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COMUNICACIÓN Y CULTURA: UN ANÁLISIS EN TRES PAÍSES
COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE: AN ANALYSIS IN THREE COUNTRIES

Realizado por el alumno Raquel Aguado García

Tutelado por el Profesor Dña. Carmen Rodríguez Santos

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RESUMEN

En el presente trabajo se aborda el estudio de cómo la cultura afecta a la comunicación en la empresa. Asimismo se definen las estrategias de comunicación que una empresa puede utilizar en el ámbito global. Dichas estrategias son estandarización, adaptación y glocalización.

Consecuentemente, se estudian y analizan en profundidad las cuestiones más relevantes que plantean estas estrategias, especialmente las relativas a sus características y los supuestos que se exigen para su adopción. Además se define el término cultura y se analizan sus componentes y dimensiones. Estas dimensiones son estudiadas en tres países: Alemania, España y Estados Unidos. Finalmente se explica cómo afecta la cultura de estos países a la estrategia de comunicación elegida.

Palabras clave: comunicación, cultura, estandarización, glocalización y adaptación.

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the study of how culture affects communication in companies. It also defines different communication strategies used by companies at a global level. These strategies are standardization, adaptation and glocalization.

Thus the key issues raised by these strategies are examined in depth, especially those relating to their characteristics and the events required for their adoption. Furthermore, culture is defined and its elements and dimensions analysed. Those dimensions are studied in three countries: Germany, Spain and the United States. Finally, an explanation is given of how the cultures of these countries affect the communication strategy chosen.

Keywords: communication, culture, standardization, glocalization and adaptation.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN. Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

DB. Deutsche Bahn.

GATT. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

ICEX. Instituto de Comercio Exterior.

MERCOSUR. MERcado COmun del SUR.

NAFTA. North American Free Trade Agreement.

NY/NYC. New York City.

R&D. Research and development.

RAPEX. Rapid exchange of information between European Member States and the Commission

SMEs. Small and Medium Enterprises.

USA/US. United States of America.

WWII. World War II.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, more companies decide to expand their business across the borders and markets of their normal geographical environment for various reasons.

Peter J. Buckley and Pervez N. Ghauri (2006) establish various factors affecting that decision making. An excess of the product on the local market or a shortage thereof on foreign markets are among them. The need to diversify risk together with the existence of a crisis in the local market may involve an increase in the number of exporting firms in a country. Another reason affecting the decision to internationalise is the desire to increase brand prestige or the need to increase competitiveness. Finally, the goal of achieving growth by the company in more profitable foreign markets also has an effect.

Once the internationalisation process has started, the next step is to identify which communication strategy the new markets require. There are three basic strategies here:

• Standardization

• Adaptation

• Glocalization

The communication strategy chosen will not only have a direct influence on the company´s expenses, but also its international image. This will therefore determine its success or failure in foreign markets.

With a higher degree of standardization the costs incurred will be lower. However, this marketing strategy does not take into account customer differences as regards tastes or needs. The distribution channels available, competitors and telecommunications operations also have to be considered in order to avoid poor product reception.

On the other hand, companies can adapt their communication strategy to satisfy the particular needs of every country. Although that can increase product acceptance, expenses may also rise.

Finally glocalization combines both standardization and adaptation. Companies adapt those aspects needing to be adapted and standardize those that do not require any changes. This strategy can save money and time, avoiding cultural confrontations.

Despite the existence of many studies related to communication strategy, this project focuses on analysing culture as the main factor determining the success or failure of different approaches. Understanding the influence of culture at different

acceptance levels of varying types of communication can make it easier for companies to choose which strategy to implement in every country where they carry out business.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT

The main purpose of this project is to analyse how culture affects communication. The general goals of this project can be summarized as follows:

- To analyse how international trade has increased over the last few decades and its main role in the economy. An explanation will also be given as to how this development has affected companies as well as pointing out the possible obstacles to internationalisation: culture stands out here.

- To define different communication strategies: glocalization, standardization and adaptation: identify their characteristics as well as specifying their scenarios and the consequences of their use.

- To define culture, its elements and dimensions: explain all the cultural elements and their importance within culture; analyse culture dimensions as defined by Geert Hofstede; analyse how culture affects communication and how companies can respond to different cultural environments.

- To study culture dimensions within three different countries: Germany, Spain and the United States; provide some examples of communication for each particular dimension.

Those generic objectives set out at the beginning of this project have been modified during the process. In addition some other objectives have arisen in order to analyze and explain those issues which could have been more difficult to understand or explain.

METHODOLOGY

Primary sources of information are those that provide first-hand information of the events, practices, or conditions of the research. In general, these are documents that were created by the witnesses or first recorders of these events at about the time they occurred, and include diaries, letters, reports, photographs, creative works, financial records, memos, and newspaper articles.

Primary sources also include first-hand accounts that were documented later, such as autobiographies, memoirs, and oral histories. However, the most useful primary sources are usually considered to be those that were created closest to the time period of the research.

In contrast, a secondary source of information is one that was created later by someone who did not experience first-hand or participate in the events or conditions you're researching. For the purposes of a historical research project, secondary sources are generally scholarly books and articles. Also included would be reference sources like encyclopaedias.

For secondary sources, often the best sources are those that have been published most recently. A secondary source that was published decades ago could not be updated.

In order to write this project both primary and secondary sources have been used. Primary sources used are pictures and some information taken about countries and companies studied, as well as personal experience. Secondary sources used are articles in collected works, magazines and books, as well as websites that could further develop and support the arguments and concepts presented here.

1 INTERNATIONALISATION OF COMPANIES

Over the last few years there have been deep and intense changes on the international front. Many companies representing very diverse industries have had to change their traditional business methods and focus on international business.

Furthermore, globalization has taken a major role in the world scenario with greater integration among economies. Immediately after the Second World War the degree of interdependence among national economies rose. At that time multinational companies started their consolidation and the flow of international trade in products and services increased. Thus the volume of trade and international business rose in a historical manner.

After WWII many barriers to trade disappeared and many incentives to international trade appeared. A large number of companies took advantage of this situation and started to develop their activity outside their country's borders. In most cases this process of internationalisation obliged them to make important changes in their operating methods and in the structure of the company, due to the greater complexity as new functions were developed in other countries. The concept and need for international marketing appeared within this context.

1.1 GLOBALIZATION OF MARKETS

Globalization has different meanings and a general one is: "The process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale" (Oxford Dictionaries). It is affected by many elements and impacts not only on countries, but also individuals like companies and people.

Globalization is responsible for creating wealth, but is also accused of some negative aspects. Although globalization mainly refers to the great growth in international trade, there are increasing concerns about its social consequences.

Frank Bradley (2005) mentions this phenomenon that directly affects international firms in the following ways.

- New information and communication technologies that allow firms to have an international presence.
- Communication technology which integrates suppliers in their customers´ buying process and consumer´s lifestyle.
- Growth of non-profit businesses in international markets.
- Call for more ethical and social responsibility among international firms.

- Emergence of a global culture based on music, clothing and entertainment.

- Influence of global branding incorporating services and products.

Until recently the term globalization was related to big companies which operated in many different markets but nowadays small companies have more of a presence in international markets. Firms with an international vocation usually pursue diversification and such companies tend to enter new markets where the resource requirements match their resource capability.

1.2 INTERNATIONALISATION OF COMPANIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Both international trade and international business have increased their volume over the last few years, helping each other and affected by the same factors. According to ICEX, the number of companies that export increased 10% during 2013, being the total number of exporter companies 126800.

This generalized internationalisation of business, together with a homogenization of demand in the global sphere, has meant the globalization of markets. The phenomenon of globalization is helped by great progress in the fields of communication and transport with the latter being more accessible and affordable nowadays, which has allowed customers to find new products and patterns of consumption in markets other than theirs. Furthermore, a greater spread of information makes it possible for new products to reach new markets. All these aspects contribute to expanding integration and interdependence among economies.

1.2.1 Development of international trade

Philip R. Cateora and John L. Graham (1999) analyzed international trade trends over the last decade. International trade has increased exponentially over the last few years. International trade has mainly been affected by three trends. Firstly, the last few decades have seen quick growth in free trade areas like NAFTA, ASEAN or MERCOSUR. Those areas not only help commercial relations between members, but also affect trade flows and non-member investment through rules and standards. Secondly, the free market system has been more widely accepted among developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. Finally, as a result of the first two trends mentioned, big emergent economies, such as Brazil, China, South Korea or Poland, have undergone considerable development.

Rosario García Cruz (2002) considers the following factors, which have helped the development of international trade, the most important:

- *"The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade" (GATT) (1986).* It came into force on January 1948. This agreement and its following Rounds have looked into eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers to international trade.

- *Development of technology in communication and reduction of transport costs.* New forms of communication allow a larger number of people access to information about new goods and services, which helps to increase demand for these products. Moreover, developments and reductions in transport prices have allowed transactions between faraway places to become possible.

- Increasing participation of developing countries in international trade, which is due to the following factors:

  - A new group of quickly industrialised countries and an increase in their exports have greatly increased the weight of their participation in international trade.

  - The value of energy resources and their significance have grown which has helped producers of these products to increase the volume of their exports.

  - The export rate of manufactured products from developing countries to developed ones has risen due to their high degree of specialization and cheap labour costs.

  - Developing countries have gradually reduced export tariffs.

- Increased international trade of similar and complementary goods and services. Also trade between multinational companies within the same industry has grown.

- More participation of services in international trade.

International trade has created global links between different markets, technologies and ways of life. At the same time it has affected politics to a great extent and created new opportunities as well as new threats. It has also meant a new global orientation for processes and business. Although it had never before been so easy to collect information, the need to do so had never been quite so high. The constant technological innovation has direct effects on the effectiveness of all areas of business: products can be made faster and cheaper than ever before. Taking advantage of cheaper

sources from all around the world to produce and distribute goods and services, clients around the globe can more easily be satisfied.

Levels of global investment have also reached their highest level with changes in financial flow affecting the whole world. The external debt of governments has increased affecting currency values, companies have received financial aid from foreign investors and direct foreign investment has also grown.

To prosper in this world of great change, full of new opportunities, threats and influences from overseas, companies must be prepared and develop an active response. New strategies need to be created and business methods changed. Leadership must not only be gained but also maintained.

1.2.2   Internationalisation of companies

Nowadays, due to increasing globalization, companies all around the world do business with foreign clients, competitors or suppliers, even if they only operate within their own borders. They have to face both national and international competitors.

Internationalisation, according to Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen (2008), is a key strategy for companies to increase sales volumes. Firms that export experience faster growth, higher production and their employees earn higher wages.

When firms develop their activities in international markets, they transfer their products, services, technologies and ideas as intellectual property, tangible and intangible assets, across national borders. Sometimes that transfer is by exporting, but others it is by owning and investing directly in foreign markets or forming alliances with local companies. Firms usually internationalise to diversify as a result of excess resource capability: the more general the resources, the wider the opportunities available.

There are companies that, due to their particular nature, are created as multinationals and operate in markets in different countries from the beginning. This is not usual as most enterprises start their process of internationalisation gradually by targeting more resources to overseas markets as their knowledge of them increases.

Entry into new markets is usually slow, mainly owing to the high risk related to the company's lack of knowledge about them. That risk also means that companies start their process of internationalisation in those markets both geographically and culturally closer. This paper looks at how the cultural variable affects not only the whole company, but also its marketing strategy.

Companies in international markets operate not only in an environment of risk, but also in one of opportunity. That is why it is necessary to develop appropriate international marketing strategies in order to compete with other firms and, at the same time, satisfy customers' wishes and needs. In these circumstances firms can develop new products which respond to the needs of its new customers or adapt their original products to the new market.

Both, Frank Bradley (2005) and Rosario García Cruz (2002) explain the main reasons why a company decides to internationalise:

- Small or saturated domestic markets or better opportunities abroad. When demand in a market is blocked and is lower than the production capacity of a company, that company must seek new markets in which to develop its activity. That is the case of the American firm Wal-Mart, which started its expansion overseas due to its high level of saturation in the American market.[1]

- Face foreign competitors. Internationalisation is a good strategy to confront new foreign competitors which threaten the position of the company in the local market.

- Look for new markets less competitive or at a different stage of the product lifecycle.

- Emergence of attractive new markets. Nowadays both demand from and supply to Southeast Asia have increased significantly. That means new competitors, but also potential new consumers. In this framework, foreign producers wishing to penetrate those new markets must not forget that despite Asian clients buying goods and services from the west, important cultural differences exist.

- Government incentives and commercial deficit. Some countries have to provide incentives for their companies to export and thus improve their balance of payments. This is the case of Japan, which has a huge volume of imports compensated for by a large volume of exports.

- Look for bigger markets to take advantage of economies of scale[2]. Technological innovation has made great advances in many sectors, but it also has

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[1] "Panorama Internacional de la Distribución Comercial durante las últimas décadas". This document is part of the book "Alternativas estratégicas y de Marketing en Distribución Comercial, Evolución de los grupos estratégicos Internacionales en el Comercio Minorista en Europa" Editorial Académica Española.

[2] "The cost advantage that arises with increased output of a product. Economies of scale arise because of the inverse relationship between the quantity produced and per-unit fixed costs; i.e. the greater the quantity of a good produced, the lower the per-unit fixed cost because these costs are shared over a larger

increased fixed costs. To achieve economies of scale, companies have been forced to increase their production and find new clients outside their borders.

- Diversification of risk, in case the domestic market is exposed to diverse economic, financial, political or demographic risks. This is the case of many Spanish companies which have been forced to search for new opportunities in overseas markets due to the delicate situation of the Spanish economy.

