The role of culture in advertising-

“A comparative analysis of selected Nike print advertisements from the U.S. and Japan”

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Abstract

As organizations increasingly expand overseas, they are exposed to many new markets and thus intercultural communication continues to play an essential role in their success in these new markets. Cultural knowledge and understanding is very important in business as culture influences every aspect of marketing. Advertising as a part of marketing communication is a worldwide business activity today. As marketers venture into countries they have previously not explored, and as media proliferates across countries, advertising continues to gain momentum world over. This means, that marketers need to have a good understanding of the target country’s cultural characteristics, like language, religion, values, etc. when developing their international advertising strategy.

This thesis discusses various theories in the fields of communication, culture, advertising and semiotics in order to establish how they are related. The relevant theories discussed are then applied to study the selected print ads of Nike Inc. from the United States and Japan. A comparative analysis between Nike's print ads from these two markets shall help reveal the cultural differences and similarities between both the cultures, American and Japanese. Furthermore, it will reflect the advertising strategy (how standardised or adapted this is) employed by Nike to effectively communicate its product in these two markets. This approach can thus help deduce how the "cultural element" can be used as a guideline when designing advertisements for local and international markets and thereby indulging in intercultural communication.
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1. Introduction

With the trend to a global economy, many organisations perceive their market to be unrestricted by national boundaries. As a result, organisations have increasingly been expanding their operations outside their domestic market in order to take advantage of growth and profit opportunities.\(^1\) Globalization is regarded as the outcome of development in new technologies especially in the areas of communication and transportation.\(^2\) Technology has created opportunities for the movement of information, goods, services and techniques as never before.\(^3\)

When an organisation internationalises, its marketing activities take place within a complex environment. Marketing communications are the most visible and the most culture-bound of an organisation’s marketing functions, and as such are particularly influenced by the international context.\(^4\) Culture influences every aspect of marketing: the products people buy the attributes they value and the principles they accept are all culturally based choices. For example, different levels of awareness, knowledge and familiarity with products in general, and specific brands may result in differential attitudes towards similar products. To produce compelling marketing communication programmes in one or many social settings requires a special sensitivity towards the group(s) for whom the message is intended. It is important to have an understanding of the dimensions of a target country’s cultural characteristics, namely language, religion, education, attitudes and values, social organisation, political life and aesthetics (design, music, colour and brand names).\(^5\)

This discussion suggests that cultural differences are among the most important variables involved when assessing the business environment in an unknown market.\(^6\) Cultural values are at the root of consumer behaviour, so understanding culture’s influence is necessary for organisations that want to succeed in the global market place.\(^7\)

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\(^3\) Ibid. P.131


Advertising, which is based on language and communication, is the most culture-bound element of the marketing mix. Since advertising is largely based on language and images, it is influenced by culture. Moreover language, be it through words or images, is the strongest link between advertisers and their potential audiences in marketing communications.8

The “fine line” between cultures influence on advertising intrigues me as the use of images, jargon, colours, etc. can contribute to positive or negative reactions to an ad and thereby the product in itself.

1.1. Problem Statement

As discussed in the introduction in section1, in this globalisation era, organisations desire to increase their presence internationally by venturing into new business markets and so communication continues to play a crucial role in linking markets through flow of information, images and ideas. Taking this information into perspective, this thesis examines how culture can influence the international advertising strategy of a global organisation. The global organisation being considered in this thesis is Nike, Inc. The organisation is headquartered in the United States of America. It is the world’s leading supplier of athletic shoes and apparel and a major manufacturer of sports equipment.9

It is the general idea of this thesis to study if the American organisation Nike, Inc. considers the “cultural element” when designing their advertisements for the local and international markets. With the help of intercultural communication theory a comparative analysis will be made on the selected print advertisements of Nike from the U.S. and Japan10. This will bring out the cultural characteristics shown in the ads11 and help in identifying the contrasts and similarities that exist amongst both markets.

Hence, the research question of the thesis is:

To what extent do the selected print advertisements of Nike used in the American and Japanese markets differ from each other regarding adaptation to cultural aspects?

1.2 Delimitations

10 The abbreviation U.S. for United States of America and JP for Japan has been used wherever necessary in the thesis
11 The abbreviation, ‘adverts’ or ‘ads’ has been used for ‘advertisements’ commonly in the thesis.
Since, there is a need to be precise about the use of theories so, detailed accounts of the chosen theories have not been given but care has been taken to try and apply these theories in relation to the research question mentioned in section 1.1.

The marketing communications of a company deals with labels, package design, direct marketing efforts, sales promotions, web pages and media advertisements. To examine all these aspects of marketing communications is beyond the scope of this thesis and so the primary focus is on analyzing print ads of Nike involving the United States and Japan.

Hall has distinguished patterns of culture according to context, space, time, and information flow. However, this thesis does not involve studying interpersonal encounters so his work on monochronic and polychronic time and the concept of space has not been considered in the research.

There are two common methods to compare cultures the “emic” or the “etic” approach. The emic approach tries to describe behaviour of one particular culture, whereas the etic approach tries to describe and compare behaviour of different cultures. An emic account comes from a person within the culture whereas an etic account is the description of a behaviour or belief by an outside observer. Being an outside observer, the etic approach is applicable to this study.

Ultimately, the analysis of the selected empirical material aims at giving an indication of how Nike Inc. shapes its advertising strategy and it cannot be considered as a general conclusion. In terms of validity this research is a helpful indication but not an explicit conclusion of how Nike Inc. communicates in the context of intercultural communication in advertising.

1.3 Methods

The foundation of the thesis draws on hermeneutic interpretation and deductive reasoning as a qualitative research approach.

Hermeneutics is the study of the theory and practice of interpretation. Contemporary, or modern, hermeneutics includes not only issues involving the written text, but everything in the interpretative process. This includes verbal and nonverbal forms of communication as

well as prior aspects that affect communication, such as presuppositions, preunderstandings, the meaning and philosophy of language, and semiotics.\textsuperscript{15}

Hermeneutics is fundamental to every act of communication. The theory of hermeneutics is useful when analysing the adverts from Nike Inc. in order to interpret the company’s intentions based on the ads, thereby providing a tool to understand the mechanisms at work in the visual and linguistic choices made and the purpose they serve in the company’s communications efforts.

The hermeneutic circle describes the method of understanding a text hermeneutically. It refers to the idea that the whole receives its definition from the parts, and, reciprocally, the parts can only be understood in reference to a whole. The meaning of a whole is a “sense” derived from the meaning of individual parts.\textsuperscript{16} The selected theories within advertising, intercultural communication and the empirical material-the ads, combine to form the various “parts” that are collectively necessary to conduct this “whole” research successfully and answer the proposed problem statement.

Furthermore, this thesis follows a deductive approach of reasoning. Deductive reasoning works from the more general to the more specific.\textsuperscript{17} In this manner, the research begins by presenting general theories of different researchers in the field of communication, advertising and intercultural communication and moves over to applying them specifically on the selected material. The deductive approach helps to assess Nike’s advertising communication strategy in relation to chosen theories and concepts. The deductive approach used is of qualitative nature based on already available material in the form of ads. This means that empirical material in the form of the selected Nike print ads will be analysed by exploring the visual and text messages in the ads and the sender’s (Nike’s) intention with what they are trying to communicate in accordance with deductive reasoning, qualitative research and hermeneutic interpretation.

\subsection*{1.4 Structure}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeneutics
\item \textsuperscript{17} Research Methods Knowledge Base (2006): Deduction and Induction. http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/dedind.php
\end{itemize}
Chapter 1 presents the introduction, the research statement, delimitations, method, and the structure of the report. Chapter 2 will introduce the company Nike Inc. and provide more information on the selected print ads. Chapter 3, 4, 5 and 6 form the theoretical part of the thesis, thereby establishing the base for understanding theory within the field of communication, advertising and intercultural communication in a global and cultural context by critically discussing literature on these topics. The theoretical part forms the foundation required to analyze the selected material. Chapter 3 is devoted to general communication and the understanding of the communication process in relation to the communication paradigms. Here Fiske has been included. The topic of semiotics is also mentioned to the extent to show its link to advertising and culture. The main purpose of this part of the chapter is to give the background information that is necessary to reveal the connection between culture and communication in relation to advertising. This aspect is then discussed in greater detail in the following chapters that are based on advertising and culture theory. The first part of Chapter 4 provides a general introduction to advertising. Here, Kotler’s definition of advertising is examined followed by the definition of international advertising by DeMooij. The subsequent part of the chapter discusses the issue of standardization versus adaptation. This is based on a discussion on Levitt and De Mooij. Pelsmacker is included with regard to the Global/Local phenomenon. Chapter 5 is about culture theory and this is important as it forms the cultural foundation of both the analyses and the comparison of Nike print ads. De Mooij is included in the discussion of culture as she has shown the relation between advertising and culture. Other, prominent cultural theorists like Hofstede, and Hall have been included since their study on cultural dimensions show that differences between cultures exist. To conclude the discussion the relation between culture and advertising is shown.

Chapter 6 deals with the theory of Semiotics in greater detail. Here Barthes theory on semiotics is discussed as it is used in the analysis of the visual message of the ads. Chapter 7 forms the analytic part where the analysis is done on the selected ads based on the theories that have been discussed in the previous chapters. The outcome of the analysis of the ads then sets the foundation of the comparative analysis of the ads that is done in chapter 8.

