74 million students who graduated from university in 2020. The unprecedented employment pressure in China attracts the eyesight of academia.

The application of the concept is widely-ranged. The research is conducted in the disciplines of career development, education, industrial and organizational psychology, etc. As a university teacher, I naturally put my eyes on the research of gradating employability. Dominant research on graduate's employability focused on the training strategy of high education and the economic role of graduate (Tomlinson, 2012). To enhance the graduate's employability, many graduate's employability models are designed. Researchers including Hillage and Pollard (1998), Bennette et al (1999), Yorke & Knight (2004), Lwa & Watts (1977), Lorraine & Peter (2007) designed employability model for training.

A lot of relating research found in well-ranked journals can prove the currency of the theme. Shintaro Sato (2021) analyzed the graduate employability situation before and after COVID in the sports industry. But in the top journals, the graduate employability is not frequently discussed while the topic like career transition in employability is more accessible in top journals. Sherry E & Akram (2021) summarize dominate perspectives on career transition and predict the direction for future research. Barbara Samaluk (2020) analyze the process of work transition in the female-dominated welfare profession to prove workfare regime in Europe deteriorate precarity.

2.3. Topic I learned in one of my modules - Corporation Social Responsibilities

CSR is a frequently- discussed academic topic in China now which is an indicator of its currency. CSR theories are categorized into four groups (Carrega & Mele, 2004): instrumental theories emphasizing the profits generated like stockholder theory of Friedman (1970), political theories focusing on social duties like corporate citizenship theory (Crane & Matten, 2010), integrative theories like Freeman's stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) believing the consistency in both social and organizational benefits, Carroll's pyramid of CSR (1991), ethical theories arguing ethical duties should be accepted as the priority above other considerations.

In some top journals, the CSR theory-based research can be found. Alwyn Lim (2017) examine why decoupling happens in global corporate responsibilities, taking Singapore as a study case. Katy Gardner (2015) identify the contradiction between corporations development and the calls of local residents, adopting development gift theory in the perspective of CSR. Both of the two elaborated pieces of researches remind me CSR provide the researchers with a good perspective to analyze organizational management.

2.4 Duplicating an existing study but try to do something different

Living in China for over 30 years, how e-commerce modifies China greatly from the perspective of economics, socio demography, anthropology, sociology astonish me. Social commerce, regarded as a subset of E-commerce is an emerging field in China. Following the existing landmark study and try to duplicate is appropriate for a novice researcher like me.

the study of social commerce fall into three categories: social commerce and organizations, social commerce and advertising, social commerce and e-WOM (Xiaolin Lin et al, 2016)

In the previous research, some researchers focus on the role of review in social commerce. Hajli et al (2014) identified the positive relationship between consumer trust and new products. Zhang, et al (2014) claimed both the positive and negative reviews will influence the consumers' trust in online sellers and their intention to purchase. Goes, et al (2014) explored how review changed over time with finding that the reviewer whose review was valued will be more objective.

Some researchers focus on the social aspect of social commerce.

Haenlein and Kaplan (2009) argued that a good relationship between retailers and consumers will increase the intention to purchase. Huang, Kim, and Kim (2013) find the interaction with other social media users will influence the users generated content significantly.

Xiaolin Lina, et al (2016) identified the trend of online reviews, trust, e-WOM research will attract more attention in social commerce.

From the perspective of trust, The previous study focuses on how trust and social commerce mutually affect each other (Hajli, 2014; Coulter & Roggeveen, 2012)

What interest me most is the research from the perspective of culture. There weren't many comparative studies of social commerce published in a top journal in recent 3 years. The researches below have comparatively high validity and reliability whose number of citation is as high as 400.

The integrative research was conducted by Ng (2013), who empirically proved the moderating effect of culture and mediating effect of trust on the relationship between social interaction and intention to purchase. It also makes a comparative study between East Asia and Latin America.

Kamal, et al (2013) identified the positive impact of materialism level to purchase intention of luxuries, through the investigation of Arab and American customers.

The application of the concept, social commerce, cover all topics in business and management. The huge number of publication prove its currency. Pitifully the research with high reliability and validity are seldom.