- Desire to follow competitors or customers abroad. In this case internationalisation is rooted in the decision to follow an important partner to overseas markets. This is the case of many suppliers of Ford or General Motors which started business in Europe when those two large motor industry companies set up there.

- Find easy access to technological advances and raw materials

- Expand operations to places where labour is cheaper.

- Excess capacity and resources.

- Growth aspirations and international orientation of the firm.

- Opportunistic response to unsolicited order or request from abroad.

- Backward or forward integration to reduce costs and increase control.

Obstacles to internationalisation

A great variety of obstacles can be found when a company is setting up overseas. Those obstacles are not usually found in their local market. Due to this, the company can decide on growth in its regular markets instead of attempting to develop their overseas markets. A major obstacle facing many firms in attempting to internationalise is the unknown and complex environment and the competitive international competition. Many times a company's strategy is a process of trial and error rather than a real strategic choice resulting in small changes being introduced in the overall strategy.

- Financial difficulties. In many cases the lack of availability of financial resources can make a company decide not to become international.

- Negative attitude of managers.

- Difficulty in identifying opportunities in overseas markets. On many occasions, although there are enough financial resources and the attitude of the

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number of goods. Economies of scale may also reduce variable costs per unit because of operational efficiencies and synergies" www.investopedia.org

whole company is positive, the information available about which markets are more favourable to start its economic activity is insufficient. In that situation the firm should dedicate more time and resources to collecting all the information necessary before deciding which markets to establish themselves in.

- Lack of knowledge of managers about cultures and ways of doing business in other countries. Company managers need to have an open attitude towards new cultures. As stated later in this paper, culture greatly affects the strategy that the firm will follow in a new country.

- Non-tariff barriers to trade. Those non-tariff barriers take up a great deal of a manager's time. They also mean excessive bureaucracy, the most common being import quotas, sanitary controls and technique or security specifications.

- Selection of means of distribution. The lack of contacts that a company has initially may mean more difficulty involved in bringing the product to the desired market.

- Difficulty in finding, interpreting and collating all the important government regulations.

- Adaptation and supply of the products that will be exported. Not all products are accepted without any modifications in different markets. In many cases, those products must be adapted before being introduced to the target market.

- Strong foreign competitors.

- Lack of qualified, experienced personnel.

- Inadequate size. In some cases SMEs (Small and medium companies) find it more difficult to become multinational because of their size as this is related to problems finding financial resources.

- Competition from developing countries.

Those are some of the most common obstacles that a company must face when continuously exporting its products or services. This paper looks at the need to adapt products before they are exported in greater depth and at how culture affects the degree of adaptation required.

1.3 FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Companies have to face many threats and dangers when they internationalise. To overcome those situations companies must prepare and develop an active response. New

strategies and new ways of doing business need to be taken into account as the only way to become a leader is via adapting to the new global situation.

Increased global business has created many opportunities. International activities can be key to company survival and growth. Companies can increase their competitiveness by developing business outside their domestic market and reaching out to foreign clients. Those companies that have excess production can sell it in overseas markets; thus market saturation can be avoided by entering other markets.

Besides, production centres can be located in different countries and easily moved. Cooperation among companies has also increased with the creation of agreements to develop new products, services and ideas that could not have done by an individual firm.

Finally, Michael R. Czinkota and Ilka A. Ronkainen (2004) mention that international companies diversify their risk. They are more solvent and pay higher wages. Moreover, consumers have more choice at lower prices thus improving their standard of living.

International companies have understood that most of the difficulties encountered in international markets are related to marketing. One of the essential concepts of marketing is adaptation to the environment and the market. Although most companies understand that there is a need to adapt in their domestic markets, very often they treat their clients in the same way no matter where they are from. That is a common mistake which can lead the company to inefficiency, rejection by the consumer and sometimes to failure in the new market.

2   COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Identifying and satisfying the desires and needs of clients is the key to successful marketing. Market and product characteristics must be used to evaluate the degree of adaptation to be applied.

This chapter will analyze the different degrees of adaptation: standardization, adaptation and glocalization.

2.1   STANDARDIZATION

Standardization at its purest is to sell the same product at the same price, using the same distribution channels and the same communication strategies.

With globalization, the tastes and needs of consumers have undergone a process of homogenization. Trade barriers have been drastically reduced and the development of new technologies has facilitated the process of distribution and access to information. The theory of standardization has been developed based on this and in the belief that consumers are willing to purchase products which are not adapted to their needs if they are sold at a lower price.

The main aim of standardization is cost reduction, due to the fact that fewer changes to the product, processes and communication and the use of synergies arising from operating in more than one country mean lower costs. Standardization can also lead to savings in distribution times, since the creation, production and distribution of these products is easier.

Furthermore standardization involves exploiting economies of scale: this refers to the reduction in the unit cost occurring when a company increases production volume with an inverse relationship between the number of units produced and the fixed costs. The greater the quantity of products produced, the lower the unit cost as these fixed costs are spread over a larger number of units. Economies of scale arise not only in production, but can be applied to communication, supply or even R & D. Fixed costs that arise during these processes are distributed among a larger number of units, thus allowing companies to produce the same product at a lower standardized price. Economies of scale can also reduce variable costs due to higher production efficiency from learning. Despite the existence of such economies of scale, they are not recommended for communication, where the message needs to be adapted to the public.

The overall image of the company can also be positively affected. A company that sells standardized products or services, using the same type of communication will be

more easily identified and recognized than a company that adapts all its products and thereby the company's bargaining power is increased. Communication quality may also increase due to lower production costs and therefore the incorporation of new techniques. On the other hand, in less developed markets this increased quality is achieved by marketing a product that will also be distributed to countries requesting it. Product diffusion will then be faster and that standardization implies a significant time saving in creation and development and in further distribution.

On the other hand, standardization involves consumer lack of demand as it is thought that lower prices of standardized products and communication provide sufficient motivation for customers to purchase the product. In this case preferences and consumer habits are overlooked. The traditional approach of the marketing mix (which was to adapt the product to the tastes and needs of the consumer) tends towards adapting consumer preferences to the product.

Another negative aspect of standardization is centralizing operations, causing an increase in rigidity and time in decision-making, as well as hindering communication between the different levels within the company.

Theodore Levitt (1983) could be considered the advocate of standardization strategy. In 1983 he wrote an article called "The Globalization of Markets" in which he claimed that there was "a global market for standardized consumer goods on a scale of unimagined magnitude." In this article, Levitt encouraged companies to create high-quality standardized products and market them worldwide with a standard price, distribution and communication. Levitt and other supporters of standardization defended this strategy based on the trend towards the homogenization of global needs. This trend is driven by the development of technology, communication and transport. Levitt posited that "a powerful force drives the world towards a converging community and this force is technology" and also added that the result would be "a new commercial reality with the emergence of global markets for standardized consumer products." This author saw cost reduction as the main advantage of standardization, because "companies connected to this new reality benefit from enormous economies of scale in production, marketing, distribution and management." This cost reduction benefits those competitive companies whose main strategy is to standardize "transferring these benefits to reduced world prices" and thus "decimate the competition".

According to Rosario García Cruz, standardization "is a matter of degree and cannot be applied globally to all marketing activities to be determined but the extent to which each is more or less likely to be standardized".

This author provides a number of assumptions for which standardization would be the right strategy to follow. The main factors when selecting the main standardization strategy are:

- A high degree of homogeneity of tastes in the markets in which the company operates. One of the main obstacles to internationalisation is the differences in tastes and preferences among the country or countries exported to and the country of origin of the company. The smaller the cultural differences, the greater the homogenization of tastes. That means that standardization strategy will be more successful if the company develops in markets with similar needs and conditions. For example, a company is more likely to succeed if it standardizes its product in two markets as similar as the United States and Canada; however, the same strategy may not work if standardization took place in a product marketed in the United Arab Emirates and Japan.

- Ease of access to economies of scale once the company operates internationally. The economy of scale is the reduction of the cost per unit for an enterprise with expansion, for example, an increase in production means a lower unit cost. These reductions are due to a greater volume purchasing inputs or other materials for producing the product; greater specialisation of the directors of the company; a reduction in the unit cost in marketing and technology, because any spending on marketing or innovation made by the company is divided among a larger number of products; and finally, a better understanding of the processes and techniques used by the company leading to more efficiency.

- External and internal environment of the company. Since not all businesses operate in the same way, it would be unwise to think that a strategy successful in a company would be so in another. Similarly to the characteristics of a company affecting the decision whether to use standardization as the main strategy, the characteristics of the industry to which that company belongs also have an effect. A standardization strategy is easier in certain sectors where the tastes and needs of

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consumers follow a similar pattern. For example, standardization could work in technological products or the automotive industry; while this same strategy could fail if a company dedicated to food production used it.

Jose Luis Munera and Ana Isabel Escudero (2007) also considered the type of product being traded an important factor. Industrial products are less affected by the cultural characteristics of a country and are often produced and marketed in a standardized manner. Conversely consumer products are usually created in response to the customs and traditions of the country in which they are to be marketed. They also advocate the coexistence of segmentation and standardization. A company can sell a standardized product worldwide or sell different products in different global product segments. This standardization can be classified into three categories: undifferentiated standardization, standardization and differentiated concentrated standardization. In the first case the company designs a product standardized for global distribution, in the second case a product will be designed for a single global segment and, finally, in the third case the company designs several standardized products that will be marketed in various universal segments.

Stevan P. Schnaars (1994) in "Marketing strategy: a consumer-oriented approach" analyzes the four components of the marketing mix: promotion, product, place and price, in a standardization strategy. Achieving the overall success of a promotional campaign saves many costs to businesses and advertising companies, while those more specific aspects such as language or some cultural characteristics of these campaigns should be tailored to the audience they are targeting. The product is one element that most companies standardize. Generally standardized, slightly modified products are sold and, as previously indicated, the degree of standardization of the marketing mix element depends largely on whether the product is an industrial or a consumer product. Regarding the standardization of place or distribution, this depends on the degree of development of the countries in which the product is marketed. In countries with a similar level of development the same distribution channels are used. Finally, the price is the element of the marketing mix that is most problematic when it comes to standardization. If the same product is sold at the same price in different markets with differing degrees of development, the company can risk setting prices too high for countries with a lower per capita income or too low in higher income markets which could bring in more profit. On the other hand a price adjustment in each country may

involve other problems. There are many companies that sell their products at lower prices in their home markets as Apple, Knockaround or American Eagle, resulting in many consumers taking advantage of this price difference by buying their products in the United States to either consume or sell in markets where the price is higher. This leads to the emergence of a new type of competition in which the main competitor is the same product but at a lower price. In addition, due to the high degree of globalization worldwide, this practice is not only common but relatively simple.

IKEA is a good example of a company that standardizes its product and processes. The Swedish furniture used standardization as its main strategy. It offers the same products at similar prices in different countries, thereby taking advantage of economies of scale. The model that IKEA has exported is based on offering a wide range of furniture at affordable prices.

Figure 2.1 IKEA Long Island (NY, USA)

Source: Own picture (2014)

Figure 2.2 IKEA Hannover (Germany)

Source: Own picture (2013)

IKEA offers its products in large buildings located on the outskirts of cities in retail parks. Product distribution in the stores is identical. IKEA names its products in Scandinavian languages and does not change this name for export. The experience of the consumer in IKEA is always the same.

In short standardization is to export a product that has been successful in its home market to other markets in the belief that the tastes and needs of consumers are sufficiently globalized so as to achieve a repetition of that success. According to Steven P. Schnaars (1994), creating new products has an index greater than the introduction of existing products and has demonstrated its feasibility failure.

On the other hand according to Hamel and Prahalad (1985) defence of standardization should not be based solely on cost reduction but should focus on a strategy of cross-subsidies, which occur when "a global company uses financial resources accumulated in one part of the world to face a competitive battle elsewhere." Since the main objective of standardization is to improve the competitiveness of enterprises, exploitation of cross-subsidies in addition to the use of economies of scale contributes to this. In this case a company operating worldwide would have certain advantages over those doing it only locally. If a price war globalized company could not only adjust their prices but offset probable losses with gains in other markets.

2.2 ADAPTATION

Adaptation lies in modifying a product or service to cover different needs and conditions in each market. Generally that strategy is used when there are insurmountable differences between two or more countries.

In contrast to standardization, adaptation is based on differences that exist in the different international markets. Those differences can be related to consumer behaviour, competitors or even the market. Defenders of adaptation do not believe that the world level of homogenization of cultural characteristics has reached such a degree as to allow it to be ignored. So when it comes to selling a product, the lower price of standardized products is not usually enough to convince a consumer to ignore their own particular culture.

Steven P. Schnaars (1994) postulates that the decision to use this strategy can be voluntarily taken by the company. In this case the objective will be to adjust the product to the specific market conditions. In these situations the main differences usually lie in consumer behaviour. Despite living in a globalized world, cultural differences are still too important to be ignored. Different languages, aesthetics, habits, beliefs and values are important factors when deciding to adapt the product or service.

Sometimes adaptation is imposed by the local government. Companies are very often forced to collaborate with a local one creating joint ventures before being

permitted to operate in a country. On occasions companies have to face legal differences related to the product, container and packaging.

The main objective of adaptation is to boost the sales volume through deeper knowledge of the consumer and a closer relationship with them. In this case marketing is orientated towards adapting all the components of marketing mix to the client´s wishes, tastes and needs.

Adaptation can increase product quality. In this case that quality would be achieved by creating a product totally adapted to the client´s tastes. There would be more personalized products and a wider variety when it comes to choosing what product best fulfils the consumer´s needs depending on the segment concerned.