Chapter 8, In this chapter the American ads are compared to the Japanese ads. The comparative analysis sheds light on the cultural differences and similarities in Nike ads for the United States and Japan.

The concluding chapter 9 sums up the vital findings of the thesis and answers the question in the problem statement.
2. The Company- Nike

The company was founded on January 25, 1964 as Blue Ribbon Sports by Bill Bowerman and Philip Knight, and officially became Nike, Inc. on May 30, 1978. The company takes its name from Nike the Greek goddess of victory.18 The company’s brand logo is popularly known as the “swoosh.” Like its company name, Nike swoosh was inspired by the Greek goddess Nike, the winged goddess of victory. The swoosh evokes her flight. The swoosh is amongst the most easily recognized brand logos in the world19.

The global headquarters of Nike is located near Beaverton, Oregon, a suburb of Portland in the United States. The company operates in more than 160 countries around the globe. Nike’s mission is to bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.20 In addition to manufacturing sportswear and equipment, the company operates retail stores under the Niketown name. Nike has the names of many high profile athletes like Michael Jordan, Lance Armstrong and Christiano Ronaldo associated with it and sports teams around the world, with the highly recognized trademarks of "Just do it" and the Swoosh logo21.

Nike continues to seek new and innovative ways to develop superior athletic products, and creative methods to communicate directly with consumers.22

2.1 The Selected Material:

The Nike ads have been acquired from the online ad database of Coloribus. Coloribus is the world’s biggest advertising archive with a collection of more than 2 million ads from across the world23. There are four U.S ads and four Japanese ads that were printed in the respective markets. For the sake of easy reference the ads have been referred to with the respective country abbreviation followed by the ad. number example, U.S. ad.1 (2,3 and 4) for the American ads and JP ad.1(2,3 and 4) for the Japanese ads. The chosen ads show a variety of product range example Nike basketball, Nike football, Nike clothing. The ads have been chosen randomly from the years 2000-2008 since this will give a better overview of any changing trends in Nikes advertising strategy over the years.

20 http://nikeinc.com/pages/about-nike-inc
22 http://nikeinc.com/pages/history-heritage#tab6-tab
23 http://www.coloribus.com/about/
Nike has been known for using celebrities in ad campaigns like **Bo Jackson** a former American baseball and football player and the first athlete to be named an **All-Star** in two major American sports. Bo Jackson was part of the 1988 ‘Revolution’ campaign bearing the tag line “Just Do it.” Nikes use of celebrities is also visible in the selected American and the Japanese print ads. The American ad., U.S. ad.3 bearing the title ‘Nike Clothing: Marion Jones’ shows Marion Jones a former world champion track and field athlete featuring in the ad. The Japanese ad., JP ad.3 called ‘Nike Clothing: Kiralee Hayashi’, shows Kiralee Hayashi who is a former National champion gymnast turned actress. An objective for showing the celebrity is for the target group to associate the product with the celebrity.

### 3. The Process of Communication

According to John Fiske, communication is a multidisciplinary field, there are no complete theories and different disciplines have focused on different aspects of communication. Fiske assumes that communication is possible to study, that all communication involves signs which signify more than themselves and can be organized into codes; these signs and codes are transmitted to others as the ‘practice of social relationships’ and that communication is central to culture. Based on these assumptions Fiske summarises communication “as social interaction through messages”.

There are two main schools in the study of communication; the **process school** and the **semiotics school**.

The ‘process’ school concerns itself mainly with the ‘transmission’ of messages. Followers of this school, consider communication is an act or process through which one person affects the thoughts or behaviour of another. It is concerned with matters like efficiency and accuracy of the message. If the effect is different or lesser than which was intended, then there is a communication failure. Shannon and Weaver’s Communication model is a clear example of the process school, seeing communication as the transmission of messages. This model is a simple linear process.

The second school sees communication as the ‘production and exchange of meanings.’ This school of thought is involved mainly with the concept of ‘meaning’, particularly the role of

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25 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marion_Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marion_Jones)
26 [http://www.kiraleehayashi.com/about.html](http://www.kiraleehayashi.com/about.html)
27 DeMooij, M (2010) Global Marketing and Advertising-Understanding Cultural Paradoxes. SAGE. P.251
29 Ibid. P.2
30 Ibid. P.6
texts in culture. Here, the focus is not on the sender and receiver, instead the focus is on the signs or messages passed between them and the meaning the signs signify based on the culture of the sender and receiver. The main system of study here is semiotics (the science of signs and meanings), and so it is called the ‘semiotics’ school.  
Two of the most significant models of meaning in the Semiotic School are that of the philosopher and logician C.S.Peirce, and the second is that of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. For the linguist Saussure ‘semiology’ was ‘a science that studies the role of signs as part of social life’, to the philosopher Charles Peirce the field of study which he called ‘semiotic’ was the ‘formal doctrine of signs’, which was closely related to logic. Peirce sees the sign, that to which it refers, and its users as the three points of a triangle. Each is closely related to the other two, and can be understood only in terms of the others. Whilst Saussure takes a slightly different line according to him the sign consists of its physical form plus an associated mental concept, and that this concept is in its turn an apprehension of external reality. The sign relates to reality only through the concepts of the people who use it.

In semiotics, the reader is seen as playing a more active role than in most of the process models. Semiotics, deriving largely from Saussure and Peirce, is concerned not with the transmission of messages but with the generation and exchange of meanings. The focus is on the role of communication in establishing and maintaining values and on how those values enable communication to have meaning.

From the discussion on the main points of both schools the difference in approach is apparent. The Semiotic school does not believe that communication can "breakdown." Instead, this is due to presence of social and cultural differences between the producer and the reader and so there is a divergence in meanings from the same signs. Fiske suggests that the solution to minimizing the misunderstanding is not the increase in communication efficiency, but by finding mutual understanding. In other words, the determinants of communication lie in society and the world around us, not in the process itself. Contrary, to this is the process school believes in communication breakdown and focuses on the effects of communication acts.

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31 Ibid. P.2
33 Ibid. P.41
34 Ibid. P.40
35 Ibid. P.189
36 Ibid. P.189-190
As mentioned before in the main ideas of the semiotic school, the study of communication is the study of text in culture. Also, as already mentioned in the introductory part of the thesis that for a company to produce compelling marketing communication programmes in one or many social settings it requires a special sensitivity towards the group for whom the message is intended. Advertising, which is based on language and communication, is the most culture-bound element of the marketing mix. Since advertising is largely based on language and images, it is influenced by culture. Consequently, it can be seen from the discussion that the study of communication involves the study of culture with which it is integrated.37

The following chapter looks at concepts and theories from within the field of advertising.

4. Advertising: Theories and Concepts

Marketing communications are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers—directly or indirectly—about the products and brands that they sell. In a sense, marketing communications represents the “voice” of the brand and are a means by which it can establish a dialogue and build relationships with consumers. Marketing communications allow companies to link their brands to other people, places, events, brands, experiences, feelings, and things.38

Marketing communications mix consists of six major modes of communication like Advertising, Sales Promotion, Events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and personal selling. Advertising is a central element of the marketing communications program.39

Kotler defines advertising as, ‘any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor’. 40

Advertising has to be “paid” for since the space or time for an advertising message must be bought. It is “non personal” as it can transmit a message to large groups of individuals, often at the same time using mass media (e.g., TV, radio, magazines, newspapers) also in advertising there is generally no opportunity for immediate feedback from the message recipient (except in direct-response advertising). Therefore, before the message is sent, it is

37 Ibid. P.2
39 Ibid. P.496
40 Ibid. P.526
very important for the sender to think about how the audience will interpret and respond to it. An advertising goal (or objective) can be classified according to whether their aim is to inform, persuade, remind, or reinforce. Informative advertising aims to create brand awareness and knowledge of new products or new features of existing products. Persuasive advertising is meant to create liking, preference, conviction, and purchase of a product or service. Reminder advertising tries to stimulate repeat purchase of products and services whereas reinforcement advertising is aimed to convince current purchasers that they made the right choice.

Advertising objective depends on the current marketing situation meaning if the product class is mature, the company is a market leader, and brand usage is low, the objective should then be to encourage more usage. If the product class is new, the company is not a market leader; the objective then is to persuade the market of its brand superiority.

Advantages of Advertising

Advertising can be used to build up a long-term image for a product or trigger quick sales. It can efficiently reach geographically dispersed buyers. It is considered, to be capable of reaching large audiences and being effective and cost efficient at achieving high levels of awareness, creating brand differentiation, informing and reminding and, over the longer term, developing and maintaining brands. The presence of advertising might have an effect on sales as consumers might believe that a heavily advertised brand must offer “good value.” The merits of advertising are in its pervasiveness since advertising, permits the seller to repeat a message many times. Large scale advertising gives a positive impression about the seller’s size, power, and success. The amplified articulateness of advertising provides opportunities for dramatizing the company and its products through the artful use of print, sound, and colour. Its impersonality allows the audience to not feel compelled to pay attention or respond to advertising.

43 Ibid. P.527
44 Ibid. P.527
45 Ibid. P.515
Owing to their self-spaced nature, print ads in magazines and newspapers can provide much detailed product information and can also effectively communicate user and usage imagery. Although newspapers are timely and pervasive, magazines are typically effective at building user and usage imagery. Format elements like size, colour and illustration can affect a print ad’s impact. A minor rearrangement of mechanical elements can improve attention-getting power. According to researchers in print adverts, the picture, headline, and copy are important, in that order. The picture must be strong enough to draw attention. Then the headline must reinforce the picture and lead the person to read the copy. The copy itself must be engaging and the advertised brand’s name must be clearly prominent.  

