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# Brand Evangelism and Big Five Personality Traits<sup>1</sup>

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#### **Abstract**

Brand evangelism is a strong type of word-of-mouth marketing with which consumers advise about goods or services to another. So a brand evangelist is a powerful marketing asset. There are many factors that effect brand evangelism or brand evangelists' behaviour. Personality traits are one of these factors that have strong effect on brand evangelism. Personality traits reflect consumer's characteristic patterns of thoughts and behaviors. Personality traits are called as Big Five Model including extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness and openness. The main aim of this study is to determine the effect of Big Five Personality traits on brand evangelism. The other aim is to determine difference between men and women in terms of brand evangelism and personality traits. According to the results, extraversion and openness traits are more effective on brand evangelisim. So, openess and extraverted consumers may act as a brand evangelist than other consumers. Also, women have agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness traits more than men, and men have openness trait than women. In addition, there is no significant difference between them in terms of extraversion trait. Keywords: Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Agreeableness; Openness, Brand Evangelism;

# 1. Introduction

Brand evangelism reflects a strong consumer—brand relationship and it is defined as a type of persuasion (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013; Wimber and Springer, 2009). Brand evangelist is a consumer who have a strong emotional commitment to the brand. Their behaviour is defined as speaking with other consumers about benefit of the brand, purchasing favoured brand and acting as an unpaid spokesperson for the brand (Riivits et al., 2014). He goes beyond positive word-of-mouth and engages in efforts to convince others about the benefits of brand (Pimentel and Reynolds, 2004). The communication of his may be also considered as an attempt to convince others to purchase the brand (Doss, 2014). These roles and interactions between consumers make brand evangelism an

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important subject for companies and drive a company's success. The consumer's development of strong relationship with a brand depends on many factors. In other words, many factors influence evangelism's emergence. Personality traits are one of the most important factors influencing brand evangelism (Lin, 2010; Doss and Carstens, 2014). McCrae and John (1992) grouped personality traits as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness that referred to as the Big Five Model. The success of a brand depends on these personal traits (Lin, 2010). When a brand become part of consumers' identities or consumers perceive oneness with a brand, consumers may be defined as brand evangelists. These consumers are likely to work for the benefit of the brand and construct their identities with their brands (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013).

Because of this importance, this study aims to research the effect of the Big Five personal traits on brand evangelism and determine whether a difference exists between men and women in terms of traits and evangelism. According to these aims, the study consists of two parts. In the first part, personality traits and brand evangelism are evaluated; in the second part, the study's results and recommendations are discussed.

#### 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. Brand Evangelism and The Big Five personality traits

A brand evangelist communicates positive feelings, ideas, and information about a brand or exhibits a strong struggle to effect consumption behaviour of other consumers about a particular brand. Such behaviours of brand evangelists are called as brand evangelism (Kemp et al., 2012: 151; Doss, 2014). Brand evangelism is an act of preaching the most loved aspect of the brand (Kautish, 2010: 190). Brand evangelism is affected by some personal traits called the Big Five personality traits.

The Big Five personality traits consist of agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and neuroticism (Costa and McCrae, 1985; McCrae and John, 1992). Until today, only a few studies have examined the personal traits and their relationships with brand evangelism. Although studies about brand evangelism have increased in recent years, but none of them evaluates brand evangelism, the Big Five traits, and gender all together. Whereas, the effect of brand evangelism and personal traits can differ in terms of gender (Schmitt et al., 2008; Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013). According to the literature, more studies focus on the effect of personal traits on consumer behaviors, like repurchase intention, attitude, loyalty, and trust (Mooradian, 1996; Lin, 2010). Some examine the effect of trust, opinion leadership, and brand silence on evangelism (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013; Doss, 2014). A few studies evaluate brand evangelism and personality traits together (Matzler et al., 2007; Doss and Carstens, 2014).