Jose Luis Munuera Alemán y Ana Isabel Rodríguez Escudero (2007) claim that adaptation increases flexibility and reduces time spent making decisions. One decentralized organization means faster responses to any stimulus from the market. On the other hand decentralization can cause the parent company to lose control of subsidiaries. In any case the adaptation strategy is usually better accepted by local managers because they will be able to use all their knowledge of the market

The main disadvantage of adaptation as a strategy is its high cost. This is due to the modifications applied to the product and the processes related to commercialization.

Adaptation not only increases expenses but also increases distribution time. It would be necessary to create a new commercial plan in each region where the company is to operate. In contrast to standardization, adaptation strategy does not allow economies of scale to be taken advantage of, which means that the cost per unit will be higher.

Finally, the global image of the company may be weaker if it operates using different brand names or different standards in the different regions and markets as they would not be recognised.

Factors to adapt

Jose Luis Riesco Jeréz and Álvaro García Mendoza (2010) say that the main factors with an effect when adapting a product are: political-legal factors of the market where operation is planned, factors of the product to be commercialized and company factors. Political-legal factors are usually mandatory. They are normally related to some product specifications, its components, packaging or container with low costs being involved. Sometimes countries use that type of requests as non-tariff barriers to control imports. These rules implicate high costs which are reflected in the product price. They

also involve longer bureaucratic processes and the need to adapt the product. Finally cultural factors make the task of introducing a product in a country without any kind of adaptation impossible, common in the case of gastronomic products. One of the most widespread examples is the banning of cow products in India or pork products in Islamic countries. In these cases companies like McDonald's change their product composition to adapt them to the local culture. Purchasing power can also affect product price and quality in the new market.

According to Ildefonso Grande (2004) some of the reasons why companies choose adaptation are:

- Physical environment: Temperatures and humidity change from one place to another. Some products can be damaged in tropical countries due to high temperatures and humidity so air conditioning must be installed there. On the other hand some products need adaptations to cold countries. Car batteries must have a higher capacity to enable them to start an engine.

- Legal environment. Sometimes countries reject foreign brands. Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp are banned in Iran as they are from the USA. Products placed in the internal market of the European Union are subject to general safety requirements that companies must meet. In the case of a product posing a serious risk to consumers, the European Union has introduced a rapid alert system (RAPEX) (Europa.eu).

- Cultural environment. Consumer perception varies among cultures. For example the word diet has different meanings. In English it is related to low calories, while in Spanish it is more closely related to weight loss or medical diets. That is why Coca-Cola sells Diet Coke, Coca-Cola light or Lite coke depending on the country.

Figure 2.3 Diet Coke and Coca-Cola Light

Source: Own picture (2014)

- Perceptions. It is the interpretation of a product by consumers. In Spain wine is not seen as an alcoholic drink and can easily be found in stores. On the other hand in the United States wine is considered an alcoholic drink and can only be bought in specialized stores that have a special license. In Europe garages are used to keep cars, while in Canada and United States garages are mainly used as storage areas.

- Language. It is important to take into account how a product name can be understood in a different language. Lamborghini launched "Lamborghini reventon". Reventon means puncture in Spanish. Chilly is an intimate product created for women. Chilly is also a spicy Mexican sauce so it is not an appropriate name.

Figure 2.4 Chilly

Source: Chilly (2014)

- Tastes. In the United States people prefer big cars that use gas. In Europe cars are smaller and use diesel. In some North European countries people prefer to use bicycles instead of cars, though cycling is not so popular in Southern Europe. Mexican food is spicy and Indian food uses many spices.

- Ethics and religion. Some cultures are stricter than others about their beliefs. Islamic culture rejects dolls like Barbie because they represent a decadent symbol of the West. That is why some others as Fulla or Jamila have been launched. Jamila is a doll launched by Simba Toys Middle East. Muslims cannot eat all kinds of meat and those they can eat must be certified as halal. Kosher Jews have strict rules about what food to eat and how to cook it. (Badatz Igud Rabbonim KIR).

Figure 2.5 Jamila and friends. Symba Toys

Source: Clason Blogspot (2012)

- Ethnocentrism. Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen (2004) find that some cultures feel that theirs are better than others. The United States is an ethnocentric culture and tries to export its habits, beliefs, thoughts and values to other countries. Sometimes that attitude is rejected by other cultures. When Disney placed Eurodisney in Paris, the company made the mistake of considering European culture as a whole and that the park would be a success merely because it was American. However, Europe has many different and old cultures that are not willing to change in the face of American culture. On the contrary, Disney was very successful in Hong Kong where it was not adapted because it succeeded as it came from the United States.

- Symbols. Symbols are different among cultures. For example in China four represents bad luck because it sounds like "death". On the other hand eight is a lucky number sounding like "prosperity". License plates or telephone numbers containing the number four are avoided and those with an eight are more expensive. The Olympic Games in 2008 started on 8th August to make the date 8-8-2008. The same thing occurs with the number thirteen in the West. Some planes do not have thirteen as a seat number and some buildings do not have a thirteenth floor.

- Communication. Communication is different among cultures. In Germany commercials have more text than in Spain, where images are more important.

The need for adaptation is also affected by the nature of the product. Generally consumer products are more likely to require adaptation. Tastes and needs related to these kinds of goods are usually more heterogenic than industrial goods. Companies must consider whether the product satisfies the consumer's needs in different markets in the same way or whether the product will be used in the same way. Purchase can be for different reasons which can change depending on the country. The company should

know those reasons in order to create an appropriate marketing plan. Moreover, if the distribution channel changes, this element of marketing-mix will need to be adapted.

Finally, the characteristics and intentions of the company are of great importance in this decision. If the primary intention of the company is only to increase its market by selling the same product in new areas, the adaptation needed will be minimum. On the contrary, if the company wishes to commercialize different products in different areas, adaptation will be more drastic. Furthermore, the company must take into account the value of its brand. If this brand is known all around the world, adaptation will be less because acceptance will be easier.

2.3   GLOCALIZATION

Globalization is a process by which economies, governments and local cultures become part of a global system. The emergence of Internet and its subsequent growth have fuelled the development of this phenomenon. Despite the current degree of globalization in the world, local cultures remain important in their respective countries and regions. It is for this reason that the term glocalization arises.

Glocalization is to "think globally and act locally." That is, although the company uses a global strategy when developing their marketing plan, this does not mean that all aspects are standardized. The company can usually standardize those elements that allow it and adapt those requiring it. The process of glocalization involves a high degree of trial and error on the part of firms. Some companies, such as McDonald's, use this strategy by minimally varying characteristics depending on the market products it offers. For example, McDonald's India offers a wide variety of vegetarian, chicken or mutton products. It has different designs in different locations. It adapts its image to the Theatre District in Chicago or to Chinatown in New York City and Boston.

Figure 2.6 McDonald´s in Chinatown, New York

Source: Own picture (2014)

Figure 2.7 McDonald´s in the Theatre District, Chicago

Source: Own picture (2014)

The term glocalization first appeared in the late 1980s in the "Harvard Business Review". This approach appears to combine two competing approaches such as standardization and adaptation. Subsequently, this term was popularized by the sociologist Roland Robertson.

Robertson explains the "need to introduce the concept of strong glocalization" in response to the various problems posed by globalization: both the perception of globalization as a phenomenon that surpasses the local and the same current concept of the local are erroneous. Currently local culture is considered as a whole regardless of its particular aspects. He finally concludes that glocalization is the simultaneity of the universal and the particular.

Glocalization is linked to Micromarketing. José María Mateu considered "micro-marketing is the consideration of the target audience as the sum of a large number of micro segments." Micromarketing is defined as "the adaptation and advertising of goods and services with a global basis to more local markets."

Therefore glocalization will always use global elements as far as possible and adapt those elements when required.

3   HOW CULTURE AFFECTS MARKETING

Over the last few decades international trade has increased. Barriers to trade have been reduced and consumers have greater purchasing power. Furthermore, companies have to compete against international competitors. As a result a communication plan has to be designed which deals with all cultural differences found in the international market. Those differences come first based on different consumer behaviour and second because of the different results of a communication plan in different markets.

Some marketing managers defend the figure of a global consumer who would have the same wishes and needs all around the world. Those universal aspects would translate into standardized communication plans that could be applied in every region. However, thinking in this way marketers are making a mistake. Success in foreign markets depends on the adaptability of the company, and thus, the adaptability of its communication strategy.

To take advantage of markets or global segments marketers need to identify what affects consumer behaviour. They also have to find similarities between consumer behaviour in different markets and how those similarities can be used to create the communication strategy.

When a company starts to operate outside its domestic market, it begins to establish relationships with new clients and new partners. Foreign governments are sometimes among those partners, so it is essential for the company to understand what motivates the behaviour of those different groups. Understanding culture is not only important to creating good strategies, but it also influences how these strategies will work in foreign markets.

According to Ildefonso Grande (2004) culture must be understood as mental programming. People maintain the thoughts, feelings and behaviour that they learnt in their childhood. Culture is not only knowledge, but something more complex. Cultural differences are expressed in values, rites and symbols: values are probably the first thing learnt and it is difficult to change them later; rites are collective activities which are very important within a culture; symbols are words, gestures or even drawings that have a special meaning in each culture and are recognized by the people who integrate that culture.

Sometimes it will be necessary to adapt products and processes to the wide range of needs and wishes of clients. In order to save time and money companies must be able

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to find similarities and differences among its clients. Knowing that, firms will be able to discover which elements of communication adapt and which can remain the same. This paper analyses the concept of culture and its elements and how they affect the strategy of international communication.

3.1   DEFINITION OF CULTURE

Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1985) conducted an analysis of more than 160 definitions of culture. Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen (2004) found a common point: culture is learnt, shared and transmitted from one generation to another. First culture passes from parents to children, but is also transmitted by social organizations, governments and religious or educational institutions. Common ways of thinking and acting are developed and helped by all society, called "collective mental programming" by Geert Hofstede (1984). Culture consists of different elements which are interdependent, so if there is any change in one of them, all of them will be affected.

Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen (2004) define culture as an integrated system by learnt behaviour patrons that characterize members of that society. It includes everything the group thinks, says, does and makes. It also includes their language, items, attitudes and feelings. So that broad definition refers to a wide range of elements from material to spiritual ones. Culture is also resistant to change. People are acculturated in a particular culture. Problems appear when an individual, either a business or a person, has to adapt to another culture. That is why the capacity of companies to acculturate is basic to determining their success or failure.

Paul Herbig (1998) said that all cultures share the same characteristics:

- Functionality. In every society culture orients people's behaviour to help the coexistence and survival of social groups. Every culture determines what is wrong and what is right; what can be done and what cannot be done. In some European countries people give each other two kisses when they meet for first time, in the United States people shake hands and in Japan they just bow.

- Social phenomenon. Culture is created through contact between people and must be considered a human creation. Social contacts also develop culture.

- Culture guides. Culture decides what is right or wrong, what is good or bad and what is acceptable or unacceptable.

- Culture is learnt. Culture is learnt by imitation and interaction.

- Culture is arbitrary. Values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of one culture can be rejected by another. For example an American woman could feel uncomfortable if she is kissed by someone from Italy when meeting for first time.

- Culture is full of values. Culture transmits many rules and suggests acceptable behaviour. Behaving in a different way to that expected can cause rejection by society.

- Culture helps communication. In cultures there are ways of communication that can be verbal or non-verbal.

- Culture evolves. Culture evolves constantly and adapts to new situations. Many years ago it was not acceptable for a girl to wear a bikini on public beaches. Nowadays it is not only accepted, but is the most common swimsuit for women.

- Culture is long term.

- Culture satisfies needs. People need to belong to a group or society in which they are appreciated and can share the same behaviour and habits.

There can be different cultures even in a close and common environment. Culture can be considered on different levels. For example Americans and Europeans are considered occidentals, and sometime western culture is seen as a whole. Ildefonso Grande (2004) sets the following levels:

- National level. Countries usually have their own culture.

- Regional level. It is based on ethnic, religious or linguistic particularities. People from New York have a different culture to someone from Texas. They share history and language, but some concepts such as hospitality, social relationships or time are perceived in a different manner. Religion also creates values that differentiate people. In New York Muslims, Jews and Catholics have different values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. People from Quebec and Ontario in Canada speak different language and have different origins.

- Generational level. Some generations cannot share the same values due to the context in which they grew up. For example, in Spain someone who was born in 1936 and lived during the period after the civil war would behave differently regarding food and money from someone who was born in the late nineties.

- Social class. Each social class can have its own values. Higher social classes usually have more complex rules and etiquette.

- Cultural level related to the activity. Sometimes culture is different depending on a person's activity.

3.2   ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

"A cultural universal is a group of characteristics that are common to all human cultures worldwide" (Czinkota, R. M. and Ronkainen, I. A. 2004: 61). Although those elements can be the same, their nature is completely different from one culture to another.

Elements of culture can be classified as tangible and intangible elements. They are: language (verbal and non-verbal), religion, values and attitudes, behaviours and habits, material elements, aesthetics, education and social institutions.

A multinational company being able to identify those elements and adapt them depends on its product, service and market share. Some products and services will need to be more adapted than others.

3.2.1   Language

Language is important in the way that it transmits messages. Messages can be verbal and non-verbal. Both of them are important. It is not only important to be able to dominate a language, but also to know about its cultural aspects.

Edward T. Hall (1976) created the concepts of low context culture and high context culture. High context cultures are characterized by a vague and ambiguous language. The most important part of the conversation is not what is said, but the circumstances or gestures made by the interlocutors. Information comes from the environment. Japan, Arabia Saudi, China and Hispanic countries are high context cultures. On the other hand, in low context cultures complete messages are used and do not need to be interpreted. Environment and gestures are much less important than words. The United States and England are cultures that use a low context communication.