4.1 International Advertising

Advertising is a worldwide business activity today. As marketers expand into countries they have previously not explored, and as media proliferate across countries, advertising is gaining impetus around the world. For frequent travellers, advertising is the most visible manifestation of the globalization business in general and of brands in general. The term international advertising is widely used to denote cross-border advertising, and it may have a number of context-specific connotations. De Mooij defines international advertising as advertising, created at, coordinated or directed from one central point, for execution, with or without local adaptations, in a number of countries. Depending upon the context, this term could refer to advertising from another country, or to global advertising, or to the international dimension of the advertising agency business. The most common usage of the term international advertising is in the context of advertising for brands being marketed in several countries. Such advertising is also referred to as global, multinational, multicountry, or cross-national advertising. Global Advertising usually refers to advertising for universally ubiquitous. This term is used as a qualifier only when the brand is available in a very large number of countries (i.e., when

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48 Ibid. P.529
50 Ibid. P.13
53 Ibid. P.14
it is a global brand) and employs the same advertising execution(s) in almost all of those countries.\textsuperscript{54}

The number of only truly global brands is very limited. It is not always necessary for a global brand to use global advertising executions. A brand like Coca-Cola usually does, some modifications to accommodate local norms, tastes and preferences.

Multinational Advertising is a term used to describe the advertising for multinational brands that may not be as ubiquitous as global brands, but are yet available in a large number of countries. Usually, the development of advertising for such brands is somewhat centralized, with the “lead agency” of a major worldwide advertising network being responsible for strategic planning and creative development.\textsuperscript{55}

Transnational advertising is a much recent and evolutionary term used to connote advertising (for multinational brands) developed in a more participatory, decentralized manner, with the input of consumers, the agency network’s personnel, and the client’s marketing personnel from the various countries where the advertising will eventually be exposed. \textsuperscript{56}

The term multidiomestic advertising relates to the advertising used for a multi domestic brand, a brand might have the same name across a number of countries but is characterized by different states of brand development \textsuperscript{57} and a relatively low degree of brand standardization across those countries. Essentially, the advertising for such a brand varies widely from country to country, depending upon the marketer’s strategic intent and the set of circumstances contingent upon the brand in each country. This is an up-and-coming activity and is to be found in beer and in certain food categories. \textsuperscript{58}

\subsection*{4.2 The Global vs. Local Debate}

Globalization in the broadest sense is defined as the “crystallization of the entire world as a single place.” The term is globalization is used to cover the global flow of capital, technology, and media, as well as changes in human behaviour that are expected to result from globalization forces. \textsuperscript{59}

The success of global brands has led scholars to predict a foreseeable colonization of world cultures by international corporate brands that would lead to the fall of local cultures.

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{54}] Ibid. P.21
\item[\textsuperscript{55}] Ibid. P.22
\item[\textsuperscript{56}] Ibid. P.22
\item[\textsuperscript{57}] Ibid. P.22
\item[\textsuperscript{58}] Ibid. P.23
\item[\textsuperscript{59}] DeMooij, M (2010) Global Marketing and Advertising-Understanding Cultural Paradoxes. Sage, P.6
\end{itemize}
Conversely, evidence also suggests that social relationships and values in local cultures are fairly resistant to the assumed erosive effects of globalization. This is the paradoxical aspect of globalization.60

In the last decades, academics have studied the behaviour of firms in foreign markets to understand the factors that influence the choice between standardizing operations or adapting to local environments. The focus of these studies has varied from individual elements of the marketing mix (mostly product or advertising) to the entire marketing mix or a firm’s entire business strategy. The debate is ongoing. Given that the standardization processes and products across markets can yield economies of scale in the areas of marketing, production, and research and development. Firms however still need to take into account the differences among foreign markets and adapt their practices and offerings to suit consumer’s needs and wants.61 Supporters of standardization rely on a strong belief in the universality of fundamental needs and the assumption that advertising purposes are universal, and, so, advertising can be similar everywhere. Amongst the most frequently quoted authors proposing standardization strategy is Theodore Levitt.62 Levitt has suggested that, “the world is becoming a common market place in which people – no matter where they live- desire the same products and lifestyles”.63 According to Levitt, the driving forces for convergence of needs and desires are technology and modernity. Levitt’s argument was that standardization allows a company to compete on the basis of appropriate value-the best combinations of price, quality, reliability, and delivery for products that are globally identical with respect to design, function, and even fashion.64 DeMooij holds the opinion that products have to be adapted to particular markets in terms of design or use since not all brands can be easily turned into global brands. She feels that standardized communication very often is not possible and communication strategies and/or execution have to be adapted to the cultural environment.65 Pelsmacker says that products often find themselves at different stages of the product life-cycle in different countries. This makes it impossible to use a global approach, since the information needed will differ depending on which stage of the life-cycle the product is in. He proposes, the best way to approach international markets is to opt for a ‘global commitment to a local vision’, or in other words to ‘think global, but act local’. For instance, to work out a global creative idea, but to adapt the advertising so that local

60 Ibid. P.6
61 Ibid. P.14
62 Ibid. P.15
64 Op.Cit. DeMooij, M (2010), P.15
65 Ibid. P.200
presenters, experts or celebrities are employed, or that reference is made to local history or national symbols.  

4.2.1 Variables Influencing the Standardization-Adaptation Choice

Numerous variables influence the decision to standardize or adapt. Some of those strategic aspects have been mentioned below.

Product category and Product life cycle: A few product categories are successful if they follow a standardized marketing approach. For these products a standardized category and country of origin appeal can be used. Fashionable for clothes relates to French origin, whereas quality for cars relates to Germany or Japan. A clear combination like French perfume can be used world-wide. However, country images can change over time, and consumer attitudes may also vary. Consumers holding positive or negative attitudes towards a particular country will show favourable or unfavourable responses to country-related advertisements.

The product phase in the product life cycle determines the possibility of standardization. Marketing communications for fresh products or brands are easier to standardize than mature products. However, by selling one single product worldwide and not adapting to usage and attitude differences that become apparent later, manufacturers run the risk of finding a mass market in one culture and a niche market in another. So, in different phases of a product’s life cycle, require different advertising approaches. Established brands in different markets may have different brand images, making it difficult to move the product to a global approach.

Organisational Factors: The culture of a company’s country of origin strongly influences the vision of its managers, and the vision of a company’s management influences the degree of standardization. U.S. companies hold universalistic philosophies about people’s values. They assume that U.S. values are valid world over, and thereby undervalue the importance of culture. On the contrary, European and Japanese managers, share the opinion that marketing and advertising needs be adapted to local customs.

The Business Environment: The business environment includes differences in infrastructure, level of competition, laws and regulations, and media infrastructure. A common argument for standardization is the existence of international media. The availability

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69 Ibid. P.17
and increasing penetration of international media have raised expectations, but increased availability of cross-border television has not resulted in more cross-border campaigns. Various cultures demand different television programming that reflects national tastes, so the scope of pan-regional television programming is restricted to a few types of programs, like sports.

The Consumer: Consumer factors include customer similarity (lifestyles, preferences, tastes) and differences (culture, climate, language), along with spending power. Traditional approach in international marketing has mainly emphasized on the similarities of market segments, increasingly it is recognized that the critical factor is differences. For international advertising and marketing to be effective marketers need to understand the differences in consumer behaviour across countries.  

Global communications play a major role in building global images for global brands, but global image alone cannot make a global brand strong and product performance remains important.

Global standardized communication is necessary because of its ability to create a uniform brand image. Companies want consistent brand images, but the same brand may be perceived in totally different ways by consumers around the globe. The standardization debate has concerned itself with the issue of standardizing the advertising stimulus, the message. People process advertising messages in social and cultural contexts and then respond. Even though products and brands can be accepted in more than one culture, communication will have to be culture related, that means more than simply translating the central message. Not all concepts are translatable because they are nonexistent in other cultures. The values included in advertising must match consumer’s values to make advertising effective.

4.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Standardisation-Adaptation

The decision to standardize or adapt advertising is based on the different points of view of the world. Those who favour standardization are mainly concerned with cost reduction of advertising and a consistent brand image worldwide while proponents of adaptation point differential advantage through local adaptation.

The two main advantages of standardization of advertising are cost reductions and consistent brand image. Cost reduction from standardization of advertising mainly originates from economies of scale and scope. There is a strong relation between standardized advertisement

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70 Ibid. P.18
71 Ibid. P.36
72 Ibid.P.37
and centralized advertising functions. Standardized advertisement themes provide consistent brand images worldwide. Other advantages of standardization include sharing of experience, effective use of advertising budget, consistency of communication, less duplication of effort and pre-selling of the company’s products.

Arguments against standardization suggest that to focus on cost reduction is to ignore the target group’s need for a meaningful message. Standardized advertising is based on homogenous segments and unless this holds in reality, the probability for a communication breakdown increases. Cost reduction does not automatically mean profit maximization as standardization can well make the advertising unappealing to target segments and thereby lower sales. Academics also argue against the assumption that standardization results in substantial cost reductions. They claim that centralisation is profitable only when potential cost savings from economies of scale or scope exist, barriers to standardization are low (for instance, culture or infrastructure) and products fulfil similar needs or wants.