Following Ng (2013)'s research design, I will seek to identify the cultural factor in social commerce acceptance in different ethnic groups in China.

3. Validity and reliability of the sources

To secure the validity and reliability of the sources, the references cited including thesis and books meet one of the following criteria:

- a) The thesis from a 3-starred or 4-starred journal in AJG.
- b) The thesis from a journal whose impact factor is above 1.5.
- c) The thesis or books whose number of citation is above 50.

Section 2

My chosen theory is Hofstede's cultural dimension theory which was used in many research territories including anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, law and medicine. (Hofstede & Geert, 2001).

1. evolution of Hofstede's cultural dimension theory.

Based on a survey of IBM employees from 72 countries around the 1970s, following the theoretical foundation built by Inkeles & Levinson (1969), Hofstede created a four-dimensioned model (Geert Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede et al, 1988) to analyze the cultural difference becoming the cornerstone of cultural study - individualism & collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity & femininity. The "unpacking of culture" approach enlightened many landmark pieces of researches like Chinese culture connection (1987) and Schwartz (1994) which will be introduced in details.

In 1991, the fifth dimension was introduced referred to as long-term orientation echoed with Bond's research on the Rokeach Value Survey (RSV) dimensions (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). More evidence was given to support the theoretical foundation (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Hofstede, 2001)

Hofstede integrated the organizational culture into his research and suggested that national cultures stemmed from the individuals' family life is different from the organizational culture obtained in an organization (Hofstede et al, 1990).

The substantial development of Hofstede's dimensions occurred with the appearance of GLOBE's main works (House et al, 2004). Although GLOBE project accepted the paradigm of cultural dimensions, it argued some of Hofstede's dimensions lack face validity. Based on GLOBE's research, Smith (2006), McCrae et al (2008) explored the cultural dimension by telling personal values from norms.

Another substantial development of cultural dimensions was made by Minkov (2009) who pointed out the measure of life control and leisure quality are indicators of happiness of national culture referred to as

“indulgence & restraint”. The five-dimensioned model of Hofstede was evolved into six endorsed by Hofstede himself as a contribution to his framework.

Most importantly, the fact that measures of Minkov extracted from a database of World Value Survey representing the western value corresponded with the measure extracted from Chinese Value Survey developed by Bond (Chinese culture connection, 1987) representing eastern value proves Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are justifiable (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011).

2. My research area

2.1. the evolvement of my research topic

There is a spectrum of relating topics mentioned in blog 1. I will focus on social commerce research in China in the aspects of acceptance, the role of trust and e-WOM in the lens of cultural dimensions.

In the beginning, I tried to combine the technology acceptance model, Hofstede cultural dimensions and family life cycle in the context of different ethnic groups, exploring the cultural factors on social

commerce acceptance in single-phase crowd defined in FLC theory in the context of two ethnic groups.

As a novice researcher, I realized it is too ambitious to achieve research with so many variables from different lens and may reduce my focus on the cultural factors of social commerce. So I gave up the FLC perspective and refined my topic into *the moderating effect of culture on social commerce acceptance: a comparative study between two ethnic groups in China*.

2.2. Strengths and weaknesses

Hofstede's cultural framework provides me with a systematic and justifiable tool to conduct my study on social commerce acceptance. Many precious landmark research adopted this framework proving the validity in application to social commerce (Ng, Celeste See-Pui, 2013; Nakayama et al, 2019; Kamal et al, 2013).

However, Hofstede warned that the replication research undertakes huge risks, especially for novice researchers whose results are "marginally interesting" because they rarely cover an adequate number of cultures (Geert Hofstede, 2001). The replications covering only two or three cultures whose reliability of the instrument will be questioned because in the culture study reliability calculations like Cronbach Alpha

should be applied to the research objects, cultures (Hofstede, 2001), rather than individuals. this is relating to the first phase of my research seeking to identify the cultural differences in the Han Chinese and Tibetan.