Cultures are proud of their language: sometimes they even defend it using legal procedures. Ildefonso Grande (2004) says that in France products must be labelled in French. Forty per cent of the music broadcast on French radio must be in French. It is also forbidden to use English words if there are French words with have the same meaning. The same thing happens in Spain where "La Real Academia de la Lengua Española" does not allow Anglicisms. In Europe 51% of TV programmes must be European.

According to Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka R. Ronkainen (2004) language has four main functions in international marketing.

To collect information: if the company knows the language, they can collect information personally instead of taking it from other agents. It is also easier to collect more detailed information because people feel more comfortable talking in their own language.

1.   Language provides access to local society.

2.   Language facilitates communication within the company.

3.   Non-verbal language can be a useful tool.

Dominating a language goes further than understanding it. Some words and expressions have completely different meanings depending on the country. For example English differs from the United States to Australia or Great Britain. Something similar occurs with Spanish in Latin America and Spain. "Carro" in some Latin American countries means "car", while in Spain it means "carriage".

Many famous companies have made big mistakes in translation. That old saying in these cases is true: "if you want to kill a message, translate it". The meaning of a commercial can be made totally different by changing just one word. For example, KFC China used the slogan "finger lickin´ good", which is very common in the West, but not in the East. Chinese customers understood "eat your fingers". American Airlines translated its slogan "fly in leather" into Spanish word for word. The result was "vuela en cueros" which is an informal way to say in Spanish "fly nude". Even Coca-Cola can make huge mistakes in translations. When they started to operate in China they tried to find an easy way to say Coca-Cola. They chose "ke kou ke la" Depending on the dialect that can mean "mare stuffed by wax" or "the wax tadpole bites". (Odee 2011)

Language as an element of culture is an identifying mark. To avoid controversies it is necessary to know the background of the country or region: some try to protect their language against foreign ones. For example in Québec (Canada) everything must be translated into French. Companies must also be aware of the region´s history and situation. Donette in Spain used the following slogan "a pedir al metro" (If you want to beg, go to the subway) in 2011 when the crisis in Spain was at its most dramatic.

Michael R. Czinkota and Ilka Ronkainen (2004) claim that local cooperation is needed to face language problems. "Translation is not only about translating words but also it is about reflecting emotions".

Non-verbal communication

When it is time to do business it is important to be familiar with some other sub-elements related to non-verbal communication. Those sub-elements are: time, space, material belongings, personal relations and business agreements.

Some cultures are more flexible about time than others. Depending on culture the personal space that people need to be comfortable can change. In many Latin cultures it is common to greet another person by kissing them; however, that could make a businessman from Northern Europe feel uncomfortable. Finally, developing business relations is different in each culture: in China, for example, companies must spend time developing guanxi. Guanxi is "a general Chinese term used to describe relationships that may result in the exchange of favours or connections that are beneficial for the parties involved" (World Learner Chinese).

Non-verbal communication also includes gestures, outfits and even physique.

3.2.2 Time

Something that changes from one culture to another is the concept of time. Time can be monochromic or polychromic. It can also be linear or circular.

Monochromic time means that it is possible to do just one activity every time, a common concept in the West. Yet polychromic means that is possible to do more than one activity every time, something more usual in Asia, Africa and South America.

Linear time means that all tasks must be done following a sequence or schedule. New tasks are not started unless the previous one has been finished. That concept is common among developed countries in the West. In contrast circular time means that people are born, grow up, die and are reincarnated: what is not done during this lifetime will be done during the next one.

Ildefonso Grande (2004) says that time affects business negotiations or activities and process planning. It also affects marketing strategy. In cultures where time is circular it is not worth spending resources trying to reduce times and offering low time expenditure as a quality of the product.

3.2.3 Space

Space includes physical distance between persons, physical contact, how common space is shared, how symbols are placed and their meaning.

Arabic men are closer when they are speaking and hold hands. However, men and women keep a distance. In many countries like the United States and England physical

contact is avoided, but in Latin cultures physical contact represents friendship and trust. People from Northern Europe do not like physical contact in any situation.

Space affects product design. In the United States living rooms are used for sporadic meetings with family and friends. In Spain living rooms are shared by families almost every day. People from Spain can sleep on the sofa, but it is not common in the USA, which is why sofas are designed differently depending on the culture.

In Europe or North America having an office next to the window is usually for managers. However, in Japan having that same office means being isolated. In Japan managers are situated in the centre of the room. Ildefonso Grande (2004).

Figure 3.1 Manager´s office in Moody´s New York (2014)

Source: Own picture 2014

Figure 3.2 Managers in Japan share office. Bukert (2014)

Source: 2014

3.2.4 Religion

Religion has always marked behaviour, values and attitudes. Its impact on international marketing depends on the strength of the religion. Religion creates similarities among different cultures with the important religions like Christianity, Islamism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism having a strong influence on consumer behaviour.

Holidays are usually fixed by religion, but even within the same religion there are differences that must be taken into account. For example it is Child Jesus who brings

presents on December 24th in Latin America, while in Spain the Three Wise Men bring presents on January 5th. Those differences are important when planning promotions.

Religion also affects goods and services distribution. In Islamic countries alcoholic beverages, pork, blood products, carnivorous animals or birds of prey are forbidden and animals must be slaughtered following the "halal" ritual".

Sometimes religion influences the composition of societies. A good example of this is the Indian caste system. Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen (2014) claim that although that system is unconstitutional, it is still the rule in less developed areas of India.

3.2.5 Values and attitudes

Changing disposition varies among cultures. Less traditional cultures are more willing to change their habits. The attitude of the country towards one culture influences its acceptance. Some countries try to protect their cultures against foreign ones.

Michael R. Cinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainent (2004) says that in 2002 Iran banned the Barbie doll to protect their culture and one year later it was banned in Arabia Saudi. Iran then launched two new dolls that were more in accordance with Iranian culture (The Guardian, 2012). A Syrian company also created a doll very similar to Barbie: Fulla, reflecting Islamic values. Fulla's outfits and skin colour change depending on where it is sold. In order to avoid these situations Barbie has been to those markets whose culture could reject the American way of life. Mattel created the first black doll for the African-American subculture in the United States and adapted its dolls for entry to Japan.

3.2.6 Behaviour and habits

Knowledge of behaviour and habits is fundamental to start negotiations, otherwise there could be misunderstandings. Some cultures like the Chinese are extremely punctual; some others, like the Arabs, spend more time negotiating. It is important to be ready and know about the corresponding culture.

Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen (2004) claim that habits also matter when it is time to deal with foreign partners as some presents can be inappropriate. In China business cards are taken and given using both hands and it is rude not to read them when receiving them. Material elements

Material culture is a result of technology and is related to the country's economic activity. Material elements are social, economic, financial and marketing infrastructure. Economic infrastructure is transport, energy and communications. Social infrastructure

is education, housing and health. Financial and marketing infrastructures are auxiliary agencies such as banks or research companies. If infrastructures are developed, companies could use them directly to operate, but in some case they have to help with their development before starting.

Education of the workforce determines how the company will instruct its employees and if they have to send their employees overseas.

3.2.7 Aesthetics

Ildefonso Grande (2004) says that every culture has established canons of beauty. What is or is not acceptable is different in each market. Elements like colour and music influence the success of a product. While in the West white means purity, in some Eastern cultures it is the colour of mourning.

3.2.8 Social institutions

Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen (2014) say that how families and the entire society are constituted affects patterns of consumption. In some cultures a family is composed of parents and children, in some others family is a broader concept. Some cultures are more stratified than others and relationships among employees are very often determined by this degree of stratification.

The definition of family changes from one culture to another. In Western families it usually consists of parents and children. Their role changes depending on the degree of masculinity or femininity and on the power distance in that culture. For example in many cultures the woman buys food and other products for the house, but in some that decision is made by the man or both of them. The children´s role is lower, the higher the power distance. When the power distance is low, children are considered more when taking consumer decisions.

In Muslim cultures family is a broad concept with indirect relatives having a more active role. In Latin cultures families are also bigger and sometimes relatives help to take care children or perform other services.

In collective cultures groups have a more important and active role than individuals. Senior citizens usually have a major influence on young people´s consumption.

Cultures create festivities to celebrate the role of their members. Those festivities are different in each culture. Saint Valentine celebrates love in Western countries. Argentina also celebrates Friend´s day. In Spain Mother´s day is on the first Sunday in

May, in the United States it is on second Sunday in May. Religious festivities also produce differences in consumers' behaviour.

These differences affect company activity. Products or services will be in demand depending on the date so companies organize production and marketing mix activities according to the culture.

3.3 DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

In 1980 Geert Hofstede established four dimensions that allow cultures to be classified and identified. Those dimensions were: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and uncertainty avoidance. Those dimensions were created from research carried out on a sample of more than 100,000 IBM workers from more than fifty countries. In 1991 a fifth dimension was added: Long-Term Orientation. In 2010 research conducted by Michael Minkov generated two dimensions. One was a review of the fifth dimension which became: Pragmatic versus Normative. The last one was new and called: Indulgence versus Restraint.

3.3.1 Power distance

"This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The fundamental issue here is how a society handles inequalities among people. People in societies exhibiting a large degree of power distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. In societies with low power distance, people strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power." Geert Hofstede (2014).

Classification of cultures depending on their power distance

According to Ildefonso Grande (2004) cultures can have high power distance or low power distance. Power distance has different sources:

- Social status, level of education and professional activity. The more stratified a culture is, the more power distance there will be.

- Family. If power distance in families is high, children are expected to do whatever their parents and older members of their family say.

- Educational institutions. In cultures with low power distance education institutions look for the personal development of their students instead of controlling and disciplining them.

- Place of work. In cultures with high power distance managers control their employees.

- Ideology. Some ideologies help power distance, others reduce it.

- Size of population. The more populated an area is, the more control it will need.

- Amount of resources. The more resources, the more control will be needed.

Characteristics of high power distance cultures:

- Status respect is a basic value.

- Power, status and privileges are closely related.

- Political, economic and social power give independence.

- Power centralization is accepted.

- Subordinates are expected to follow orders.

- Communication style is formal and full of rites and traditions.

- Role differentiation.

Characteristics of low power distance cultures:

- Equality is a basic value.

- Inequality is minor.

- Subordinates are considered when making decisions.

- Powerful persons do not boast about this.

- People respect each other without traditions or rites.

- Communication style is correct but informal.

- Any person can play any role.

Ildefonso Grande (2004) also claims that in-depth research is needed to classify cultures depending on their power distance. Sometimes means of communication can reflect the degree of power distance in a society. Advertisements that show traditional roles or differences in social status are related to high power distance cultures.

The following example is a frame of a Veet commercial in United States. That commercial is not only controversial for being sexist but also for reinforcing social status differences. In that commercial an Asian woman is giving a pedicure to a white American woman. Furthermore that commercial uses some stereotypes, such as Asians not speaking English correctly or working in this kind of place.

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Figure 3.3 Veet advertisement

Source: The Independent. (2014)

3.3.2 Individualism versus collectivism

"The high side of this dimension, called individualism, can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families. Its opposite, collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we."" Geert Hofstede (2014).

Individualist and collectivist cultures

According to Ildefonso Grande (2004) a society is individualist when bonds between people are weak. People just worry about themselves and their families. In collectivist cultures people must be loyal to their families and social groups.

Individualism has different sources.

- In individualist cultures families leave their members to develop by themselves. In collectivist cultures every member has their position within the family and all the members support everyone.

- Education systems in collectivist cultures are designed to develop group decisions. In individualist cultures each student tries to stand out. Individualist cultures teach how to learn, collectivist cultures teach how to do.

- History and ideology. Cultures where religion is important are usually collectivist.

Characteristics of an individualist culture

- Individualist cultures also have low power distance.

- Each person has their own opinions and has total freedom to express them.

- There is low context communication.

- There is not much difference between roles.

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Characteristics of a collective culture

- Collectivist cultures have higher power distance.

- People create groups. Relationships within those groups are really important.

- It is accepted that rules, rights and obligations are not the same for everybody.

- Labour relations are determined by ethical behaviour.

- There is high context communication.

- People assume different roles. Men are focused on their jobs and women have to combine work and family.

- In collectivist cultures presenters are together in the news.

In collectivist cultures personal relationships are really important. The following pictures are advertisements for precooked foods. However, the first one is intended for a collectivist culture, from Spain, emphasizes socializing and tries to show that the product is not incompatible with traditional meals. The second one, from United States, emphasizes that the food is still delicious although it is precooked and can be eaten at home or out.

Figure 3.4 Casa Tarradellas. Advertisement in a collectivist society

Source: La Criatura Creativa (2011)

Figure 3.5 Kraft foods. Advertisement in an individualist culture.

Source: Dfusiondsign (2014)

3.3.3 Masculinity versus femininity

"The masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented." Geert Hofstede (2014).

<u>Classification of cultures as masculine or feminine</u>

According to Ildefonso Grande (2004) masculine cultures are competitive and aggressive. Power is important in these societies. On the other hand feminine cultures have values related to protection, care and affection.

Masculinity and femininity resources are:

- Families. In masculine cultures men are expected to be competitive and women to be affectionate. Women´s roles are related to caring for children, patients or other persons and men are expected to seek professional and economic success.

- Work. In feminine cultures confrontation is avoided. Rewards are not always money. Companies seek to maintain their activity instead of making as much money as they can.

- Ideology. Masculine cultures are less permissive than feminine ones. Feminine cultures invest in welfare while masculine cultures invest in armies and economic growth.

Characteristics of a masculine culture:

- Worries are related to material progress, ambition or success.

- Men are expected to be ambitious, while women should be caring.

- Failures, specially academic and professional ones, are not tolerated.

- Conflicts are solved by arguing or fighting.

- Leaders are those who stand out as students or professionals.

Both low context communication and high context communication are used. Ildefonso Grande (2004).