The aim of adaptation is to gain differential advantage by adapting the advertisement to gain maximum effectiveness in terms of response and sales. Adaptation of advertising is generally related with a decentralized advertising function so that it allows responsiveness and adaptation to culture, infrastructure and competition. The visual and verbal parts of advertising are mostly sensitive to adaptation and use of local language, models and scenery increases the probability for the advertisement to be effective. Therefore, adaptation of creative presentations and decentralized implementations of campaigns are expected to offer greater benefits than less culturally-tied functions. Nike enjoys a successful partnership with Wieden + Kennedy the American advertising agency which is amongst the largest in the world. Together, Nike and Wieden+Kennedy have created many print and television advertisements, and they remain Nike’s primary ad agency. It was the ad agency co-founder Dan Wieden who coined the now-famous slogan “Just Do It” for a 1988 Nike ad campaign, which was selected by Advertising Age as one of the top five ad slogans of the 20th century. Other reasons for adaptation include accurate positioning and price discrimination. Sometimes similarities within the markets of a nation are more frequent than between the markets of two or more countries. In such case, when advertisements and advertising styles are adapted, they better the positioning of the product as chances of the product being better

understood and thus accepted on the national level are higher. However, due to the need of advertising adaptation to achieve this, costs increase and the brand image may suffer.  

5. Culture Theory

This chapter presents and discusses the work of distinguished theorists in the area of culture research. Geert Hofstede and E.T Hall have been included in the discussion since they both have shown distinctive approach to classify culture. Their theories will be useful in analyzing the differences and similarities at the culture level between the United States and Japan. De Mooij is included because she has shown how Hofstede and Hall’s dimensions can be used in advertising.

5.1 DeMooij’s View of Culture

De Mooij explains Culture as learned behaviour that is passed on from generation to generation and is at times difficult for the outsider to comprehend. She further adds that in the global village it is important to understand the culturally conditioned control systems. Cultures differ in the way they experience and use aspects such as time, space, relationships, power, risk, masculinity, femininity and many others. According to De Mooij, advertising is a cultural artefact and in order to build relationships between consumers and brands, advertising must reflect people’s values. Contemporary marketing and advertising, uses values to differentiate and position brands in comparison with competitive brands. National values are said to influence consumer behaviour. To be able to establish successful relationships involving consumers and brands, brands and brand communication must reflect consumer values.

All individuals under the guidance of cultural patterns are historically created systems of meaning and advertising reflects these wider systems of meaning. It reflects the way people think, what moves them, how they relate to each other, how they live, eat, relax and enjoy themselves. Therefore, all manifestations of culture, at different levels, are reflected in advertising. In order to analyze advertising as a manifestation of culture at the broader level, it must be understood that culture is expressed in several ways.

75 Ibid. P.869
77 Ibid. P.35
5.2. Hofstede’s view of Culture

This section will take a look at Hofstede’s work in the field of culture. The main topics of his work that will be discussed include: culture as mental programming, expressions of culture as symbols, heroes, rituals and values and finally the dimensions of national culture.

5.2.1. Culture and Mental Programming

According to Hofstede, culture can be defined as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.”

Hofstede, in his definition of culture refers to culture as “the collective programming of the mind” as culture is a collective phenomenon and is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. He further regards culture as mental programming, since it is the most important concept of culture. This is represented in figure 1 shown below (culture as mental programming).

The source of one’s mental programs lie within the social environments in which one grew up and collected one’s life experiences e.g. family, neighbourhood and school etc. Therefore, culture is learned, not innate as it derives from one’s social environment and not from one’s genes. This is why; culture should be distinguished from human nature on one side and from an individual’s personality on the other.

He differentiates between the three layers of mental programming based on; human nature is what all human beings have in common and thus it represents the universal level in one’s mental software. Human nature is shown as the third layer. The top layer reflects personality. The personality of an individual is her/his unique personal set of mental programs that need not be shared with any other human being. It is

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based on traits that are partly inherited and partly learned. *Culture* is located as the central layer between personality and human nature. Culture is something that members of a group have in common, and it is at this level that most or all mental programs are learned.\(^8\) The culture level is significant to this project as at this level a group’s common cultural traits are manifested, and all manifestations of culture are reflected in advertising. In order to analyze advertising as a manifestation of culture at the broader level, it must be understood that culture is expressed in several ways. The following topic looks at the concept of manifestations of culture.

### 5.2.2 Manifestations of culture

Culture is expressed in several ways. Hofstede states that the following four expressions embody the total concept of culture: *symbols, heroes, rituals* and *values*. This concept is illustrated diagrammatically in figure 2.\(^4\)

![Hofstede's culture depiction as the layers of an Onion](image)

Symbols’ being placed in the outermost layer of the diagram represent the most superficial and values the deepest manifestations of culture. Heroes and rituals are located in the middle layers of the diagram. *Symbols* can be defined as words, gestures, pictures or objects which carry a particular meaning only recognized by those who share the culture like words of a language, dress, flags and status symbols. Nike, is an example of a brand that has become a global symbol. Yet, it may evoke different associations for Americans than it does for Japanese.\(^5\) *Heroes* can be described as persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture, and thus serve as ideal role models for behaviours. An example of this would be reflected in Nikes advertising campaigns using high profile athletes/sportsmen like Michael Jordan, Christiano Ronaldo or Marion Jones that can be seen as cultural heroes by many aspiring athletes/sportsmen. *Rituals* on the other hand,

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\(^8\) Ibid. P.4-5  
are collective activities considered socially essential within a culture example, ways of
greeting and paying respect to others. Sporting events are rituals for both players and the
spectators. The rituals around American football are very different from those around
European football.\textsuperscript{86} Symbols, heroes and rituals have been included in the term \textit{practices}
since they are visible to an outside observer. However their cultural meaning is invisible, it
lies in the way these practices are interpreted by the insiders of the culture. At the core of
culture lie values. \textit{Values} are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others.
Based on individuals surroundings values are formed at an early stage in childhood. Values
are the deepest manifestation of one’s culture-because it is the way an individual “feels”.
\textsuperscript{87}The discussion on manifestations of culture shows that some particular elements of culture
are more or less visible than other elements thus making it difficult to be observed.
One of the difficulties in researching values is interpreting what people say. One problem is
the distinction between the desirable and the desired, as discussed before. Language is
another problem: Values don’t translate easily because words expressing values have abstract
meaning. They must be seen as labels of values. A word may serve as a label of a value in
one culture but the label of a different value in another culture. This explains the difficulty of
translating advertising copy into languages other than the one in which it is conceived.
A so-called global culture refers to the expressions of culture, the symbols, converging eating
habits, and global heroes. Fast food, and particularly the Big Mac or pizzas, have become a
global ritual. Yet an individual’s values have not become global; they vary across cultures
and are not likely to change during one’s lifetime. This stability of values is often
misinterpreted by advertising people, who tend to mistake superficial trends for changing
values.\textsuperscript{88}

5.2.3 Hofstede’s National Cultural dimensions

Hofstede developed a model of five dimensions of national culture that helps to explain basic
value differences. This model distinguishes cultures according to five dimensions: \textit{power
distance}, \textit{individualism/collectivism}, \textit{masculinity/feminity}, \textit{uncertainty avoidance}, \textit{and long-}
/\textit{short term orientation}. The dimensions are measured on a scale from 0 to 100 for 73
countries and each country has a position scale or index.\textsuperscript{89}

5.2.3.1 Power Distance

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid. P.53
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. P.74
Power distance can be defined as the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions are the basic elements of society, like family, school, and community; organizations are places of work. Power distance is thus described based on the value system of the less powerful members. The way power is distributed is usually explained from the behaviour of the more powerful members, the leaders rather than those led.\textsuperscript{90}

In the Power Distance Index (PDI) table for United States scores 40 points Japan and scores 54 points.\textsuperscript{91} This shows U.S. scores lower than Japan. According to Hofstede, the United States score low on this dimension 40 points which highlights the American premise of “liberty and justice for all.” This is also evidenced by the focus on equal rights in all aspects of American society and government. Within American organizations, hierarchy is established for convenience, superiors are always accessible and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise. Both managers and employees expect to be consulted and information is frequently shared. At the same time, communication is informal, direct and participative.\textsuperscript{92} At a score of 54, Hofstede suggests that Japan is mildly hierarchical society in comparison to other Asian cultures. The Japanese are indeed conscious of their hierarchical position in any social setting and act accordingly. Some foreigners find Japan as extremely hierarchical because of their business experience of painstakingly slow decision making process: all the decisions must be confirmed by each hierarchical layer and finally by the top management in Tokyo. Ironically, the exact example of their slow decision making process shows that in Japanese society there is no one top guy who can take decision like in more hierarchical societies.\textsuperscript{93}

This dimension can be witnessed in advertising in the way people correlate and the kind of people depicted in ads. Like the use of older people is more common in the ads of high power distance societies since they are more important because of their old age. In societies like America that are below average on power distance tends to use more humour, innovativeness and creativity in advertising.\textsuperscript{94}

The use of status in high power distance cultures is important to show power and success. Further, status symbols are more frequently used in large power distance cultures than in small power distance cultures. In its execution power distance can be shown in the way

\textsuperscript{90} Op.Cit. DeMooij, D (2005), P.46
\textsuperscript{91} http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html
\textsuperscript{92} http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html
\textsuperscript{93} http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html
people interrelate or by the type of people shown (older vs. younger). In large power distance cultures, the elder advises the younger. In small power distance cultures the younger advises the elder.