There are three solutions to solve this problem:

- a. Follow the individualism & collectivism scale of Triandis, & Gelfand(1998) instead of the six-dimensioned framework of Hofstede to identify the differences between the two ethnic groups.
- b. Adopt qualitative research methodology like interviews and focus groups to identify the cultural diversity of the two ethnic groups.
- c. Increase the number of ethnic groups from two to fifteen.

2.3. Alternative cultural dimension framework

Despite the popularity and wide usage of Hofstede's dimension framework, the criticism of its methodological and theoretical flaws and obsolete calls for more theoretically sound frameworks.

2.3.1. cultural distance

Kogut & Singh's (1988) cultural distance index is based on Hofstede's cultural dimension framework (Tihanyi, 2005). It explores how uncertainty avoidance and culture distance affect the entry mode choice.

Schwartz (1994) & Trompenaars(1994) cultural dimension framework: both of them share the same conceptual view on culture with Hofstede that individual country possesses its norms and values. But which value differentiates the culture is the divergence of them.

GLOBE research program evolve their dimensions by investigating the extant cultural theory of 9 constructs. this similarly value-based framework (House et al., 2004) was laud for the advancement that capture both the cultural value and contemporary social practice.

2.3.2. institutional distance

Based on the differences of the 3 pillars of institution suggested as a barrier to the information transfer by Kostova (1996), Xu et al (2004, P285) developed the institutional distance to explain the cultural factors in business. The research shows that the differences in value and norms are stemmed from the economical and sociological discrepancy.

Table 1 has listed the constructs of each cultural framework.

Framework	Hofstede 1967-2014	Schwartz 1988-1992	Trompenaars 1980s-1990s	GLOBE 1990s	ID (Xu et al) 2004
cultural dimensions	1. Individualism & collectivism. 2. Powerdistance. 3. Uncertainty avoidance. 4. Masculinity & femininity. 5. Long term – orientation 6. indulgence & restraint	1. Conservatism 2. Intellectual autonomy 3. Affective autonomy 4. Hierarchy 5. Mastery 6. Egalitarian commitment 7 harmony	1 universalism 2 individualism 3 neutral 4 specific 5 achievement 6 attitude toward time 7 attitude toward environment	1. uncertainty avoidance 2. power distance 3. institutional collectivism 4. in-group collectivism 5. gender egalitarianism 6. assertiveness 7. future orientation 8. performance orientation 9. human orientation	1. regulative environment 2. normative environment 3. cognitive environment

Table1 constructs of the alternative frameworks 图表 1

2.4. Challenges to Hofstede's cultural dimension theory

Hofstede's framework has received strong criticism despite its significance and wide application in previous research.

a. many pieces of research were conducted to question the plausibility of Hofstede's cultural framework. Brenda Mcsweeney (2002) denied the causal relationship between national culture and concerted action and challenge its methodological assumptions. The findings extracted from an internal company survey lead to its poor validity. Ailon (2008)

criticized Hofstede's monograph *culture's consequences* for its theoretical and methodological inconsistency.

b. some of the dimensions don't relate to all the countries. Hofstede & Bond (1988) confess the fact that uncertainty avoidance is not prominent in some Asian countries and developed another dimension of long-term orientation to explain it.

c. Due to the data collected in the 1970s, the relevancy to contemporary society is questioned. A lot of empirical research was conducted to test the validity of Hofstede's cultural framework.

d. Globalization brings risks to the cultural diversity and uniqueness, leading to the similarity and homogeneousness of countries which threaten the validity of Hofstede's dimensions (Zou et al, 1996; Cleveland & Laroche, 2007).

e. Hofstede's cultural dimensions is a tool to distinguish nations but can't tell the differences between members of society as well as the organizations. Anne E. Witte (2012) explicated that using individual, national aggregates don't always work well on business scenarios and nation-state dimensions used to analyze culture in organizations is not

always appropriate.

3. the risks in application Hofstede's dimensions to my research

Regarding my research to distinguish the cultural differences between two ethnic groups, the aforementioned disturbance of an inadequate number of cultures will reduce the validity of the research. Consequently, the quantitative approach is less appropriate than qualitative research but which I am completely unfamiliar with.