Characteristics of a feminine culture:

- Worries are related to safety, welfare and comfort.

- Men and women share roles.

- Failures are tolerated.

- Conflicts are solved by negotiating.

- Leaders are not necessarily those who stand out professionally or academically.

The first of the following pictures is from Spain and is intended for a feminine culture. A relaxing environment and enjoyment are the main characteristics of the advertisement. The second one is intended for a masculine culture as the American society. Men control the situation and the woman is used as a sexual object.

Figure 3.6 Ligeresa advertisement.

Source: Ogilvi (2012)

Figure 3.7 Calvin Klein advertisement

Source: Fashion Telegraph (2010)

3.3.4 Uncertainty avoidance

"The uncertainty avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The fundamental issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles." Geert Hofstede (2014).

Classification of cultures depending on their degree of uncertainty avoidance

Ildefonso Grande (2004) establishes the following sources of uncertainty avoidance:

- Avoidance uncertainty and family. In societies where there are many severe rules, avoidance uncertainty is higher.

- Avoidance uncertainty and educational institutions. Cultures where children are taught to face new situations avoid uncertainty less than those where children are taught to follow rules.

- Avoidance uncertainty and work. In societies where avoidance uncertainty is low, workers are used to having more autonomy and solving situations by themselves.

- Avoidance uncertainty and ideology. When cultures have been developed under powerful political and religious regimes where everything is established, avoidance uncertainty is higher than in those where people have more freedom.

Characteristics of high uncertainty avoidance cultures:

- Many rules to regulate personal, social and labour life. Having regulations reduces anxiety.

- Conflict avoidance.

- Everything unknown is dangerous and must be avoided.

- Time is money. Having everything planned reduces the possibility of unknown situations.

- Experts are valued because their knowledge and opinions reduce anxiety.

- Tranquilizers are often consumed.

- Low context in communication.

Characteristics of low uncertainty avoidance cultures

- New situations do not create anxiety, but curiosity. Rules are set only when necessary.

- People only work when it is necessary.

- Cultures less conservative and more tolerant.

- Stimulating products are often consumed.

- Scientific thoughts are based on empiricism and relativism.

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- High context in communication. Ildefonso Grande (2004)

Analysing communication cultures can be classified depending on their degree of uncertainty avoidance. The following pictures show two advertisements for Bosch in Germany and United States. The German advertisement has more text and explanations than the American one. This is done in order to reduce any risk perceived by the consumer.

Figure 3.8 German advertisement of Bosch

Source: Bosch (2013)

Figure 3.9 American advertisement of Bosch

Source: Bosch (2013)

3.3.5 Pragmatic versus normative

"This dimension describes how people in the past, as well as today, relate to the fact that so much that happens around us cannot be explained.

In societies with a normative orientation most people have a strong desire to explain as much as possible. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing absolute truth and a need for personal stability. They exhibit great respect for social conventions and traditions, a relatively small propensity to saving for the future and a focus on achieving quick results.

In societies with a pragmatic orientation, most people do not have a need to explain everything, as they believe that it is impossible to understand fully the

complexity of life. The challenge is not to know the truth but to live a virtuous life. In societies with a pragmatic orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context and time. They show an ability to accept contradictions, adapt according to the circumstances, a strong propensity to save and invest, thriftiness and perseverance in achieving results." Geert Hofstede (2014).

Classification of cultures depending on their pragmatism

Characteristics of pragmatic cultures:

- Future matters more than present.
- Long-term results are preferred rather than quick results.
- Saving and persevering is important.
- Traditions can be changed to be adapted to new conditions.

Characteristics of normative cultures

- Truth depends on the situation.
- There are no great concerns about the future.
- Quick results are preferred to long-term results.

Analysing communication cultures can be classified depending on their degree of pragmatism.

3.3.6 Indulgent versus restraint

"Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms." Geert Hofstede (2014).

Classification of cultures depending on their indulgence

Characteristics of indulgent cultures:

- Indulgent societies are willing to realize their impulses and desires in order to enjoy their life and have fun.
- People are positive and optimistic.
- Free time is of great importance and money is spent to satisfy wishes and desires.

Characteristics of restraint culture:

- Societies are cynical and pessimistic.

- Restraint cultures control their desires and gratification. Their actions are restrained by social norms. Indulging themselves is seen as somewhat wrong.

- Free time is not very important.

The degree of indulgence can be easily established by analyzing communication.

4 ANALYSIS IN THREE COUNTRIES

4.1 "POWER DISTANCE" (GEERT HOFSTEDE, 2014).

Graph 4.1 Power distance
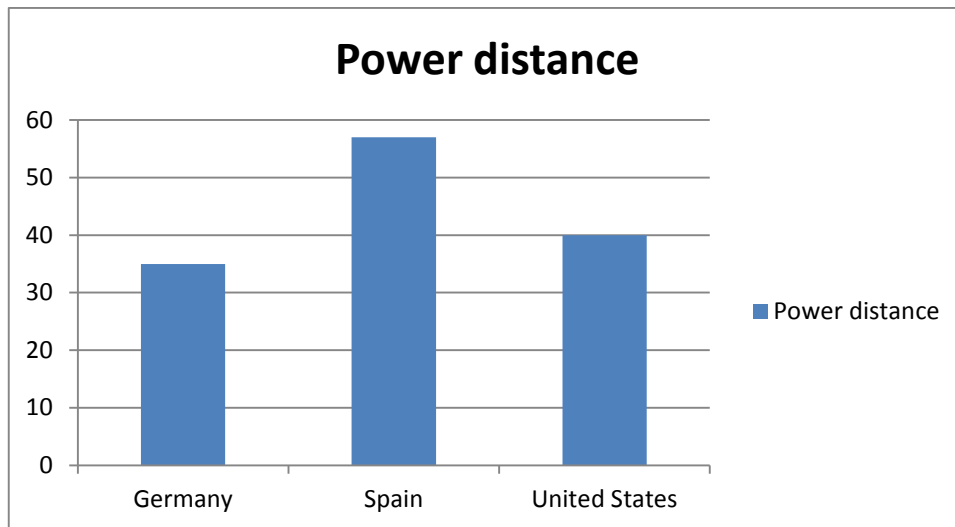
Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

Table 4.1 Power distance

"Power distance"

Germany	35
Spain	57
United States	40

Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

"Power distance" deals with inequalities within societies. It expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities. Geert Hofstede (2014) defines "power distance" as: "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect that power is distributed unequally".

Spain has as score on this dimension of 57. It scores the highest on the scale of the PD. That means that people accept inequalities amongst people as a fact of life. That inequality is accepted in all stages of society. In companies, every decision must be approved by the top manager of the company.

United States has a score on this dimension of 40. Americans do not accept inequalities amongst people as a fact of life. Americans emphasized on equal right in all aspects of American society and government. Within American culture, hierarchy is established for convenience and superiors are usually accessible managers. Individual

employees and teams are relied for their expertise. Managers and employees share information frequently and expect to be consulted. Communication used is informal, direct and participative. Hiring, promotion and decisions are based on merit or evidence of what one has done or is able to do. Americans are born equal and any American can reach any position if works enough.

Germany is highly decentralized and it has a strong middle class. That is why Germany is the lowest power distant country: 35. Communication is direct and participative. Control is disliked and leadership can be challenged when that challenge it is based on expertise. (Geert Hofstede, 2014)

When it is time to communicate in a society with high "power distance" (Geert Hofstede, 2001: p. 79) it is important to respect economic, social and politic hierarchies. Children must be protected by their parents or other adults. Senior citizens are usually who act as expertise. Communication must be serious and jokes are not allowed. (Ildefonso Grande, 2004: 281-286). In the figure 4.1, Pan Bimbo uses a famous scientific to advertise its brand.

Figure 4.1 Pan Bimbo advertisement in Spain

Source: Youtube. (2011) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dKFr7QiKAk

Figure 4.2 Cheerios Commercial in USA

Source: Youtube. (2014) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKuQrKeGe6g

On the other hand in cultures with low "power distance" (Geert Hofstede, 2001: p. 79) hierarchies are not respect. For example in the commercial of Cheerios, It is the daughter who, taking care of his father, gives him Cheerios to take care of his health.

Furthermore roles are highly defined in cultures with high "power distance" (Geert Hofstede, 2001: p. 79). In Spain detergent advertisements are usually starred in by women as the Colon commercial. Commercials starred in by men are not usual.

Figure 4.3 Colon commercial in Spain

Source: Mujer tenías que ser (2012)

Figure 4.4 Skip commercial in Spain

Source: Mujer Tenías que ser (2012)

Besides, in cultures where "power distance" (Geert Hofstede, 2001: p.79) is high, websites are designed with authority signs as restricted areas, stamps, certifications or different areas for different roles. On the other hand, there are not restricted areas or differentiated roles in websites where power distance is low. (Ildefonso Grande, 2004: 293)

4.2 "INDIVIDUALISM" (GEERT HOFSTEDE, 2014)

Graph 4.2 Individualism
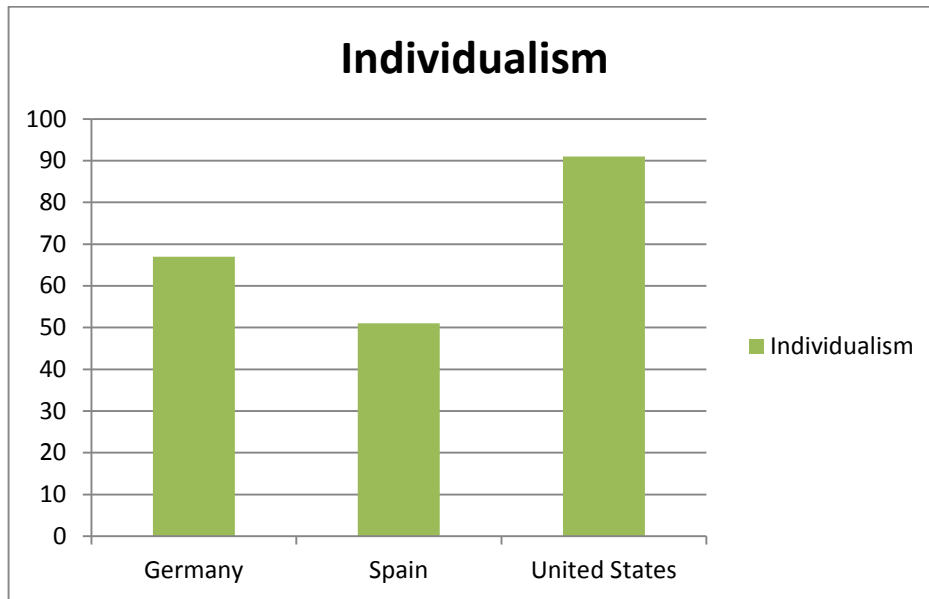
Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

Table 4.2 Individualism

"Individualism"

Germany	67
Spain	51
United states	91

Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

This dimension deals with the degree of interdependence that a culture maintains among its members. It is related to people´s self-image and if it is defined in terms of "I" or "We". In individualist cultures people just take care of themselves and their direct family. In collectivist cultures people must take care of all members of groups that they belong to and be loyal to them.

United States scores the highest (91). American society expects that people look after themselves and their direct family. Americans do not rely on authorities for support. Americans have no problem to do business with people that do not know very well. There is also a high degree of geographical mobility in United States. In the business world employees are usually self-reliant and display initiative.

German culture is also really individualist (67). Families are usually small and focused on the parent-children relationship. Non-direct family relationships are not common. The ideal of self-actualization is a strong belief. Loyalty is based on a sense of

duty and responsibility, but also on personal preferences for people. Communication is direct.

If Spain is compared with other European countries it can be considered a collectivist country. But if it is compared with the rest of the world it is seen as individualist. This made Spanish easier to relate with some non-European cultures. Employees tend to work in teams and families are bigger than in other cultures. (Geert Hofstede, 2014).

Communication style is context-rich, so it usually extensive and elaborate. Many people appear in commercials. The total number of people that appear in commercials and how they relate determines if a culture is collective or not. (Ildefonso Grande, 2004: 287).

In the following advertisements are advertisements of insurances in Spain and United States. The slogan of the first one is "I am". It represents the belonging to a group. Many people appear in the commercial and all of them announce to belong to the insurance. The second one, from United States, just shows the pet of the company: Geico.

Figure 4.5 Mutua Madrileña advertisement in Spain

Source: Soulman (2014)

**Figure 4.6 Geico advertisement in United States**

Source: Geico (2014)

In individualist cultures information showed in websites is about the product, while in collectivist websites information is about the group or the company. (Ildefonso Grande, 2004: 299).