In large power distance cultures, everyone has his or her rightful place in a social hierarchy, and as a result acceptance and giving of authority is something that comes naturally. To the Japanese, behaviour that recognizes hierarchy is as natural as breathing. It means, “everything in its place.” In Japan, every greeting, every contact must indicate the kind and degree of social distance between individuals. In cultures scoring low on the power distance index, authority can have a negative connotation, as focus is on equality in rights and opportunity, and independence is highly valued.95

In large power distance cultures, one’s social status must be clear so that others can show proper respect. Global brands serve that purpose. In continental Europe, some luxury alcoholic drinks have such social status values in the high power distance cultures. Example, there being a significant correlation between power distance and consumption of Scotch whisky in continental Europe. In large power distance cultures, people are well-groomed, in particular when going out to streets as persons position in the social hierarchy is defined by the way they dress and how they present themselves before others. However in low power distance cultures people are less concerned of their outer appearance.96 The rightful-place concept implies that in high power distance cultures being the “number one” brand is important. A brand that has entered markets early and is viewed as the number one brand will remain so more easily than it would in low power distance cultures where challengers are favoured with a “we try harder” approach. In large power distance cultures, there are strong dependency relationships between parents and children, bosses and subordinates, professors and students, masters and learners. In small power distance cultures, children are raised to be independent at a young age.97

In high power distance cultures, where elders are respected, ads also tend to refer to generations, for example, to fathers and grandfathers who also used the product or brand. In high power distance cultures, elder people who dress up as young ones are viewed as “not grown-up.” 98

5.2.3.2 Individualism/Collectivism

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95 DeMooij, M (2010). P.75
96 Ibid. p. 75
97 Ibid. P.76
98 Ibid. P.222
Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.  

With a score of 91 on this dimension, the United States is a highly individualistic culture. This reflects on the loosely-knit nature of the American society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families. There is also a high degree of geographical mobility in the U.S. and most Americans are accustomed to doing business with, or interacting, with strangers. Consequently, Americans are not shy about approaching their prospective counterparts in order to obtain or seek information. In the business world, employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative. Also, within the exchange-based world of work, hiring and promotion decisions are based on merit or evidence of what one has done or can do.

Japan scores 46 on the Individualism dimension. This classifies Japan as a collectivist society. Typical characteristics of a collectivistic society are putting harmony of group above the expression of individual opinions and people have a strong sense of shame for losing face. Japan has been a paternalistic society and the family name and asset was inherited from father to the eldest son. While in more collectivistic culture, people are loyal to their inner group by birth, such as their extended family and their local community. The major distinction in advertising styles of individualistic cultures and collectivist cultures is the direct style in individualistic cultures and the indirect style of collectivist cultures. In advertising the direct style uses the personal pronoun (you, we), whereas the indirect style doesn’t address people directly but uses indirect methods such as drama or metaphors. Direct style communication also tends to be more verbal, whereas indirect style is more visual. Also, in ads from individualistic societies normally uses just one person in the ad, since in this society is more private in nature whereas ads in collectivist cultures is a more group oriented and the ads show more than one person. In individualistic cultures advertising should be persuasive, whereas in collectivist cultures, the purpose is to build relationships and trust between the seller and the buyer.

100 http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html  
103 Ibid. P.144
benefits, harmony, and family are more effective, whereas in individualistic cultures advertising is more effective that appeals to individual benefits and preferences, personal success, and independence. In collectivistic cultures, the acceptance of celebrities would be expected to be lower because being individually distinctive in context of daily life is not advised.\footnote{104}

Members of collectivist cultures have a different perception of hospitality than members of individualistic cultures. In collectivist cultures, an unexpected guest will always be served food, so there is always enough food available.\footnote{105}

In individualistic culture, advertising must persuade whereas in collectivist cultures, the purpose is to build relationships and trust between seller and buyer. The desire of Japanese advertising is to focus on inducing positive feelings rather than on providing information.\footnote{106}

\subsection*{5.2.3.3 Masculinity/Feminity:}

According to Hofstede, a society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.\footnote{107}

In reference to Hofstede’s Masculinity index values The United States scores 62 points hence making it a masculine. In the American society behaviour in school, work, and play are based on the shared values that people should “strive to be the best they can be” and that “the winner takes all”. Consequently, Americans tend to display and talk freely about their “successes” and achievements in life. Typically, Americans “live to work” so that they can earn monetary rewards and attain higher status based on how good one can be. Conflicts are resolved at the individual level and the goal is to win.\footnote{108}

With a high score of 95, Japan is one of the most masculine societies in the world. In corporate Japan, it is seen that employees are most motivated when they are fighting in a winning team against their competitors. What can be noticed as an expression of masculinity in Japan is the drive for excellence and perfection in their material production (monodukuri)
and in material services like hotels and restaurants and presentation like gift wrapping and food presentation as every aspect of life. Japanese are regarded as workaholics and this is seen as another expression of their masculinity. It is still hard for women to climb up the corporate ladders in Japan with their masculine norm of hard and long working hours.  

Winning, being a characteristic of masculine cultures, is frequently reflected in U.S. advertising example “Being first,” and “Be the best.” Hyperbole, persuasiveness, and comparative advertising are reflections of masculinity. Aggressive typology and layout are another reflection of competitiveness. Dreams and great expectations are expressions of masculine cultures e.g. typical statements like “A dream come true,” “A world without limits,” reflect the value “mastery”. This is opposed to feminine cultures where dreams are said to be delusions. In masculine cultures, status is important for demonstrating ones success. Appeals of masculine cultures are more task or success oriented, whereas appeals of feminine cultures are more affiliation and relationship oriented.  

5.2.3.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

According to Hofstede, uncertainty avoidance can be defined as: the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules. The U.S. scores 46 points on this dimension and so, the American society is classified as “uncertainty accepting.” As a result, there is a larger degree of acceptance for new ideas, innovative products and a willingness to try something new or different. Americans are inclined to be more tolerant toward ideas or opinions of others, thereby allowing the freedom of expression. At the same time, Americans do not require a lot of rules and are less emotionally expressive than higher-scoring cultures. 

At 92 points Japan is one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries on earth. This can be related to the fact since Japan is vulnerable to natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis to volcano eruptions. Under these circumstances Japanese people have learned to prepare themselves for any uncertain situation. This holds true not just for emergency situations and precautions for sudden natural disasters but also for other aspects of society. In Japan

http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html
http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html
anything one does is prescribed for maximum predictability. From birth to death, life is highly ritualized and ceremonies are an important part. At weddings, funerals and other important social events, what people wear and how people should behave are prescribed in great detail in etiquette books. School teachers and public servants are reluctant to do things without precedence. In corporate Japan, a lot of time and effort is put into feasibility studies and all the risk factors must be worked out before any project can start. Managers ask for all the detailed facts and figures before taking any decision. This high need for uncertainty avoidance is one of the reasons why changes are so difficult to realize in Japan.  

In relation to advertising it is seen that strong uncertainty avoidance cultures translate into the need for explanations, structure, test reports, scientific proof and advice by experts. Advertisements tend to be highly structured and detailed. In high uncertainty avoidance advertising, the competence of a manufacturer must be demonstrated. Showing how a product works, with all the technical details, is important. This is in contrast with weak uncertainty avoidance cultures where the result is more important. An appeal recognized in advertising in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures is relaxation in the sense of relief from anxiety and tension. This is expressed explicitly, whereas relief from tension is more implicit in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures. Stability is an important value of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures and change is not perceived as favourable.  

5.2.3.5 Long-/Short-Term Orientation (LTO)

*Long-term orientation is the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view.*

The United States scores 29 on this dimension and is a short-term oriented culture. This makes, it a culture focused on fulfilling social obligations. Given this viewpoint, American businesses measure their performance on a short-term basis, with profit and loss statements being issued on a quarterly basis. This mentality drives individuals to strive for quick results within the work place. There is also a need to have the “absolute truth” in all matters.  

With 80 points Japan scores as one of the long term oriented societies. Japanese view their life as a very short moment in a long history of mankind. From this perspective, some kind of

http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html
http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html
fatalism is not strange to the Japanese. You do your best in your life time and that is all what
you can do. Notion of the one and only almighty God is not familiar to Japanese. People live
their lives guided by virtues and practical good examples. In corporate Japan, long term
orientation is seen in the regularly high rate of investment in R&D even in economically
difficult times, higher own capital rate, priority to steady growth of market share rather than
to a quarterly profit, and so on. They all serve the durability of the companies. The thinking
behind it is that the companies are not here to earn profits every quarter for the share holders,
but to serve the stake holders and society at large for many generations to come.  

Values included in long-term orientation are perseverance, ordering relationships by status
and observing this order, thrift, and having a sense of shame. The opposite is short-term
orientation, which includes personal steadiness and stability, respect for tradition and
reciprocation than on pursuit of peace of mind. The combination of long-term orientation and
collectivism results in family-ties, long-term thinking, and other elements of Confucian
philosophy such as filial piety and paternalism. This is noticeable in the successful family
entrepreneurship that makes East Asian development so different from Western development.
Something that is often perceived as paradoxical in the measurements on this index is the
combination of strong respect for tradition and short-term orientation in a large part of the
Western world, whereas respect for old age and ancestor worship are such strong elements of
Asian value systems. This reflects the desirable versus the desired: Tradition is important, but
it is innovativeness that is desired. Particularly in China, pragmatism tends to overrule respect
for tradition.  