Section 3

1. Develop a theme from the general theory

Combing the content of blog 1 and 2, my final research topic is the moderating effect of culture on social commerce acceptance: a comparative study between two ethnic groups in China.

The social commerce acceptance model, Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Triandis & Gelfand's individualism and collectivism scale (1998) will be considered in the research. Selecting Han Chinese and Tibetan holding the value of Confucianism and Tibetan Buddhism respectively leading to their different concept of collective as participants, the

empirical study will identify in which ethnic group the social commerce is more possibly succeed.

2. Quantitative, qualitative & mixed research approach

2.1. Research paradigm

Bowen (2009) suggested that a research method is a system to collect and analyze data. An appropriate research method should be in line with the paradigm.

Broadly speaking, qualitative research adopts interpretive research methods as tools to understand how people make meaning of and explain their behaviours in a specific context (Ravitch, 2021). It is mainly exploratory and used to comprehend implicate causes, assumptions and impetuses (Bryman, 2006 p97-113). It is a process of transition from specific to general (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) which reflect constructivism and transformative knowledge claim (Creswell & CN Poth, 2016). So Denzin & Lincoln (1994) call it a bottom-up approach to collect participants meanings, study the contexts or settings, etc (Creswell, 1994).

By efficiently understanding people's meanings and motivations, it contributes to the generation of new theories. The weakness of qualitative research is the time-consuming process of data collection. Meanwhile, the analysis and interpretation of the data intimately rely on the knowledge and philosophy assumption of researchers (Asterby Smith et al, 2018). "subjective" findings easily lower the credibility of the research.

2.2. Quantitative approach

Quantitative research relating to the positivism paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) usually collect data and transform it into numbers for statistical analysis and conclusions. Opposite to qualitative research, quantitative research tends to transform from general to specific, like verifying the theories, identifying variables to study (Creswell, 1994).

As a dominating research form in social science, the quantitative research approach is objective and comparatively far away from human bias. It provides a wide range of samples with speed and efficiency. However, it is not very helpful in forming theories and lacks flexibility

(Asterby Smith et al, 2018).

2.3. Mixed method approach

The mixed-method approach based on a pragmatic worldview can be seen as a third paradigm in a way that combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies based on pragmatism (Denscombe, M., 2008). It collects diverse types of data best providing a holistic understanding of research problems instead of either qualitative or quantitative data (Creswell). Although the mixed method is time-consuming and has a problem of inconsistency (Martyn Denscombe, 2008), many researchers adopt it because it addresses research problems at different levels (Biddix, 2013).

2.4. Research proposal for my research

2.4.1. Justification for selecting positivism

Cassell and Johnson (2006) emphasize the importance of the method because it must meet the aims and objectives set in the research. the philosophical world view and the research problem to be addressed are important factors to select research approach(Creswell).

According to Guba & Lincoln (1994), scientific paradigms fall into four categories of Positivism, Constructivism, Realism and Critical theory. The research paradigm adopted in my research is positivism, a deterministic philosophy in which causes effects or outcomes (Creswell, 1994). The empirical research seeks to identify the causal relationship between variables to predict reality (Golafshani, 2003). The purpose of positivism research is to explain other than understand and has no personal bias. One of its major elements is theory verification (Creswell, 1994) which is relating to my research exploring the impact of the culture referring to Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The justifications of selecting positivism are in **Fig.1** below.