4.3 "MASCULINITY" (GEERT HOFSTEDE, 2014)
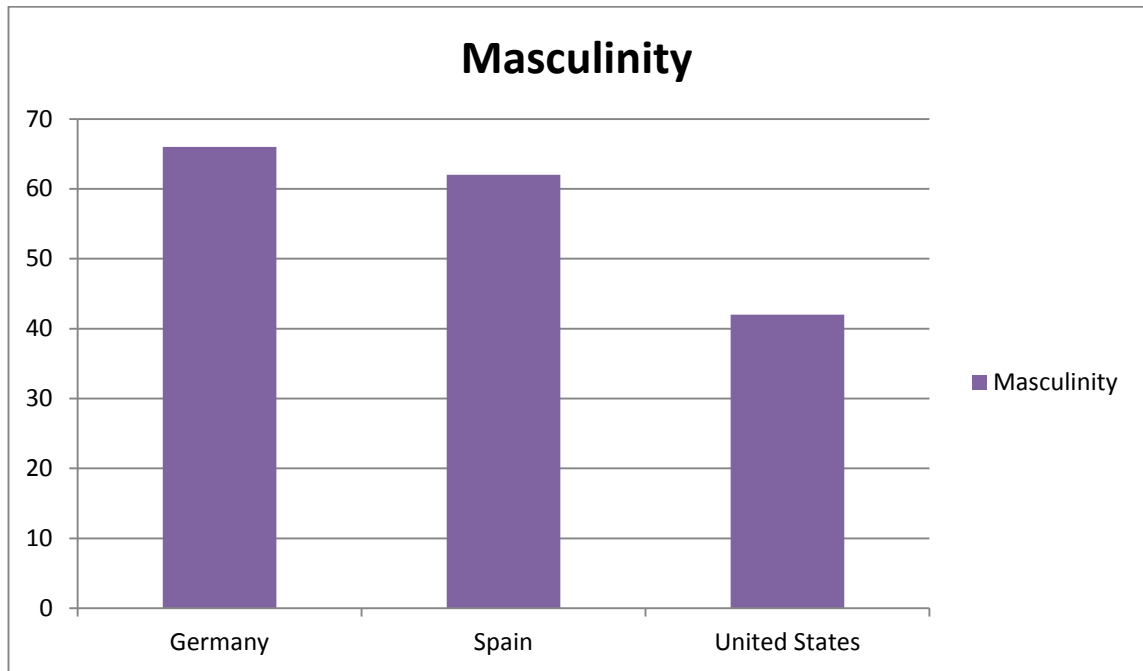
Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

Table 4.3 Masculinity

"Masculinity"

Germany	66
Spain	42
United States	62

Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

High masculinity means that values of this culture are related to competition and achievement of success. This value system starts in childhoods and continues throughout one´s life. Standing out from the crowd means success.

Low "Masculinity" (Geert Hofstede, 2001) means that dominant values in this culture are: caring for others and quality of life. Quality of life is sign of success. Excellence and perfection in their material production and in material services and presentation is an indication of "Masculinity". Long and hard working hours make harder to women to access to highest position within companies.

Germany is a masculine society that scores 66. Children are separated into three types of schools at the age of ten. Managers are decisive and assertive. Cars, watches and technical devices show status, which is very valued.

At 62 score, United States is a masculine culture. That "Masculinity" (Geert Hofstede, 2001) is reflected in behavioral patterns. Unlike Japan and Colombia, United States is an individualist society. Americans tend to display and talk freely about their successes and achievements in life and work. Success can be easily measured because assessment systems are based on precise target setting and it is rewarded with higher salaries. That is why, in order to show their status, white workers move to better neighborhood as soon they are promoted.

Spain is also a relatively feminine society where children are educated in search of harmony and refuse to take sides or standing out. Needy or weak people generate sympathy. So that managers look for consensus, solidarity and quality in working lives. Conflicts are solved by negotiation and incentives are related to free time and flexibility.

Communication in masculine societies values are aggressiveness, ambition, domination, strength, fight, greatness, productivity, ostentation and speed are reflected. In masculine commercials it is show success and power desire. On the other hand, feminine communication shows protection, safety, care, consensus, sweetness, peace, relax and modesty. Communication is intended to people who seek quality of life instead of success. (Ildefonso Grande, 2004: 297-298)

Masculinity in communication can also reflect sexual content or violence against women. Masculine websites use more graphics, sound and animations. They also offer more rewards than feminine ones.

4.4 "UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE" (GEERT HOFSTEDE, 2014)

Graph 4.4 Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance
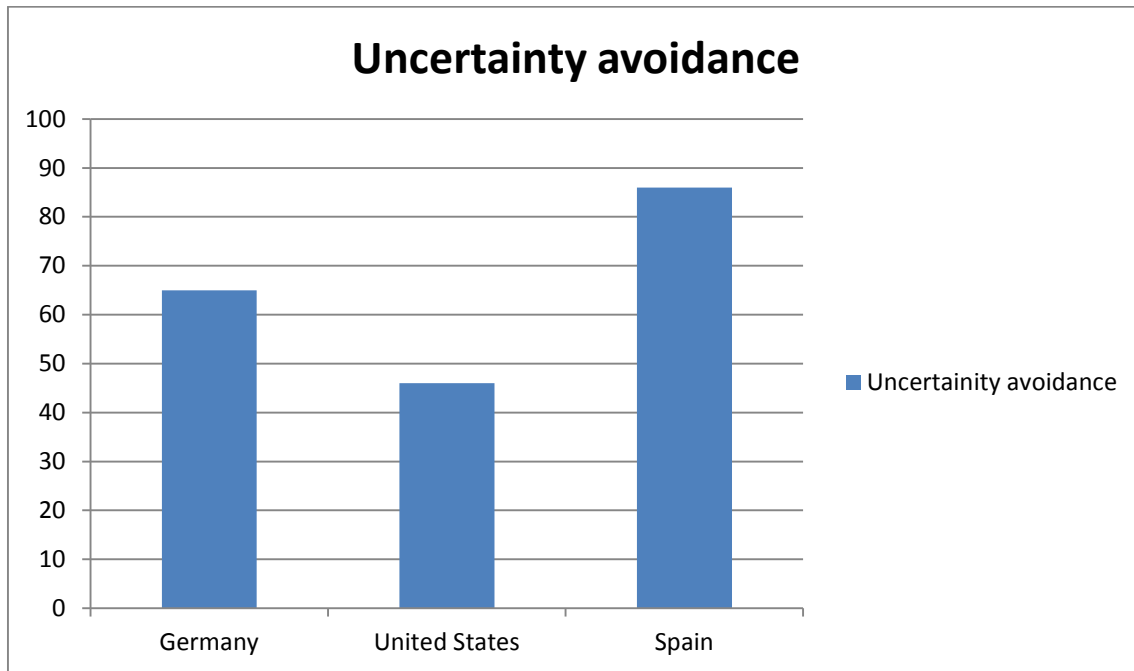
Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

Table 4.4 Uncertainty avoidance

"Uncertainty avoidance" (

Germany	65
United States	46
Spain	86

Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

"The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these is reflected in the UAI score." (Geert Hofstede, 2014)

According to Geert Hofstede (2001) in uncertainty avoidant cultures before any project can start, risk factors are worked out and a lot of time an effort is put into feasibility studies. Managers ask for all detailed facts and figures before taking any decision. That uncertainty avoidance makes hard to introduce any change in these cultures.

Spain scores 86. It is a high score that defines Spain as an uncertainty avoidant culture. Spanish have rules for everything in order to avoid uncertain situations. Uncertain situations generate stress. Emotions are openly expressed. Spain has rules for almost everything and religion is respected and followed by many conservative. People do not necessary follow rules; however, this depends on the group behavior. The combination with previous dimensions means that it is difficult to change the status quo, unless a leader changes a large group of people behavior.

Germany is an uncertainty avoidant country. It scores 65. As every uncertainty avoidant countries, German law system reflects that tendency. Germans rely strongly on expertise and every project or topic is well-though-out.

Americans score lower than the other countries in this dimension (46). Americans accept new ideas and new product. They are willing to try something new or different and are interested on new technology, business practices or food. That makes Americans more tolerant than other cultures. All of this means that United States have a less complex law system. On the other hand, since 9/11, Americans are more concerned about security, monitoring and controlling more though the NSA and other security organizations. (Geert Hofstede, 2014).

Communication in uncertainty avoidant cultures includes testimonies of experts and technical explanations. Presenters are well dressed and show emotions. Product designs are pointed out and reassuring messages are used. (Ildefonso Grande, 2004: 295-296)

Fairy commercial uses its experience as strategy to communicate in an uncertainty avoidant culture as the Spanish one and, so that, transmit calm. On the other hand advertisements from cultures that not avoid uncertainty are less focused on giving information about the product as it can be seen in Apple advertisement.

Figure 4.7 Fairy advertisement.in Spain


Source: Antena 3 (2012)

Figure 4.8 Apple advertisement in United States

Source: Apple (2012).

4.5 "PRAGMATISM" (GEERT HOFSTEDE, 2014)

Graph 4.5 Pragmatism
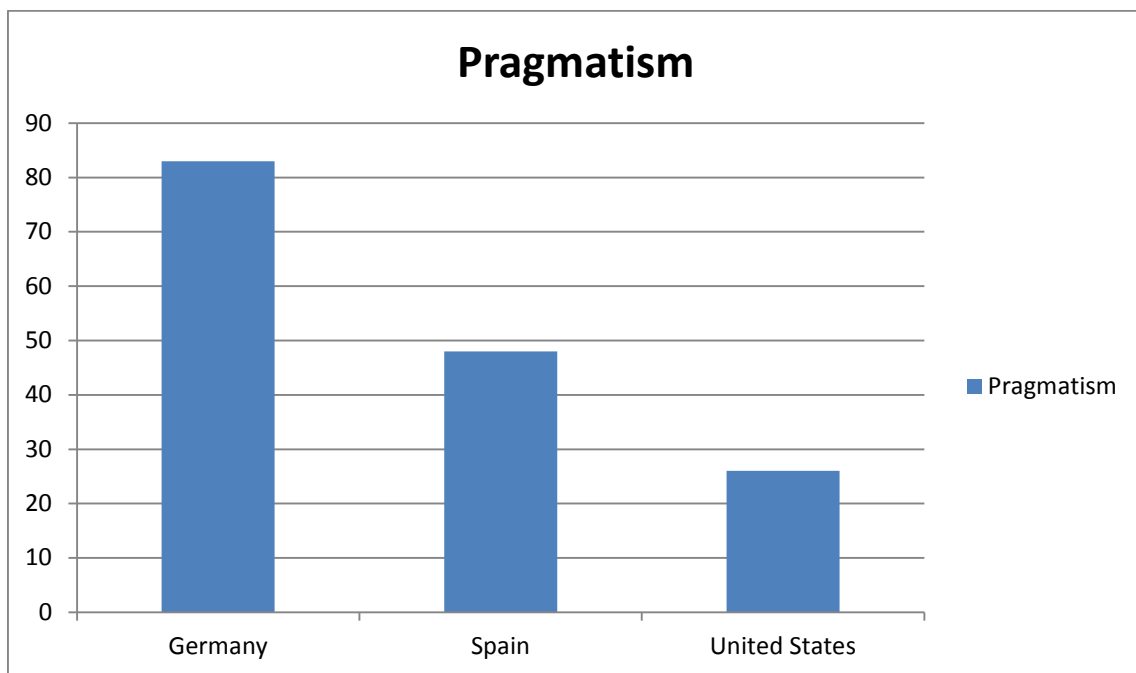
Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

Table 4.5 Pragmatism.

"Pragmatism"

Germany	83
Spain	48
United States	26

Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

"This dimension describes how people in the past as well as today relate to the fact that so much that happens around us cannot be explained. In societies with a normative orientation, most people have a strong desire to explain as much as possible. In societies with a pragmatic orientation most people don't have a need to explain

everything, as they believe that it is impossible to understand fully the complexity of life. The challenge is not to know the truth but to live a virtuous life."(Geert Hofstede, 2014)

Pragmatic cultures try do their best in their lifetime, but understand that people´s life is a very short moment in the History. People try to act guiding by virtues and practical good examples. At work they invest in R&D even in economically difficult times and prefer a steady growth than an immediate profit. Companies are not seen as a mean to earn money, but an entity that serves stake holders and society at large.

Germany has a pragmatic culture. It scores 83. Germans think that truth can depend on the situation, context and time. People from Germany can change their traditions to adapt them to new conditions. Germans invest, save and persevere in achieving results.

Spanish culture is normative. Spain scores 48. Spaniards like to live in the moment and have no great concerns about the future. People from Spain prefer quick results without delays. In fact, there is a need for clear structures and defined rules in the long term.

United States has a low score: 26. Americans have strong ideas about what is right and what is not. Companies are seen as a mean of obtain profit in the short term. They have small propensity to save for the future. Quick results are preferred rather than long-term profit.

In communication traditions and quick results have major importance. Litoral, a Spanish brand, offers its product as something traditional. Sparkasse, from Germany, has a message related to "think about the future".

Figure 4.9 Sparkasse advertisement in Germany


Source: Sparkasse (2012)

Figure 4.10 Litoral advertisement in Spain

Source: Litoral (2014)

4.6 "INDULGENCE" (GEERT HOFSTEDE, 2014)

Graph 4.6 Indulgence
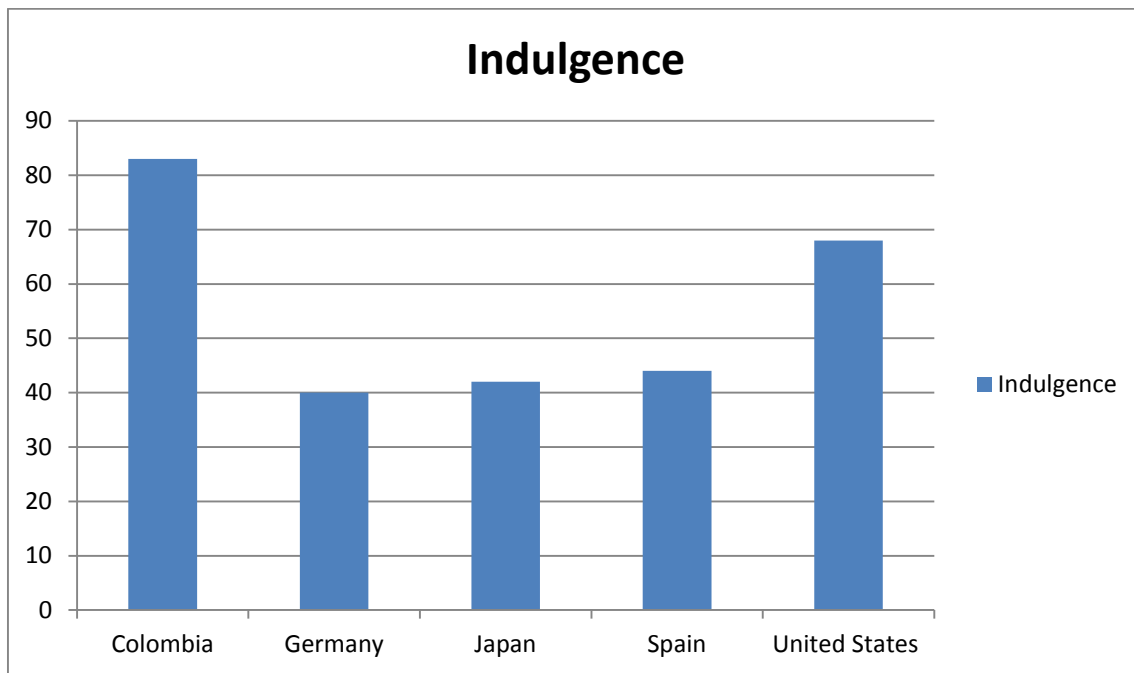
Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

Table 4.6 Indulgence

"Indulgence" (Geert Hofstede, 2014)

Germany	40
Spain	44
United States	68

Source: Compiled by author based on data from Geert Hofstede (2014)

"One challenge that confronts humanity, now and in the past, is the degree to which little children are socialized. Without socialization we do not become "human". This dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called

"indulgence" and relatively strong control is called "restraint". Cultures can, therefore, be described as indulgent or restrained." (Geert Hofstede, 2014) (Geert Hofstede, 2001)

Geert Hofstede (2001) claims that indulgent cultures are willing to realize their impulses and desires in order to enjoy their life and have fun. People are positive and optimist. Furthermore, free time has high importance and money is spent to satisfy wishes and desires.