In relation to advertising the opposing values of long-term orientation are “save for
tomorrow” versus “buy now, pay later.” Short-term orientation is reflected in the sense of
urgency so frequently encountered in the U.S., advertising. Examples are “Hurry,” “Don’t
wait,” or “Now 50% off, no money down, two full years’ free credit, it’s on now!” Symbols
of long term orientation are thick tress or precise referral to future generations. Harmony,
with nature and fellow humans, is a popular appeal in Asian advertising. It is part of an
indirect approach that helps to build trust in the company. Much advertising is pure
entertainment, and visuals and objects are used that please the eye, many of which relate to
nature: bamboo trees, flowers, autumn leaves, or other representations of the seasons, which
often have a symbolic meaning. The combination of collectivism and long-term orientation

demands harmony of man with nature and thus explains this advertising style, the objective of which is to please the customer, not to intrude.\textsuperscript{118}

5.2.3.6 Validity of Hofstede`s dimensions
A reason for widespread adoption of Hofstede`s classification of culture lies in the simplicity of his dimensions, which are straightforward and easily applicable.\textsuperscript{119} According to De Mooij, although his country scores originally were produced in the early 1970`s, many replications of Hofstede`s study on different matched or non matched samples have proved that his data are still valid and have not become weaker over time indicating that they describe relatively enduring aspects of these countries societies.\textsuperscript{120}

5.3 Hall`s Theory of Culture
According to the anthropologist Edward Hall, “Culture (is) those deep, common, unstated experiences which members of a culture share, which they communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged”.\textsuperscript{121} He says that “Cultural Communications are deeper and more complex than spoken or written messages and that the essence of effective cross-cultural communication has more to do with releasing the right responses than with sending the “right” messages.”\textsuperscript{122} Hall has distinguished patterns of culture according to context, space, time, and information flow. He examined the role of communication context in exchanges and based on this variable was able to theorize about cultures, terming them high-context and low-context.\textsuperscript{123} This thesis will only be analyzing the “context” dimension of his work and not the other three dimensions.

5.3.1 High/Low context dimension
Context can be defined as the information that surrounds an event as it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event. The elements that combine to produce a given meaning to the event and context are in different proportions depending on the culture. The cultures of the world can be compared on a scale from high to low context.

A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid. P.236
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.p.60
\textsuperscript{122} Hall, E.T. and Hall, M.R (1990): Understanding cultural differences. P.4
message. A low context (LC) communication on the other hand is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code.\textsuperscript{124}

In general high-context communication is economical, fast and efficient. Low context cultures are characterized by explicit verbal messages. Effective verbal communication is expected to be direct and unambiguous. Low-context cultures demonstrate high value and positive attitude toward words. The western world has a long tradition of rhetoric, a tradition that places central importance on the delivery of verbal messages. In advertising argumentation and rhetoric are found more in low context cultures, whereas advertising in high context cultures is characterized by symbolism or indirect verbal expression. An important consequence of context is that words and sentences as well as pictures have different meanings depending on the context in which they are embedded. Most Asian cultures are regarded as high context, whereas most Western cultures are low-context cultures.\textsuperscript{125} This classifies the United States as low context and Japan as a high context culture.

5.3.2 Validity of Hall’s Dimensions

Hall’s theory deals with communication patterns and is not really based on a study as he has not depicted different country scores but has only given few examples of countries belonging to the different dimensions. In spite of these factors, Hall’s theory on high-context and low-context cultures seems ideal to use in the identification of cultural elements as it explains the cultural patterns of the United States and Japan and can be applied to Hofstede’s dimension of Individualism/Collectivism.\textsuperscript{126}

5.4 Culture’s Role in Advertising

How communication works and how advertising works is culture-bound. In one culture, advertising is persuasive by nature; in another, it is meant to build trust between companies and consumers. Thus, models of one culture cannot be projected to other cultures. The basic difference is between communication styles. Different verbal and nonverbal communication styles can be recognized in both interpersonal and mass communication, and culture clusters can be defined where one or other style prevails. This is related to the way people process information. For some, pictures contain more information than words; for others, the only way to convey meaning is verbal. People look at how advertising works from the perspective

\textsuperscript{124} Hall, E.T and Reed, Hall, M.R (1990). P.6
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid. P.55
of their own culture, which may indeed be very different from the perspective of their counterparts in other cultures.\textsuperscript{127}

Therefore, understanding of the local culture is very important if advertising has to work effectively.

\textbf{6. Semiotics}

Fiske describes semiotics as the study of signs and the way they work.\textsuperscript{128} He further explains that a sign as something physical, perceivable by our senses that refers to something other than itself and depends upon a recognition by its users that it is a sign.\textsuperscript{129}

Signs take the form of words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or objects, still such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when supplied with meaning. Anything can be a sign as long as it can be interpreted as 'signifying' something.

Things are interpreted as signs largely unconsciously by relating them to familiar systems of conventions.\textsuperscript{130} The concept of ‘code’ is also fundamental in semiotics.\textsuperscript{131}

All codes convey meaning and their units are signs. Codes depend upon an agreement amongst their users and upon a shared cultural background.\textsuperscript{132} The meaning of a sign relies on the code within which it is situated, so codes provide a framework within which signs make sense. Codes organise signs into meaningful systems.\textsuperscript{133} There are various kinds of codes and they are related. This means that the semiotic analysis of any text or practice involves taking into account the several codes and the relationships between them.\textsuperscript{134}

From an advertising perspective focus has been given to broadcast and narrowcast codes in this thesis. This is since like advertising focuses on its target audience, broadcast and narrowcast codes are defined as being audience centred in nature.\textsuperscript{135} So, the following discussion will shed light on how these codes work in advertising.

A broadcast code caters to a degree of heterogeneity since it is shared by members of a mass audience.\textsuperscript{136} Broadcast codes are simple, have an immediate appeal and do not require an ‘education’ to understand them. They are community-orientated, appealing to what people

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. P.159
\textsuperscript{128} Fiske, J (1990) Introduction to Communication Studies. P.40
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid. P.41
\textsuperscript{130} Chandler, D (2002) Semiotics- the basics. P.17
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. P.147
\textsuperscript{132} Op.Cit. Fiske, J (1990) P.65
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid. P.149
\textsuperscript{135} Op.Cit. Fiske, J (1990) P.73
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. P.73
have in common and tending to link them to their society. The broadcast codes are the means by which a culture communicates with itself. Example advertisements for products like Coca Cola that has a global mass appeal, or a sport like football that has a global culture. Whilst a narrowcast code, is aimed at a specific audience, often one defined by the codes that it uses. They are individualist, person-orientated, not communal, status-orientated. Narrowcast codes may be elitist or, at least, socially divisive. Communication specialists are not immune to the differences between broad and narrow cast codes. It is essential for the communication specialists to take into account these two types of codes while planning their marketing campaign. For example, an exclusive product such as Rolex watches is designed for a very specific group of people in terms of social status and income level. An advertisement aimed at potential buyers of these watches needs to be created in a way that will highlight the receiver’s social status, individuality and the superiority of the product.

6.1 Barthes: Denotation and Connotation

In the 1960s, Barthes developed on Saussure’s ideas further to consider the part played by the reader in the exchange between themselves and the content. Barthes pointed out there was a major role to be played by the reader in the process of reading meaning. Like Saussure and Peirce before him, Barthes identified structural relationships in the components of a sign. His ideas centre on two different levels of signification: denotation and connotation.

In semiotics, denotation and connotation are terms that explain the relationship between the signifier and its signified, and an analytic distinction is made amongst two types of signifieds: a ‘denotative’ signified and a ‘connotative’ signified. Meaning includes both denotation and connotation. ‘Denotation’ is the definitional, ‘literal’, ‘obvious’ or ‘commonsense’ meaning of a sign. In linguistic signs, the denotative meaning is what the dictionary attempts to provide and the denotation of a visual image is what all viewers from any culture and at any time would recognize the image as depicting. The term ‘connotation’ is used to refer to the socio-cultural and ‘personal’ associations (ideological, emotional, etc.) of the sign. These are

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137 Ibid. P.73-74  
138 Ibid. P.74  
139 Ibid. P.73  
140 Ibid. P.76  
141 Ibid. P.76  
naturally related to the interpreter’s class, age, gender, ethnicity and so on. Signs are more ‘polysemic’ that means more open to interpretation in their connotations than their denotations.\textsuperscript{144} Semioticians suggest that no sign is purely denotative-lacking connotation.\textsuperscript{145} Because of the interconnectedness between denotation and connotation, it is essential to look at the denotative and connotative aspects to examine the overall meaning of a picture.

\subsection{6.2 The Three Types of Messages}

Barthes introduced a system for reading text/image combinations, which includes three separate messages. The first message is the verbal part and is called the linguistic message. This is the text itself, usually in the form of a slogan or a caption to the image. The other two form the visual part and are known as the coded iconic message and the non-coded iconic message.\textsuperscript{146}

\textbf{The linguistic message}

In mass communications in general, the linguistic message is certainly present in every image: as title, caption, accompanying press article, film dialogue, comic strip balloon.