Matzler et al. (2006) investigated the relationships between hedonic value, brand affection, brand loyalty, extraversion and openness. The results show that extraversion and openness effect brand loyalty positively. Matzler et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between personality, brand evangelism and consumer passion. According to the findings, extravert consumers are more likely to engage in brand evangelism and act as passionate. Lin (2010) researched the relationships among personality trait, brand loyalty, and brand personality. According to the results, there is a significant positive relationship between excitement, sincerity, competence and agreeableness. Furthermore, personality traits such as agreeableness and openness and brand personalities such as competence and sophistication both have a significant positive effect on affective loyalty. Personality traits such as agreeableness and openness as well as brand personalities such as sophistication, competence and peacefulness have an effect on action loyalty. Gnambs and Batinic (2012) analysed the effects of the Big Five traits on opinion leadership. As a result, there is a positive relationship between opinion

leadership and extraversion, and a negative relationship between opinion leadership and neuroticism. In addition, there is no relationship between opinion leadership and agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness. Vazifehdoost et al. (2012) analysed the effects of the Big Five traits on market mavenism. The findings show that extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness are the three most significant characteristics related to market mavenism. In addition, there is no relationship among neuroticism, agreeableness, and mavenism. Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) investigated the effect of consumer—brand relational constructs, brand trust and brand identification on brand evangelism. According to findings, consumer—brand relationship has an effect on brand evangelism; brand identification is effective on positive and oppositional brand referrals while brand trust is effective on purchase intentions and positive referrals. Doss (2014) researched dimensions involved in brand evangelism. According to the results, brand salience, opinion leadership, consumer—brand identification and brand trust are effective on brand evangelism, but brand satisfaction is not effective. Doss and Carstens (2014) investigated the relationship between brand evangelism and Big Five personality traits. According to the results, brand evangelism is significantly related to openness, neuroticism, and extraversion.

## 3. Methodology

This study's main aim is to determine the effect of personality traits on brand evangelism. The other aim is to determine whether there is a difference between average scores of women and men in terms of brand evangelism and personality traits. The study was carried out with car owners in Muş providence. The convenience sampling method was used and sample size was determined as 400, with a confidence interval of 95% and an error margin of 5%. After the elimination of incomplete surveys, 385 responses were considered in the analysis. The data were collected through a face-to-face survey consisting of two groups of questions. The first group measured personality traits and brand evangelism while the second group measured demographic characteristics. Personality traits were measured using the scale of John and Srivastava (1999) and brand evangelism was measured using the scale of Matzler et al. (2007). The variables were prepared on a 5-point Likert scale. The data were analysed using SPSS 16.0 statistical package and descriptive statistics, exploratory factor, correlation, t-test, and multivariate regression analyses were used.

# 3.1. Research Model and Hypothesis

Extraversion is defined as preferring interpersonal interaction more than others (Mooradian 1996, Mooradian and Swan 2006). Extraverts have been characterized as assertive, cheerful, forceful, optimistic, sociable, and full of energy. Thus, we assume that a positive direct relationship exists between extraversion and evangelism. Most importantly, extraverts are more talkative, and these cases give them more opportunity to share their ideas about brand and act as a brand evangelist (Matzler et al., 2007: 28).

 $H_1$ : Extraversion has an effect on brand evangelism.

Openness is related to active imagination, inventive feelings, aesthetic experience, preference for variety, curiosity about different things, and ingenuity (John and Srivastava, 1999: 132). Open individuals are more willing to entertain novel ideas and emotions more than closed individuals (Costa and McCrae 1992). Consumers who have high level of openness are more likely to seek out new experiences, brands, and products (Elliot and Warfield, 1993: 203). Thus, openness is likely related to

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evangelism (Vazifehdoost et al., 2012: 247) and openness positively influences brand evangelism (Matzler et al., 2007: 28).

 $H_2$ : Openness has an effect on brand evangelism.