United States is an indulgent society, but it is also a normative culture. That means that attitudes and behaviours can be contradictories.

Spain scores 44 and it is not an indulgent society. Spanish society is cynic and pessimist. Spaniards control their desires and gratification. Their actions are restrained by social norms. Indulging themselves is sees as somewhat wrong.

German culture is the most restrained. It is the most cynic and pessimist culture. Unlike indulgent societies, restrained ones do not give much importance to free time. Germans control gratification of their desires.

This dimension is also reflected on communication. Colombian advertisement is focused on offer enjoyment and pleasure. On the other hand, the German one is more focused on a more practical offer.

Figure 4.11 Colombian advertisement

Source: Colombia (2014)

Figure 4.12 Deutschland Bahn. DB in Germany

Source: Deutschland Bahn (2014)

4.7   ANALYSIS OF THE DIMENSIONS IN COMMUNICATION

The following analysis tries to illustrate better how the six dimensions of Geert Hofstede (2001) influence in communication.

4.7.1   Example 1

Three advertisements of the Arm Forces from the three countries studied have been analysed in order to study the six dimensions of Geert Hofstede in communication.

United States.

Campaign: The advertisement belongs to a recruitment campaign.

Scenario: In first shot some words encourage people to sign on the Marines making the squad of Marines attractive: "Wanted: a commitment to constantly push yourself and those by your side". In the second shot it can be seen a woman and behind her a man doing some training.

Message: The message is very clear and direct. That is a characteristic of a non-uncertainty avoidant cultures. It tries to convince people to sing on the Marines through a message that acclaim some values related to the Marines.

Public: Everyone eligible to the Marines. It makes no distinction; it does not matter if it is a woman or a man. This advertisement in particular is more focused on attract feminine attention. Cultures with low "power distance" (Geert Hofstede, 2001: p. 79) do not have traditional roles as can be seen in the Marines advertisement (Figure 4.5) in which the protagonist is a woman.

Figure 4.13 Marines advertisement in USA

Source: Ad Strategy (2010)

Germany

Campaign: The advertisement belongs to a recruitment campaign.

Scenario: In the centre appears a woman that belongs to the German Army. On the top of the picture and on the bottom there is much information. Much information is related to uncertainty avoidant cultures.

Message: The message tries to transmit that signing on the Army secures your future. As it has been shown, worrying about the future is a characteristic of pragmatic culture. Spanish and American advertisements only focus on what the Army is doing now or has done until now.

Public: Everyone eligible to the Bundeswehr. It makes no distinction between women and men. That means that Germany is a culture with low power distance. The Bundeswehr advertisement is also starred out by a woman; German Army also tries to show proximity due to its history. This advertisement in particular, as the American one, is more focused on attract feminine attention.

Figure 4.14 Bundeswehr advertisement in Germany

Source: Krawehl (2013)

Spain

The Spanish Army advertising has been a faithful witness of the modernization of the Armed Forces in the last decade, according to José Javier Vicario holds Martin, technical director, in the book Advertising and Armed Forces 1999-2009. Nowadays it

can be seen how the Spanish Army is trying to show a reduction of power distance between citizens and army. In figure 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 it can be seen how there are still some differences in the different cultures. While Marines advertise directly to women and Germany uses a woman as protagonist, in the Spanish Army is still rare to find an advertisement starred in by a woman.

Campaign: The advertisement belongs to a campaign created for the Day of the Spanish Army.

Scenario: In the centre of the three advertisements a man appeared. On the top of the picture and on the bottom there is much information. As it has been explained in the chapter, much information is related to uncertainty avoidant cultures.

Message: "Behind every heroic act, there is a whole force". That message tries to transmit the values of the Spanish Army, but it also shows the dimension of a culture. As it has been shown, Spain is a collectivist culture. Unlike in advertisements from Germany and United States where the personal effort and possible achievements were stand out, in the Spanish advertisement is the group what matters. That is a typical feature of collectivist cultures.

Public: The advertisement is intended to all Spanish citizens. It has been made to show the usefulness of the Spanish Army.

Figure 4.15 Fuerzas Armadas Españolas advertisement in Spain
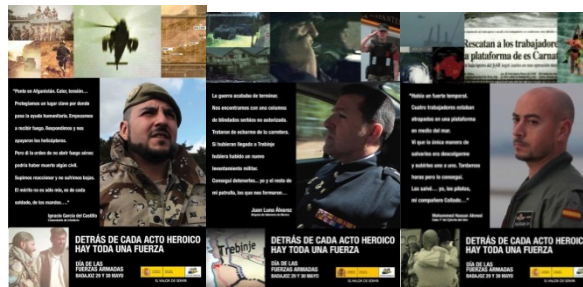
Source: Libertad Digital (2010)

4.7.2   Example 2

Observing McDonald´s advertisement, differences among cultures can be identified.

United States.

Campaign: The commercial belongs to the campaign to launch the new snack size McFlurry.

Scenario: A man and a woman in the swimming pool try the new Mcflurry. There is nobody else. That is characteristic of individualist societies.

Message: It wants to transmit that the McFlurry is available in a snack size. It also point out the affordable price. There is no much information in the commercial; once again the message is intended to a non-uncertainty avoidant culture. The whole commercial lasts 15 seconds.

Public: The advertisement is intended to all potential clients, but more focused on those that often consume McFlurry.

Figure 4.16 McDonald´s commercial in United States

Germany

Campaign: The commercial belongs to the campaign to launch the McCurry. The fact that the new product is made with German products, shows the intentions of McDonald´s to adapt some elements of its products to the culture.

Scenario: A man goes alone to MacDonald's to ask the new product. Going alone to a restaurant is something related to individualist cultures.

Message: There is more information about the new product than in the American commercial. It lasts 27 seconds. It is intended to convince an uncertainty avoidance public to try a new product.

Public: The advertisement is intended to all potential clients that could buy the new product.

Figure 4.17 McDonald´s commercial in Germany

Spain.

Campaign: The commercial is part of a series of commercials and advertisements created to launch the new breakfast. These commercials together with discounts and invitations tried to convince an uncertainty avoidant culture to change its point of view

about McDonald´s and start to see it as something else that a place to just have a hamburger.

Scenario: Many people in different branches performance a flashmob. It is a continuation of one commercial where the employments performance the same flashmob.

Message: The message in this commercial is unclear. The aim of this campaign was not only to publicize its new breakfast, but also to create the feeling of belonging.

Public: The advertisement is intended to all potential clients that could buy the new product.

Figure 4.18 McDonald´s commercial in Spain

Source: Youtube (2014)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0WxlxPbq7s&index=7&list=PLKWdmj-95Z5n6Tpd-pqgDgz8_yoSMe255

4.7.3   Example 3

Differences can be seen in Nokia´s commercials.

United States.

Campaign: The commercial promote a new phone.

Scenario: The phone stands on the centre of the advertisement. Next to it some information is showed.

Message: The little information that appears only makes reference to the fact that it has been chosen as Smartphone of the year. That information emphasizes the competitiveness of a masculine culture as the American.

Public: The advertisement is intended those clients that have few knowledge of mobile phones and need some references before make a purchase.

Figure 4.19 Lumia 920 advertisement in USA.

Source: My Nokia Blog. (2013)

Germany

Campaign: This commercial also promotes a new phone.

Scenario: Once again the phone stands in the centre of the advertisement surrounded by some information.

Message: The information showed says that this phone has beat Iphone and Samsung. This information is important in a competitive culture as the German one.

Public: As the American advertisement, this advertisement is intended those clients that have few knowledge of mobile phones and need some references before make a purchase.

Figure 4.20 Lumia 925 advertisement in Germany

Source: Ingenieur (2014)

Spain

Campaign: The commercial promote a new phone.

Scenario: The Spanish commercial is starred by a Spanish actress who is in a market.

Message: The qualities that are pointed out are related to design. In a feminine culture as the Spanish culture that features are more valued than others related to competitiveness.

Public: The advertisement is intended those clients which purchase would depend more in design than in features.
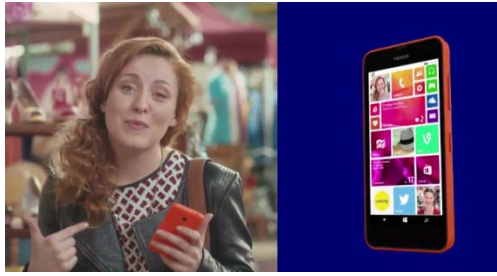
4.7.4   Example 4

Observing communication in Bosch advertisements in USA, Germany and Spain dimensions can be identified. Germany and Spain are uncertainty avoidant cultures and that is why Bosch includes more information in its advertisements in those countries than in its advertisement in United States. In United States Bosch just shows the product.

United States.

Campaign: The commercial promote a product.

Scenario: The product stands in the centre of the advertisement. In the top of it there are the logo and a short description of the product.

Message: There is not verbal communication. The lack of information is due to the low grade of uncertainty avoidance of United States.

Public: It is intended to any potential client.

Figure 4.22 Bosch advertisement in USA

Source: Bosch (2014)

Germany.

Campaign: The commercial promote a product.

Scenario: The product stands in the centre of the advertisement surrounded by much information.

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Message: There is much information in the advertisement. That means that Germans are uncertainty avoidant and need to know well a product before make a purchase.

Public: It is also intended to any potential client.

Figure 4.23 Bosch advertisement in Germany

Source: MorgenWeb (2013)

Spain.

Campaign: The advertisement shows a new promotion.

Scenario: A woman stands in the left side and in the right side is all the information about the promotion. .

Message: There is much information in the advertisement. In an avoidant culture as the Spanish culture, promotions must be clearly explained in order to aim clients to participate.

Public: It is also intended to any potential client.

Figure 4.24 Bosch advertisement in Spain

Source: PlatComunicacion (2012)

4.7.5 Example 5

In the following advertisements McDonald´s uses different approaches depending on the culture. All of them seek to promote green actions taken by McDonald´s. In the pragmatic German culture future is what matter. McDonald´s has taken measures to preserve the future. While in normative cultures like Spain or United States McDonald´s focus on everything it has done until now.

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United States.

Campaign: The advertisement tries to promote the friendly environment actions of McDonald´s.

Scenario: There is not product: just some information and the logo of the company. Green is the predominant colour.

Message: United States tries to show its achievements during 2012. It shows its competitiveness, which is typical of a masculine culture. It also speaks only about the present, which means that United States has a normative culture.

Public: All the society in general. McDonald´s tries to show its positive impact in the society.

Figure 4.25 McDonald´s US

Source: Popsop (2012)

Germany

Campaign: The advertisement wants to show the "green" actions made by McDonald´s.

Scenario: In the right side there is a map of Germany. In the left side there is a green file with McDonald´s logo.

Message: Unlike the American advertisement, this one is intended for a pragmatic culture. That is why in this advertisement future has more importance than present.

Public: As in the American advertisement, McDonald´s tries to show its positive impact in the society.

Figure 4.26 McDonald´s Germany

Source: CSR-news (2012)

Spain

Campaign: The advertisement belongs to a series of campaigns to reinforce the brand image of McDonald´s.

Scenario: There are four different images. Three of them are related to environment topics: recycle energy and water. The other one is McDonald´s logo. In the bottom of the advertisement it says "McDonald´s preserve the present".

Message: The message in the advertisement is intended to a normative culture more worried about the past than about the future. The fact that the logo of McDonald´s is represented in the same way than environment topics is intended to create a relation between them and the logo.

Public: McDonald´s tries to show its positive impact in the Spanish society.

Figure 4.27 McDonald´s Spain

Source: Guia Senior (2011)

4.7.6   Example 6

The following Mercedes-Benz commercials reflect grade of indulgence of each culture.

<u>United States.</u>

Campaign: The advertisement is reinforcing the brand image of Mercedes.

Scenario: The commercial has a sophisticated image and is made in a luxury environment where protagonists are attractive. It shows a trial of various cars.

Message: The intention of the commercial is reinforce the luxurious and exclusive brand image of Mercedes Benz in an indulgent culture as the American society.