A text has two possible functions when combined with an image: anchorage and relay. \textbf{Anchorage}, says Barthes, directs the beholder through a number of possible readings of an image, through what he calls a floating chain of signifiers, which causes the reader to ignore some of the signifiers and read others. The text answers the question ‘What is it?’. Text on a connoted image (the coded iconic message) helps the reader to interpret the signifiers they are presented with. Text on a denoted image (the non-coded iconic message) aids recognition. Barthes describes the way in which the reader is remote-controlled to a meaning that has been chosen in advance. He points out that this often has an ideological purpose. Anchorage text can then have a repressive value when applied to an image.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. P.140
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid. P.141
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid. P.74
Anchorage is the most common of the linguistic message and is frequently found in advertisements. 148

Relay is less common in fixed images. The text is usually a fragment of dialogue and works in a complementary way to the image. It can be seen in comic strips, for instance, and is particularly important in film. Relay text advances the reading of the images by supplying meanings that are not to be found in the images themselves, as in film dialogue.149

The coded iconic message is a symbolic message and works on the level of connotation. Here the reader plays a part in the reading by applying their knowledge of the systematic coding of the image. For example a picture of a bowl of fruit, may imply still life, freshness or market stalls. 150

The non-coded iconic message

A photograph, for example could be described as a message without a code as one simply reads the medium as itself: it is a photograph. This works on the level of denotation.151

7. Analysis

The ads will be analyzed based on the application of Hofstede and Hall’s dimensions and DeMooij’s application of the dimensions in relation to advertising. The first step of the analysis is to apply Hofstede’s dimensions followed by Hall’s dimension of High/Low context. This will then be followed by a Semiotic analysis based on Barthes two levels of meaning denotative level and connotative level followed by the linguistic message that is the relation between the picture and the text. The American ads are analyzed in the next part followed by an analysis of the Japanese ads.

7.1 U.S. Ad’s Analysis

148 Barther, R (1977), Image Music Text, P.40-41
150 Ibid. P.73
151 Ibid. P.74
U.S.-ad.1 (Nike: FLIGHTWING BLUE) is an advertisement of the world famous manufacturing brand of sportswear, Nike. This ad is about Nike's popular basketball apparel being marketed in America under the product name of Flightwing Blue. Probably the innovative name is so given to denote the lightness of the shoe that helps the sportsman wearing it to take easy flight as in be swift and basket the ball to score points. The colour blue cannot be easily justified and is only depicted through the colour of the shorts the person sitting next to the Nike products is wearing.

U.S.ad.2 (Nike Football: Football Leave Nothing) in this ad, the Nike football apparel has been advertised in America under the slogan: Football Leave Nothing.

The U.S.ad3 (NIKE Clothing: Marion Jones) ad markets the product, Nike clothing. This ad distinguishes itself from the other ads used, since Marion Jones, a former world champion track and field athlete, is used to advertise the Nike clothing in the US market.

US-4 (Nike Women's: ARE YOU LOOKING AT MY TITLES?) is an ad defining the Nike Women's line of clothing tagged as Are You Looking At My Titles? on the American market.

7.1.1 Power Distance

America that is below average on power distance tends to use humour, innovativeness and creativity in advertising. 152 The ad U.S.ad.1 is advertising the Nike basketball gear reflects low power distance through its originality and innovativeness as the product is not advertised in the expected way of a sportsman wearing the shoe being advertised, but the shoe and the basketball as being seated on a car seat, just as an individual would be, next to the driver of the car perhaps a basketball player to whom these products belong. Low power distance is also revealed in this American ad through use of a young driver wearing a cool blue pair of shorts. Though the person is not shown, but we can assume that its a young person, who would play basketball and use that sports gear. Thus this ad justifies America's low power distance rating by Hofstede at 40. 153

153 http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html
In U.S.ad.2 Nike football apparel has been advertised in America under the slogan: "Football Leave Nothing". This is a very straightforward ad of football gear set up on a football ground with the goalkeeper guarding the goal post with a very concentrated look on his face. Humour and any special innovativeness does seem to be part of this ad, and this aspect thus defies De Mooij, who says: America that is below average on power distance tends to use humour, innovativeness and creativity in advertising.\textsuperscript{154} Also, the goalkeeper or sportsman is a young person, which is part of Low Power Distance cultures, as America is said to by Hofstede; as in high power distance societies: use of elderly persons portrays respect and stability.

U.S.ad.-3 ad has Marion Jones, a former famous athlete advertising the Nike clothing in the US market. This ad is different from the other American ads that have been discussed here, as this one uses the anchor of a celebrity to advertise its product and make it famous on the American market. The ad is sober with a very simple colour scheming perhaps to keep the focus on the celebrity and the product she advertises. The ad, however, can be said to be innovative in so far that this ad uses a celebrity to market the product. However, no touch of humour or real creativity in the style of advertising, with the athlete mainly positioned as an athlete would really be (positioned to run). This does not support De Mooij, who feels that America that is below average on power distance tends to use humour, innovativeness and creativity in advertising.\textsuperscript{155} It should be pointed out that the use celebrity in itself in this ad contradicts America being called a low power distance culture, as according to De Mooij, status symbols are more frequently used in large power distance cultures than in small power distance cultures. Also, America being a low power distance society, as per Hofstede who says for America that "this (low power distance) is also evidenced by the focus on equal rights in all aspects of American society and government." \textsuperscript{156}The use of celebrity actually makes it fall in the bracket of high power distance as per De Mooij's explanation of use of celebrity in advertising, In cultures scoring low on the power distance index, authority can have a negative connotation, as focus is on equality in rights and opportunity, and independence is highly valued. One may thus doubt through this advertising style, Hofstede's rating of America as low power distance.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid. P.71-72
\textsuperscript{156} http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html
U.S.ad.4 (Nike Women's: ARE YOU LOOKING AT MY TITLES?) this ad shows a woman advertising Nike's Women's sportswear in blue. The ad has a sober white background with the sports clothing advertised in blue with the Nike logo in black. The woman poses in profile, which hides the Nike brand logo on her t-shirt top; and looking upfront at the reader, holding a tennis racket in both her poses. The woman in the ad is young in age. The ad can be said to be informal in style through a young woman and the sports clothes advertised, thus supporting Hofstede's statement: "The United States score low on this dimension (40)..... At the same time, communication is informal, direct and participative."\(^{157}\). No humour or creativity otherwise can be seen in the except apart from the woman posing in two ways, and this aspect thus defies De Mooij, who says: America that is below average on power distance tends to use humour, innovativeness and creativity in advertising.\(^{158}\)

7.1.2 Individualism/Collectivism in the Hofstede index, America ranks no. 1 with 91 points.\(^{159}\) and is therefore a highly individualistic society. The ad U.S.ad.1 shows a single person advertising the product as part of the basketball and shoe product ad. It could be interpreted that the product is of interest to the individual using it as he himself is interested in sports, but the ad does not point at the product bringing collective benefit to the society as such. Furthermore, the advertising here is rather persuasive in nature as is typical of individualistic cultures, as the ad puts the product, the sports products, the ball and the shoes in foreground or in the centre of the so-called optical focus of the reader or the receiver, thus automatically persuading his entire attention onto the product.

The U.S.ad.2 ad also depicts like the former ad a single person to advertise the Nike football wear apparel. The urgency revealed by the manner and expression of the person in the ad, who can be interpreted to focus on success by waiting to stop a goal from happening, as well as the slogan on his forehead on the side of the ad, "Nike Leave Nothing Behind" probably reflecting what he is thinking, as well as the third factor: the insert in the centre and towards the bottom: all show visual persuasiveness, which is part of individualism, supporting Hofstede's who ranks America at no. 1 as being most individualistic.

Marion Jones, celebrity athlete in the U.S. ad.3 advertises the Nike clothing line in America, and is the only person in the ad, which makes for individualism in keeping with Hofstede, "The United States, with a score of 91 on this dimension, is a highly individualistic  

\(^{157}\) http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html
\(^{159}\) Ibid. P. 78
culture.”\textsuperscript{160} Use of one person also proves De Mooij’s statement to be true: “Also, in ads from individualistic societies normally uses just one person in the ad, since in this society is more private in nature whereas ads in collectivist cultures is a more group oriented and the ads show more than one person.”\textsuperscript{161} Further salient features of the ad that support Hofstede is the fact that a celebrity advertises in the ad, as leading personalities also symbolise singularity and individualism. The ad lacks in direct verbal communication with the reader as the ad is only visual despite being a print ad, and this fact defies De Mooij, who explains: "The major distinction in advertising styles of individualistic cultures and collectivist cultures is the direct style in individualistic cultures and the indirect style of collectivist cultures. In advertising the direct style uses the personal pronoun (you, we)....” \textsuperscript{162}

The U.S.ad.\textbf{4} uses a single woman to advertise Nike's Women's clothing. This accounts for individualism, as also explained by De Mooij who believes that the advertising style of individualistic societies uses just one person in the ad.\textsuperscript{163} The Nike logo beneath woman directs the question at the reader: Are 'you' looking at my titles? This can be interpreted as the woman referring to her achievements or the brand Nike as winning brand, which makes for individualism again, or as Hofstede says: "The United States, with a score of 91 on this dimension, is a highly individualistic culture. This translates into a loosely-knit society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families." \textsuperscript{164} As just said, the woman in the ad communicates with her readers using personal pronouns such as 'you'. In advertising the direct style uses the personal pronoun (you, we), whereas the indirect style doesn’t address people directly but uses indirect methods such as drama or metaphors. Direct style communication also tends to be more verbal, whereas indirect style is more visual. \textsuperscript{165}

\textbf{7.1.3 Masculinity/Feminity (U.S ad’s 1,2,3 & 4)} America scores 62 points with Hofstede for masculinity making it quite masculine in culture. Looking at the U.S.ad.\textbf{1} advertisement, we see the sports gear being advertised by a sports’ man in the driver's seat, man as an image of being focused on winning and success in the tough and highly competitive game of basketball. Also, the straightforwardness of the ad with all focus on the product as is very

\textsuperscript{160} Hofstede, \url{http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html}
\textsuperscript{161} Op.Cit. DeMooij, M (2005) P.144
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid. P.140-141
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid. P.144
\textsuperscript{164} \url{http://geert-hofstede.com/united-states.html}
masculine. There is no focus on dreams or any sign of imagery of softness through nature in the background, which would make it feminine. The little talk of love through the words on the basketball, which might seem confusing at first, also clearly shows love of the individual for the product only, as the product brings him success.