Neurotic individuals have been characterized as depressed, tense, worried, and maladaptive to coping with problems (Costa and McCrae, 1985). These individuals may be highly emotional about their brands. However, they are not only emotionally loyal to their brands, but also they have knowledge, self-confidence and convictions about their brands (Doss, 2014). There is a negative relationship between evangelism and neuroticism. Because consumers have higher levels of satisfaction and romantic relationships with their brands in the low levels of neuroticism (Lopes et al., 2003; White et al., 2004). Therefore, neuroticism may affect brand evangelism negatively (Gnambs and Batinic, 2012: 11).

*H*<sub>3</sub>: *Neuroticism* has an effect on brand evangelism.

Agreeableness refers to an individual's quality of interpersonal orientation range (Doss and Carstens, 2014). Agreeable individuals have been characterized as compassionate, trusting, soft-hearted, forgiving, good-natured, straightforward, helpful, gullible (Costa and McCrae, 1985). According to the past studies, there is no relationship between opinion leadership and agreeableness (Gnambs and Batinic, 2012: 11). In addition, there is no relationship between market mavenism and agreeableness (Vazifehdoost et al., 2012: 247). The connection between agreeableness and brand evangelism is not clear (Rauschnabel et al., 2015). However, because of the relationship among brand evangelism, mavenism, and leadership, it seems that there may not be a relationship between agreeableness and brand evangelism. On the other hand, agreeable individuals are congenial with others, maintain their relationships with others long time, and believe that people are cooperative. These features may lead to them being involved in many social causes (Yahaya et al, 2011: 9642). These features may cause them to act as an evangelist. Because agreeableness increase acceptance of the brand (Doss and Carstens, 2014). Shortly, there is an effect of agreeableness on brand evengelisim.

*H*<sub>4</sub>: Agreeableness has an effect on brand evangelism.

Conscientiousness is defined as a tendency to act dutifully, showing self-discipline, engaging in planned behaviour rather than spontaneous, aiming for achievement, and being dependable (Vazifehdoost et al., 2012: 246). Vazifehdoost et al. (2012) explained that marketing mavenism is negatively related to conscientiousness. Because of the relationship between brand evangelism and mavenism, there may be a relationship between evangelism and conscientiousness. Also, consumers who have conscientiousness personality traits may love their brands (Rauschnabel et al., 2015: 10) and feel that spreading information about a brand is their social duty (Vazifehdoost et al., 2012).

H<sub>5</sub>: Conscientiousness has an effect on brand evangelism.

Men and women may have different information about different product groups and brands, so their opinion leadership may be different (Gnambs and Batinic, 2012). Being brand opinion leaders makes consumers product enthusiasts. A product enthusiast demonstrates high levels of product involvement and tends to diffuse innovations (Bloch, 1986: 51). As these individuals tend to be innovators, they spread the word about new product categories and brands. Men are generally thought to be opinion leadership about cars, so they are more likely to become brand evangelists than women (Doss, 2010: 57).

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a difference between brand evangelism behaviour of men and women.

Personality trait differences in gender are larger and robust (Hyde, 2005: 588). It has been reported that women have higher levels of conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism than men do in most nations (Schmitt et al., 2008: 168). In addition, women have higher levels of neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness than men do whereas men have higher level of extraversion trait in some nations (Feingold, 1994). The many studies revealed that women in most countries have higher level of neuroticism, openness, and agreeableness to feelings whereas men have higher level of openness to ideas and assertiveness (Costa et al., 2001; McCrae, 2002). These results suggest that there is a difference between women and men in terms of their Big Five personality traits.

 $H_7$ : There is a difference between extraversion trait of men and women.

 $H_8$ : There is a difference between openness trait of men and women.

 $H_9$ : There is a difference between neuroticism trait of men and women.

 $H_{10}$ : There is a difference between agreeableness trait of men and women.

 $H_{11}$ : There is a difference between conscientiousness trait of men and women.

The research model is shown in Figure 1.