Public: People who can not only afford the car but has tasting for luxury products.

Figure 4.28 Mercedes-Benz commercial in Spain

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Germany.

Campaign: The advertisement tries to establish a brand image.

Scenario: The commercial shows different families in different situations enjoying a Mercedes. The environment is relaxed and families are common people. All of this is reflected on their behaviour and clothes. In a restrained culture as the German culture, practicality is better considered than luxury.

Message: Mercedes Benz can be enjoyed by any type of family.

Public: All the society in general. Mercedes Benz tries to reach as many clients as possible trough diversification of the product. That is why tries to create a brand image of a company that anyone can be part of.

Figure 4.29 Mercedes- Benz commercial in Germany

Spain.

Campaign: The advertisement is reinforcing the brand image of Mercedes.

Scenario: A couple wants to buy a Mercedes. One man talks about the fact that buying a Mercedes is related to luxury and expensive caprice. Finally the man inside the car shows that someone can have a Mercedes and still being ordinary. The restrained culture of Spain is reflected on the people who is in the commercial behaviours and on their clothes.

Message: Mercedes-Benz marketers try to focus their efforts on change it sophisticated image and show that it can be also a car that someone could use not necessary as a caprice. That has been made in order to avoid a rejection from a restrained culture.

Public: All the society in general.

Figure 4.30 Mercedes-Benz commercial in United States

Source: Youtube (2014) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XK9VhF-47us

5   CONCLUSIONS

Since international trade has increased during the last decades, more companies start to sell products in overseas markets. When it comes to internationalize, companies have to face many threats and unknown situations. Among those possible threats cultural differences stand out.

Culture characterizes behavior patrons of societies and it is resistant to change. That makes it difficult to introduce products or services that could not fulfill the characteristics of a particular culture.

Edward T. Hall (1976) created the concepts of low context culture and high context culture. High context cultures, like Japanese and Arabian, context and what is said have the same importance. In low context cultures like American culture it is most important the message than the context. If that difference is taken into account misunderstandings can be easily avoided.

Composition of cultures also affects the way of making business. Japanese and Arabian cultures are more homogenous than American culture. That is because American culture is composed by subcultures as Latin-American subculture and Asiatic subculture. It is important that marketers can identify those subcultures and analyze their opportunities and dangers.

 (Marita von Oldenborgh 1996) (Ravi Vijh 1996) KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) tried to start business in India regardless its complex culture. Consumers rejected KFC. KFC could have had success if they would have establish alliances with Indian partners, oriented their communication to Indian public instead of keep their occidental publicity and finally should have analyzed better their competitors. Those competitors were small but influent domestic companies.

Not only countries with complex and protected cultures take measures against cultural invasions. Canada and other nineteen countries had a meeting in 1998 in Ottawa to discuss how protect their cultures against US culture. That meeting was repeated some years later in Stockholm. That last meeting was sponsored by the United Nations (Michael T. Molloy 1993). European countries have the approval of the World Trade Organization to restrict US cultural imports in order to protect their own culture.

Geert Hofstede (2014) established six dimensions in order to classify and identify cultures: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, pragmatic versus normative and indulgence versus

restraint. These dimensions define each particular culture and can give companies some important clues to start business in foreign countries.

Companies must be aware of not introducing new products that not respect the local culture. Some companies such as Coca-cola or McDonald's have suffered the rejection by consumers due to their "westernization".

But companies not only must adapt their products to different cultures but they have also to make adaptations in their communication. When creating communication companies can standardize their campaigns. That can reduce costs but also it can transmit an image that can be rejected in a particular culture. On the other hand, companies could create totally personalized commercials and advertisements for every country in which they are working. That would not be a good solution because it would increase costs and thus reduce benefits.

In the analysis conducted in three countries: Germany, Spain and United States. It can be said that communication has the same characteristics when countries scored similar. That means that standardized communication will be more effective if it is used among countries that share similar characteristics. Adapted communication will be more effective if it is used among countries that have different characteristics.

Thus, the most effective strategy would be glocalization. Companies should standardize when it is possible in order to reduce costs and adapt their products when cultures are not alike.

To know in which grade adapt their communication companies should conduct investigations in which they would analyze both dimensions and elements. Future researches could focus on how elements combined with dimensions configure culture and affect communication.

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RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

En el presente trabajo se pretende analizar el impacto de la cultura en la comunicación. Trabajar en un ámbito internacional puede suponer a las empresas un reto cultural al que no se habían enfrentado hasta ahora. Por ello los principales objetivos de este proyecto se pueden resumir en los siguientes puntos:

- Analizar la tendencia creciente del comercio internacional durante las últimas décadas y su impacto en la economía.
- Definir las diferentes estrategias que pueden utilizarse en la comunicación: glocalización, estandarización y adaptación.
- Definir cultura, sus elementos y dimensiones.
- Estudiar las dimensiones de la cultura en tres países distintos: Alemania, España y Estados Unidos.

Hoy en día, en el mundo globalizado en el que vivimos, cada vez son más las empresas que deciden ampliar sus negocios a través de las fronteras y los mercados de su entorno geográfico habitual por diversas motivaciones que se tratarán de analizar a lo largo de este estudio. En este sentido, se ha de destacar que el comercio internacional ha aumentado durante las últimas décadas. Según el Instituto de Comercio Exterior (ICEX), el número de empresas exportadoras ha aumentado un 10% durante 2013, siendo 126.800 el número total de compañías que exportan sus bienes y servicios a otros países

Peter J. Buckley y Pervez Ghauri N. (2006) señala distintos factores que afectan a la toma de decisión de internacionalizar la actividad empresarial. Por un lado, sugieren que uno de los motivos primarios reside en el exceso del producto en el mercado local o la escasez del mismo en los mercados extranjeros. Por otro lado, la necesidad de diversificar el riesgo, unido a la existencia de una crisis en el mercado local puede implicar un aumento en el número de empresas exportadoras de un país. Otro de los motivos que afectan a la decisión de internacionalizar la empresa tiene su origen, en la pretensión de mejorar el prestigio de la marca o de la necesidad de aumentar la competitividad. Por último, el objetivo de lograr el crecimiento de la compañía en los mercados extranjeros más rentables también condiciona la conquista del mercado exterior.

Una vez que el proceso de internacionalización se ha iniciado, el siguiente paso es identificar la estrategia de comunicación que los nuevos mercados requieren. En este sentido, se distinguen tres estrategias básicas:

- Normalización
- Adaptación
- La glocalización

La estrategia de comunicación elegida no sólo tendrá una influencia directa sobre los gastos de la empresa, sino también sobre su imagen internacional. Consecuentemente, esta decisión determinará su éxito o fracaso en los mercados extranjeros.

En cuanto a la estandarización, con un alto grado de la misma, los costes que conllevarán serán menores. Sin embargo, esta estrategia de marketing no se fija en las diferencias y peculiaridades de los clientes en cuanto a gustos o necesidades. Los canales de distribución disponibles, los competidores y las operaciones de telecomunicaciones también deberán tenerse en cuenta a fin de evitar una deficiente recepción de productos.

Respecto a la adaptación, las empresas pueden adaptar su estrategia de comunicación para satisfacer las necesidades singulares de cada país. De esta forma se consigue aumentar la aceptación y el consiguiente consumo del producto, aunque los gastos también pueden incrementarse de manera notable.

Finalmente, la glocalización combina la estandarización y la adaptación. Consiste en pensar globalmente y actuar localmente. Las empresas adecuan aquellos aspectos que necesitan ser adaptados y estandarizan los que no requieren ningún cambio. Esta estrategia puede ahorrar tiempo y dinero, evitando confrontaciones culturales.

Las empresas no sólo deben adaptar sus productos a las diferentes culturas, sino que también tienen que ajustar su comunicación. En el supuesto de organizar campañas estandarizadas, se podrían reducir los costes, aunque también podría transmitir una imagen no deseada en una cultura particular. Por otro lado, las empresas pueden realizar anuncios totalmente personalizados y crear una publicidad concreta para cada país en el que están trabajando. Esto no sería una solución recomendable, ya que se incrementarían los costes y por lo tanto reduciría los beneficios. De ahí la importancia de optimizar los recursos publicitarios conforme a la idiosincrasia de los consumidores a los que irá dirigida la comercialización de un producto.

Por lo tanto, este proyecto se centra en el análisis de la cultura como el factor protagonista que determina el éxito o el fracaso de los diferentes enfoques utilizados, ya que, cuando se trata de la internacionalización, las empresas tienen que hacer frente a muchas amenazas y situaciones desconocidas, entre las que destacan las diferencias

culturales existentes entre los países. La comprensión de la influencia de la cultura en los distintos niveles de aceptación de diferentes tipos de comunicación puede facilitar a las empresas la elección de la estrategia a aplicar en todos los países donde desarrollan su actividad empresarial.

La cultura caracteriza los patrones de comportamiento de las sociedades y es resistente al cambio, es decir, las personas que conforman una sociedad son reticentes a modificar aquellas tradiciones y costumbres más arraigadas. Esto provoca una dificultad añadida para introducir determinados productos o servicios que puedan considerarse como no adecuados, o incluso contrarios a la cultura establecida en el país en el que se van a comercializar.

Edward T. Hall (1976) configuró los conceptos de cultura de bajo y alto contexto. En culturas de bajo contexto, como la japonesa y la árabe, lo que se dice y comunica tiene la misma importancia que el contexto en el que se produce la comunicación. En las culturas de bajo contexto, como la americana, es más importante el mensaje que la situación o el entorno en el que se comunica. Si se toma en cuenta esta diferencia se pueden evitar malentendidos fácilmente.

La composición de las culturas también afecta a la forma de hacer negocios. Las culturas japonesas y árabes son más homogéneas que la cultura americana. Esto se debe a que ésta última americana está conformada por otras subculturas, tales como la subcultura-América Latina, la subcultura afroamericana o la subcultura asiática. Es importante que los vendedores puedan identificar aquéllas y aprovechar sus oportunidades minimizando las amenazas e inconvenientes que conlleva una sociedad multicultural.

(Marita von Oldenborgh 1996) (Ravi Vijh 1996) KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) trató de iniciar su actividad en la India sin tener en cuenta su cultura compleja. Debido a esto los consumidores rechazaron KFC. La empresa americana podría haber tenido éxito si hubiera tratado de establecer alianzas con socios indios u orientar su comunicación al público indio en lugar de mantener su publicidad occidental. Finalmente, debería haber analizado mejor a sus competidores. KFC no supo detectar el peligro que presentaban pequeños competidores pero influyentes en el mercado nacional.

No sólo los países con culturas complejas y protegidas toman medidas contra las invasiones culturales. Canadá y otros países diecinueve se reunieron en 1998 en Ottawa para discutir cómo proteger sus culturas contra la cultura de los EE.UU. Esa reunión se repitió unos años más tarde en Estocolmo. Esta última reunión fue patrocinada por las

Naciones Unidas (Michael T. Molloy 1993). Los países europeos tienen la aprobación de la Organización Mundial del Comercio para restringir las importaciones culturales de Estados Unidos con el fin de proteger a su propia cultura.

Las empresas deben ser conscientes de no introducir nuevos productos que no respetan la cultura local. Algunas empresas, como Coca-Cola o McDonalds han sufrido el rechazo de los consumidores debido a su "occidentalización".

Por todo ello es importante que las empresas sean capaces de identificar las características particulares de cada cultura, con el fin de crear una comunicación adecuada. Para ello, es fundamental ser capaz de establecer elementos comunes a todas las culturas y dimensiones que faciliten su clasificación.

Los principales elementos de la cultura son: lenguaje, tiempo, espacio, religión, valores y actitudes, comportamientos y hábitos, estética e instituciones sociales. Aunque estos elementos son comunes a todas las culturas, su naturaleza puede variar de manera drástica.

Por otro lado Geert Hofstede (2014) estableció seis dimensiones con el fin de clasificar e identificar las culturas: la distancia de poder, el individualismo frente al colectivismo, masculinidad-feminidad, evitación de la incertidumbre, pragmático frente normativo y la indulgencia frente a la moderación. Estas dimensiones definen cada cultura en particular y puede dar a las empresas algunas claves importantes para comenzar negocios en países extranjeros. Durante el presente trabajo estas dimensiones han sido definidas y se han elaborado una serie de características con el fin de facilitar la clasificación e identificación de las culturas.

Posteriormente se ha realizado un análisis de estas dimensiones en tres países: Alemania, España y Estados Unidos. En este análisis se han clasificado en primer lugar los países elegidos para el estudio y se han señalado sus características. En segundo lugar, se han tomado seis ejemplos de seis distintas entidades que han realizado campañas publicitarias en los tres distintos países. La comparación se ha hecho tomando como referencia las dimensiones de Geert Hofstede (2001) y la clasificación realizada en el apartado anterior. Se puede decir que la comunicación tiene las mismas características que los países que puntuaron similar. Esto significa que la comunicación estandarizada será más eficaz si se utiliza entre los países que comparten características similares. Por otro lado, en caso de que los países no compartiesen características similares, una adaptación de la comunicación sería una estrategia mucho más adecuada.

Por lo tanto, la estrategia más eficaz sería la glocalización. Las empresas deben estandarizar cuando es posible, a fin de reducir los costes y adaptar sus productos cuando las culturas no son iguales.

Para saber en qué grado las empresas deben de adaptar su comunicación, es necesario llevar a cabo investigaciones en las que se analicen tanto las dimensiones de la cultura como la naturaleza de sus elementos. Las compañías deben llevar a cabo investigaciones en las que se analicen conjuntamente dimensiones y elementos. Investigaciones futuras podrían enfocarse en cómo los elementos combinados con dimensiones configuran la cultura y afectan a la comunicación.