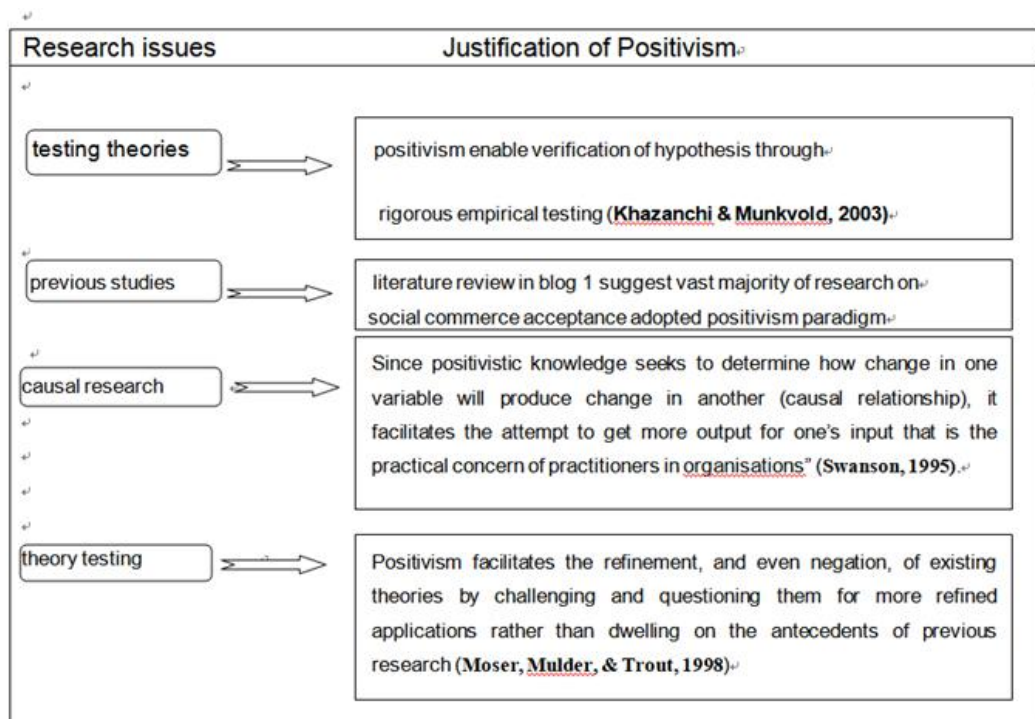


Figure 1. Justifications of selecting positivismfigure1 1

2.4.2. Methodology

Certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches.

My research objectives can be addressed by the quantitative approach.

Research objectives
1. To identify the cultural diversity on the dimension of individualism & collectivism between Tibetan and Han people.
2. To identify the concepts and components of the technological acceptance model.
3. To investigate the moderating effect of cultural dimension on the relation between trust and purchase intention
4. To assess different social commerce acceptance in Tibetan and Han Chinese group due to different cultural context.

Table 2. Research objectives 图表 2

To sum up, based on the positivist paradigm selected and the research objectives, the quantitative method is appropriate for my research.

Research strategies of quantitative experiment and survey will be used separately in stage 1 and stage 2 demonstrated in **table 2** below.

aim ^o	objectives ^o	stage ^o	method ^o	strategies ^o	
Evaluate the cross-national cultural impact on purchase intention in social commerce ^o	To Identify and quantify the cultural diversion on dimension of collectivism/individualism between Tibetan and Han Chinese ^o	1 ^o	quantitative ^o	Online&offline questionnaire 1 ^o	
	To analyze the moderating effect of cultural context and the mediating effect of trust between social interaction and purchase intention ^o	2 ^o	quantitative ^o	Experiment: set up an account on <u>Pinduoduo</u> , a prestigious Chinese social commerce website ^o Online&offline questionnaire 2 ^o	

Table3 Matching of research objectives with research approaches 图表 3

2.4.3. Research model and hypotheses

The theoretical frameworks adopted in previous research guiding social commerce acceptance include the technology acceptance model, the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behaviour and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology.

Construct	Definition
Perceived usefulness	whether or not someone perceives that technology to be useful for what they want to do.(Fred Davis)
Perceived ease of use	the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort.(Fred Davis)
Trust in social community	The sense of protection, care, and perception of reliability from the messages, feedback, or recommendations from other friends on a social network site (CSP Ng)
Intension to use	an intention to use reflects a user's desire to use technology in the future.
Cultural dimension	The degree of national cultural variation in different countries, from the perspective of the relevant dimensions of individualism; stems from a respondent's ethnic group
Individualism	the degree to which a society emphasizes the role of the individual

Table 5. the constructs of the social commerce acceptance model.图表 4

What we select is the technology acceptance model following Gefen (2003) 's study, hypotheses are generated:

H1. Perceived usefulness (PU) has a positive impact on intention to use (IUSE) of the online shopping mall.