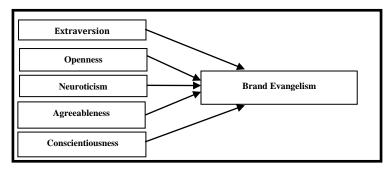


Figure 1. Research Model

# 4. Data Analysis

# 4.1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The consumers' demographic features are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the Respondents

Education	N	%	Income	N	%	Job	N	%	Age	N	%
Secondary school	41	10.6	Below 750 TL	63	16.4	Student	55	14.3	18–28	129	33.5
High School	105	27.3	750-1500 TL	34	8.8	Civil Servant	127	33	29-39	149	38.7
University	196	50.9	1501-2250 TL	66	17.1	Retired	22	5.7	40 & older	107	27.8
Graduate	43	11.2	2251-3000 TL	119	30.9	Self-employed	68	17.7	Gender	N	%
Marital Status			Above 3000 TL	103	26.8	Housewife	19	4.9	Female	189	50.9
Married	218	56.6				Other	94	24.4	Male	196	49.1
Single	167	43.4									
Total	385	100		385	100		385	100		385	100

# 4.2. Factor Analysis and Reliability

An exploratory factor analysis was used to determine under which dimensions the statements from the Big Personality traits and brand evangelism were gathered. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2. Before conducting a factor analysis on the variables related to personality traits and brand evangelism, a reliability analysis was carried out for all variables; the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. The Big Five Personality and Brand Evangelism Factor Analysis Results

Variables	Factor Loads	Eigen value	Percentage Variance
Extraversion		5.838	13.268
I am talkative.	.858		
I am reserved.	.856		
I am full of energy.	.914		
I generate a lot of enthusiasm.	.867		
I tend to be quiet.	.847		
I have an assertive personality.	.823		
I am shy and inhibited.	.649		
I am outgoing and sociable.	.552		
Openness		5.448	12.381
I comes up with new ideas.	.712		
I am curious about many different things.	.733		
I am ingenious and a deep thinker.	.696		
I have an active imagination.	.748		
I am inventive.	.744		
I value artistic and aesthetic experiences.	.740		
I like to reflect my ideas.	.795		
I have few artistic interests.	.816		
I am sophisticated in art, music, etc.	.754		
Neuroticism		4.341	9.867
I am depressed.	.742		
I can be tense.	.802		
I am relaxed.	.755		
I am emotionally stable.	.712		
I am worry a lot.	.475		
I can be moody.	.763		
I remain calm in tense situations.	.779		
I get nervous easily.	.747		
Agreeableness		6.089	13.838
I have the tendency to find fault in others.	.753		
I am unselfish and helpful with others.	.837		
I start quarrels with others.	.824		

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I am forgiving.			.817			
I am trusting.			.719			
I can be cold and aloof.			.791			
I am considerate and kind	to almost everyone.	.795				
I am rude to others.			.754			
I likes to cooperate with o	thers.	.743				
Conscientiousness			4.584	10.418		
I do a thorough job.		.618				
I can be somewhat careles	SS.	.636				
I am a reliable worker.		.520				
I tend to be disorganized.			.806			
I tend to be lazy.			.729			
I persevere until the task i	s finished.		.802			
I do things efficiently.			.661			
I make plans and follow th	nem.	.729				
I am easily distracted.			.611			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Meas	sure of Sampling Adequacy	0.900				
Bartlett Test of	Approx. Chi-Square	11149.653	Percentage Cumulative Variance: 59.772			
Sphericity	Df	946	l croemage can			
	Sig.	0.001		l	Davisantana Varianas	
2 15 11			Factor Loads	Eigen value	Percentage Variance	
Brand Evangelism				3.303	66.092	
I would make a perfect sa	<u> </u>		.814			
	car brand to several of my		.817			
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	ople about brand attributes	<u> </u>	.849			
I want to tell the world th world	at my car brand is the most	.749				
If someone disapproves of it's benefits	of my car brand, I counter	.832				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Meas	sure of Sampling Adequacy	0.866		•	•	
Bartlett Test of	Approx. Chi-Square	886.001	Percentage Cu	mulative Variar	nce: 66 092	
Sphericity	Df	10	Percentage Cumulative Variance: 66.092			
	Sig.	0.001				

As shown in Table 2, the total variance of personality traits is 59.772 and brand evangelism is 66.092. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) competence measurement for personality traits is 0.900 and brand evangelism is 0.886. This measurement is an index used to measure the adequacy of the number of the sample and coefficients (Norusis, 1993: 52-53). In the study, personal traits and evangelism are examined using 48 variables and 6 dimensions, including extraversion (8 variables), openness (9 variables), neuroticism (8 variables), agreeableness (9 variables), conscientiousness (9 variables), and brand evangelism (5 variables).

