

# **Cultural Power Distance and E-Communications: A Taiwanese Perspective**

**Ken Leelien Huang**

Business Programmes Office  
Lingnan University, Tuen Mun, Hong Kong  
huangll@ln.edu.hk

## **Abstract**

E-communications (e.g., E-mail, Voice-mail, Fax, etc.) have become the primary timely and cost-effective interpersonal communication in organizations in most developed countries (Lam, Schaubroeck & Aryee 1997). Despite this, the value of E-communications as an efficient and effective communication channel is still elusive in Asian countries (Straub 1994; Straub, Keil & Brenner 1997). This is because the adoption of E-communications is culture specific, which contains different preferences in communication types (Ess 2001).

Many conceptual works have posited that existing theories on E-communications should incorporate a cultural dimension (Tan et al 1998). However, only few empirical studies explain the relationship between culture and technology acceptance. In a sense, this paper addresses the issue by how cultural factor influences an individual's intention to use technology.

Power distance (PD) is an important Hofstede's cultural factor (Ferraro 2002; Hofstede 1980, 1984, 1985) for our E-communications research because of its theoretical linkage to personal communication behavior. Given that, this paper

examines the influence of PD on E-communications acceptance in Taiwan based on the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis 1989; Von, M.A.V. & Teagarden 1988). By incorporating Hofstede theory into TAM, this paper assumes that the influence of subjective norm (SN) on perceived usefulness (PU) of E-communications depends on the extent of PD. Structure equation models are used to investigate the moderating effect of PD.

In contrast to group or national level considered by conventional information systems scholars, in terms of theory, this paper contributes to explain how cultural factor-PD accounts for the process of technology adoption at individual level. In terms of practices, this paper helps Taiwan organizations understand the influence of societal values on E-communications acceptance and better utilize social systems to facilitate technology diffusion.