H2. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) has a positive impact on intention to use (IUSE) of the online shopping mall.

H3. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) has a positive impact on perceived usefulness (PU).

H4. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) has a positive impact on trust.

H5. Trust has a positive impact on intention to use (IUSE) the online shopping mall.

H6. Trust has a positive impact on perceived usefulness (PU).

Because collectivistic societies emphasize strong relationships, their

members are sensitive to the in-group and out-group boundary (HC Triandis, 1995) and individualists tend to like meeting new people (HC Triandis. et al, 1988 P323-328).

H7 Culture characterized by the dimension of collectivism vs. Individualism is the moderator on the relation between the trust and intention to purchase, such that the impact is more salient in Tibetan than in Han people.

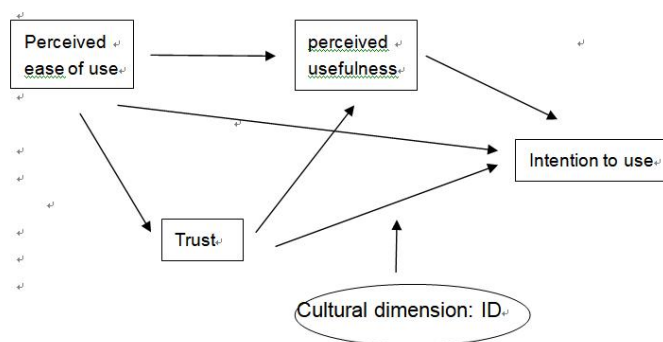


Figure 2. Research model figure1 2

3. Challenges to reliability and credibility of data collection

The challenges to reliability and credibility occurred in every phase of research including research questions, construction of measurement, sampling, data collection, coding and data analysis (Morse, Janice, 1990).

3.1. Sampling

The target sampling is 50 Han Chinese and 50 Tibetan university students. Hofstede and Geert (2001) reminded the risk of poor matching of sampling. The score obtained from the respondents affected by factors like education, age, gender and the point in time. Choosing university students can control the disturbing factors and keep the participants similar except for ethnic groups.

one way to address external reliability and validity is to clearly outline the unit of analysis from the beginning(LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). in my study, clearly-defined criteria to select the participants will be designed.

3.2. Questionnaire

As a cross-national study, the questionnaire will be designed both in Chinese and Tibetan. The content informed to the participants from two ethnic groups should be kept identical which require accurate translation of the questionnaire.

The pilot test will be done to secure the materials to be used without modification (Creswell et al, 2014).

3.3. Return rate

To have dependable, valid, and reliable results, a high return rate should be achieved (Baruch, 1999). The reminder letter and subsequent phone reminder will be used.

4. Risk factors

4.1. The application of the theory

The validity of the theory application should be fully demonstrated due to the originality to apply Hofstede's cultural dimensions to comparing ethnic groups in one country.

4.2. Subjective bias

Cultural sensitivities could also impact the researcher, leading to bias in the analysis and selection of questions to use.

4.3. Ethical risk consideration

Flinders (1992) suggested that ethical considerations involve research phases of design, data collection and reporting. To research cross-national participants, both Seedhouse's Ethical Grid (2007) helping determine right from wrong (Gray, 2010) and Flinders Ethical Frameworks (1992) will be adopted. The four layers demonstrated in Figure 3 will be considered in the process of research.

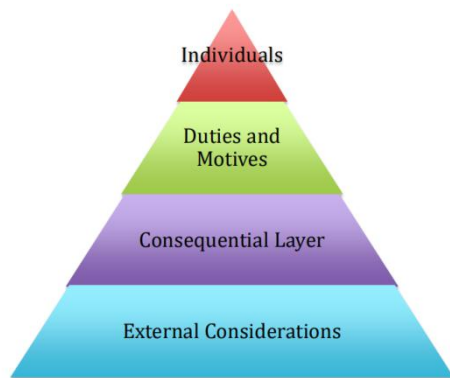


Figure 3. Seedhouse's ethical grid figure1 3

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