#### 4.3. Mean, Standard Deviation, Cronbach Alpha, and Correlation Analysis

We computed the means and standard deviations for each variable and created a correlation matrix of variables used in the hypothesis testing. The means and standard deviations are within the expected ranges. As shown in Table 3, most of the respondents have traits of extraversion (mean = 3.409), followed by conscientiousness (mean = 3.390) and openness (mean = 3.266). The lowest trait is neuroticism (mean = 2.043). The relationships between brand evangelism, extraversion, and openness are positive and show higher correlations at the p < 0.05 level. For exploratory research, a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70 is generally considered reliable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1978). All Cronbach's alpha values for this study are greater than 0.70.

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation	. Cronbach's Alpha	. and Correlation Analysis

Variables	Cron.	Mean	Std.	1	2	3	4	5
	alpha		Dev.					
Brand Evangelism	0.870	3.546	0.883					
Extraversion	0.932	3.409	1.111	0.584**				
Agreeableness	0.930	3.100	1.013	113*	091			
Conscientiousness	0.877	3.390	0.797	006	049	.459**		
Neuroticism	0.733	2.043	0.641	.054	.077	077	133**	
Openness	0.920	3.266	1.028	0.499**	.458**	112*	107**	.061

<sup>\*</sup> p < 0.01, \*\* p < 0.05.

# 4.4. Regression Analysis Results

A multivariate regression model was used to test the hypotheses. As shown in Figure 1, the independent variables are extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and dependent variable is brand evangelism. The result of the regression model is significant (F=54.824, p < 0.001). The results of the hypothesis testing shown in Table 4 indicate that the effect of openness ( $\beta$  = 0.253, p < 0.05) and extraversion ( $\beta$  = 0.354, p < 0.05) on brand evangelism is significant. Thereby, H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> were supported. The effect of neuroticism on brand evangelism is not statistically significant and, H<sub>3</sub> was not supported. H4 and H5 were also not supported as neither agreeableness ( $\beta$  = -0.068, p > 0.05) nor conscientiousness ( $\beta$  = 0.094, p >0.05) are effective on brand evangelism.

Table 4. Big Five Personality Traits and Brand Evangelism Regression Analysis Results

Dependent Variable	F	Sig	Independent Variable	β	t	Sig.		inearity atistics
Brand Evangelism	54.82	0.000	Constant		5.584	.000	VIF	Tolerance
			Extraversion	.354	10.074	.000	1.272	.786
			Openness	.253	6.634	.000	1.280	.781
			Neuroticism	.012	.217	.828	1.023	.977
			Agreeableness	068	-1.763	.079	1.276	.784
			Conscientiousness	.094	1.901	.058	1.287	.777

#### 4.5. T-Test Results

According to the Table 5, there is a significant difference between brand evangelism of women and men. In addition, there is a difference between personality traits of women and men except extraversion trait. These results are similar to the findings from other studies (Costa et al., 2001; Schmitt et al., 2008; Doss, 2010: 57). Thus,  $H_6$ ,  $H_8$ ,  $H_9$ ,  $H_{10}$  and  $H_{11}$  were supported and  $H_7$  is rejected.

Table 5. T-Test Results

Variables		df	_	(1)	) Men	(2) Women		
	ι ui		р	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	
Brand Evangelism	3.031	383	0.030	3.6789	.83424	3.4085	.91345	
Extraversion	1.783	383	0.075	3.5083	1.0684	3.3069	1.1473	
Openness	2.164	383	0.031	3.3776	1.0041	3.1517	1.0443	
Neuroticism	2.473	383	0.014	1.9642	.62682	2.1248	.64762	
Agreeableness	2.450	383	0.015	2.9770	.98471	3.2285	1.0296	
Conscientiousness	4.183	383	0.000	3.2272	.79660	3.5601	.76357	

#### 5. Conclusions

The present study investigated the effect of the Big Five personality traits on brand evangelism. In addition, the differences between women' and men' average in terms of brand evangelism and personality traits were researched. According to the results, extraverted consumers engage in evangelizing more than others. This finding confirms the talkative character of extraverted consumers. In addition, open consumers tend to be evangelists more often, because openness is related to an active imagination, curiosity, and a preference for variety. In other words, open consumers have been described as being more curious about everything and more willing to entertain novel ideas and experiences than closed individuals (Costa and McCrae, 1992). According to these findings, H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> were supported. In addition, the effect of neuroticism, agreeableness, and consciousness on brand evangelism is not statistically significant. Thus, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> were not supported. The results about extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and consciousness may be supported by Doss and Carstens (2014), while the result about neuroticism may be supported by Vazifehdoost et al. (2012).

According to the t-test results, men tend to be evangelists more than women are. This result is supported by literature (Doss, 2010: 57). Belk (2003) explained that cars are not only beloved objects for men, but also become part of their self. Thus, it is not surprising that men tend to be evangelists more than women. According to this result, H<sub>6</sub> was supported. There are some differences between women and men in terms of personality traits. Men are more prominent than women in terms of assertiveness, openness to ideas and excitement seeking (Costa et al., 2001; McCrae, 2002). Women are more prominent in terms of many traits, especially neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae et al., 2005; Schmitt et al., 2008: 173). According to these results, H<sub>8</sub>, H<sub>9</sub>, H<sub>10</sub>, and H<sub>11</sub> were supported. Also, both men and women can have an assertive personality and there is no difference between them in terms of extraversion. Therefore, H<sub>7</sub> was not supported. Finally, men are more openness than women are, because men are more interested in cars. This result is supported by previous literature, which found that men are more assertiveness and openness to ideas whereas women in most countries are more neuroticism, openness to feelings, agreeableness, and warmth (Costa et al., 2001; McCrae, 2002; Schmitt et al., 2008: 172).

# 1. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The limitation of the present study is that it was carried out only in Muş and on car owners. According to this study's results, extraversion and openness are more effective on brand evangelism than other personality traits. The study offers some benefits to the literature and will help researchers to realize the concepts of brand evangelism, personality traits, and their differences in terms of gender. The present study offers various recommendations for enterprises. Uncovering insights into brand evangelism will drive future successes for enterprises. The enterprises can realize what personality traits have an effect on brand evangelists and improve market strategies according to these personality traits (Bevolo and Brand, 2003). According to the results, extraverted consumers are important advocates for brand and may be talkative brand opponents. Therefore, enterprises should focus on extraverted consumers. In other words, understanding that brand evangelists have extraversion and openness personality traits is a good beginning for companies to determine how to best approach evangelists. Enterprises may understand that they should offer innovations to open and extraverted consumers, because they more easily accept innovation.

The present study offers various recommendations for future studies. Doss and Carstens (2014) hypothesized that neuroticism would be negatively related to brand evangelism, but in this study neuroticism was not related with evangelism. Therefore, further research should be conducted to clarify neuroticism. Nadeem (2007) suggested that successful enterprises should also understand that

not only consumers but also sales persons might act as a brand evangelist. Evangelists often use social media and researchers may investigate the effect of social media on brand perceptions of evangelists. The effect of personality traits on evangelism may be different in terms of different product groups and brands. For this reason, similar studies should be carried out with different product groups and brands among consumers with different personal characteristics. The relationship between brand evangelism and personality traits may be different in terms of culture, and it may be researched. This study can be repeated in other geographical areas.

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