The **U.S.ad.2** ad has a man, a football player, who is totally focused on the game to achieve success. This reflects a culture of masculinity in keeping with what Hofstede says: "A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the “winner” or “best-in-the-field.”

Feminism through use of imagery or nature and flowers is totally missing in the ad, which only contains the most necessary elements to advertise the football apparel of Nike, the sportsman and the football apparel.

The **U.S.ad.3** makes use of a celebrity and celebrities symbolise achievement, winning and success to quite an extent, which is why they are often celebrated and also bring popularity to the product they advertise through their own fame. Success and winning the game in our society is often associated with masculinity. This advertising style thus is very much in tune with De Mooij's description of presence of masculinity in advertising: "In the masculine cultures (U.S.), presenters are personalities or celebrities.... Winning, is a characteristic of masculine cultures, is frequently reflected in U.S. advertising example “Being first,” and “Be the best.” Hyperbole, persuasiveness, and comparative advertising are reflections of masculinity.... Appeals of masculine cultures are more task or success oriented, whereas appeals of feminine cultures are more affiliation and relationship oriented.

The **U.S.ad.4** shows a woman advertising the Nike clothes line by herself. The Nike logo below the woman directs an open question at the readers or the woman can be said to be pointing her racket at the reader and showing her titles "Are You Looking at my titles?", which in turn points at success and achievements, all associated with masculinity. This ad is in keeping with De Mooij's theory: Appeals of masculine cultures are more task or success oriented, whereas appeals of feminine cultures are more affiliation and relationship oriented and Hofstede's rating America as a masculine culture.

**7.1.4 Uncertainty avoidance**: looking at Hofstede’s Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) values, the United States scores 46 points. The **U.S.ad.1** reveals this through almost no

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product description, no product information or technical information. There is also no
information on how the product is manufactured, but simply pictures or visual display of the
product. In fact, the ad can be said to be even humorous in nature, typical of low uncertainty
avoidance cultures as is that of America, as the products, the basketball and the shoes sit as
on the passenger seat, and the basketball reads the prose of love of the sportsman for his
sports products. The innovative name can be said to denote the lightness of the shoe that
helps the sportsman wearing it to take easy flight as in be swift and basket the ball to score
points. The colour blue cannot be easily justified and is only depicted through the colour of
the shorts the person sitting next to the Nike products is wearing. However, it can also be
said that the colour, Blue, is associated with the colour of the sky through the
name, Flightwing Blue. This does cause some ambiguity, which again is a feature of low
uncertainty avoidance, justifying Hofstede's statement that America is a low uncertainty
avoidance culture.

U.S.ad.2, also lacks in all product information. The only textual message in this visual ad is
the slogan on the forehead of the sportsman "Leave Nothing Behind" (perhaps to be
interpreted his drive to success to win) and the insert in the centre-bottom of the ad. The ad
being mainly visual and not using any explicit textual information about the product makes
for low uncertainty avoidance, which is what America, is stated to be. In the American
society, achieving results and winning is very important. As De Mooij notes: ".... with weak
uncertainty avoidance cultures where the result is more important. An appeal recognized in
advertising in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures is relaxation in the sense of relief from
anxiety and tension. This is expressed explicitly, whereas relief from tension is more implicit
in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures.168 Stress and focus are written all over the
sportsman's face, who is all focused to win, thus portraying that the Nike sports
gear would drive him to achieve his 'goal' to win the game as one may interpret the visual
message, and as the insert in the ad also reads "If I told you the play, you still couldn't
beat”.

The U.S.ad.3 as with the previous US ads also does not give any product information, as on
fabric or colours, etc, on the clothing line. Of course this does not lead to any ambiguity as
such, as the product is quite simple and no information is really required. Lack of product
information makes America a low uncertainty avoidance culture as Hofstede also observed

giving the US 46 points. The ad, as already noted, uses a distinguishable element, a celebrity, Marion Jones, posing with the Nike clothing. Marion Jones is a world champion athlete, and is a figure of success. This factor immediately places trust and stability in the mind of the readers and buyers in the product. However, it does not do justice to De Mooij's observation, (as America is actually a low uncertainty avoidance culture): De Mooij also says, "Stability is an important value of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures and change is not perceived as favourable." 169

In the U.S.ad.4 again all product information (on Nike clothing) seems to be lacking in the ad, only in the top left corner there is the website for Nike's Women's line, "Nikewomen.com"making America a low uncertainty avoidance culture, which is how Hofstede looks at America as well. What is given importance or conveyed in the ad is the feeling of success as De Mooij notes for weak uncertainty avoidance cultures where the result is more important.170

7.1.5 Long-Term Orientation/Short-Term Orientation: The US is given 29 points by Hofstede for Long-term orientation, which is quite low. This can be seen in the US-1 ad, which shows no long-term orientation of ordering relationships of by status. It is a clear-cut short-term orientation of personal success and stability that can be said to be denoted by the sportsman driving himself and his sports gear metaphorically on the road to success.

U.S.ad.2 as noted already, the ad contains a sportsman who is all out to win the game wearing the Nike football apparel, gloves and shoes. As De Mooij mentions: Short-term orientation is reflected in the sense of urgency so frequently encountered in the U.S., advertising. This sense of urgency of winning the game now and fast also clearly is reflected in the ad through the sportsman, which point at Short-Term Orientation of here and now, so the Nike ad can be said to be in tune with how Americans think. As De Mooij notes: People look at how advertising works from the perspective of their own culture, which may indeed be very different from the perspective of their counterparts in other cultures.171

U.S.ad.3 portrays the clothing line of Nike being advertised by a young, world-champion and famous athlete, Marion Jones and lacks in any use of historical elements, thus showing a future-oriented style of advertising, which is characteristic of long-term Orientation.

169 Ibid. P.179-182
170 Ibid. P.179-182
171 Ibid. P. 159
This advertising style does not support the rating (of 29 points) given by Hofstede to America, which makes America a short-term orientation culture. However, the use of an athlete that runs to achieve success shows a feeling of urgency, which is a part of short-term orientation according to De Mooij: Short-term orientation is reflected in the sense of urgency so frequently encountered in the U.S.  

**U.S. ad. 4.** the only communication in this ad is through the Nike tag for the clothing line "Are You Looking At My Titles?", which can be said to be pointing at success, even immediate success, which are features of Short Term Orientation. As De Mooij states in regard to the American culture: Short-term orientation is reflected in the sense of urgency so frequently encountered in the U.S., advertising. Winning and achieving goals can always be said to be associated with a sense of urgency. 

### 7.1.6 Hall's High and Low Context Cultures

US is said to be a low context culture by Hall. De Mooij says: "The western world has a long tradition of rhetoric, a tradition that places central importance on the delivery of verbal messages. In advertising argumentation and rhetoric are found more in low context cultures, whereas advertising in high context cultures is characterized by symbolism or indirect verbal expression."  

The U.S. ad. 1 gives no explicit, or detailed, in fact no technical or product information whatsoever, rather engages in a humorous display of love of the sportsman for his sports gear that he is driving in the seat next to him. Further ambiguity is there in the ad through the name, Flightwing Blue, and its connotation that one can arrive at, the colour of the sky, Blue, depicted in the ad only through the colour of the shorts the person, perhaps the sportsman, driving the car is wearing. This ambiguity and disregard for any technical information in the ad makes would bracket America as a high context culture, which defies Hall, who calls America low context culture.

The U.S. ad. 2 contains no explicit information on the product, Nike footwear, or otherwise. This makes the ad very visual, with the only explicit information, if one can so call it, being the slogan and insert, which show the feelings of the sportsman. However, Hall says: A low context (LC) communication on the other hand is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the

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173 Ibid. P.236  
information is vested in the explicit code.\textsuperscript{175} Thus the style of this ad does not do justice to what Hall feels about Low Context Cultures.

The ad style of \textbf{U.S.ad.3} is visual with no product information or description present in the ad. Hall's statement also holds good with this advertising style where the celebrity conveys all that has to be conveyed (success through use of the brand Nike, which is worn by a successful celebrity) A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message....\textsuperscript{176} This would mean that America is a High Context culture. However, this proves De Mooij to be not correct: Most Asian cultures are regarded as high context, whereas most Western cultures are low-context cultures.\textsuperscript{177}

In the ad, \textbf{U.S.ad.4}, there is only one explicit verbal message "Are you looking at my titles", which perhaps is there to show the success one can achieve by using Nike products. However, De Mooij says: "Western cultures are low-context cultures", and "Low context cultures are characterized by explicit verbal messages". Any further information or verbal communication is missing in the ad, thus making America a low-context culture.

\textbf{7.1.7 Denotative Level, Connotative Level & Linguistic Message}

\textbf{Denotative Level- US ad.1:}

The ad shows a man in sportswear sitting at the steering wheel of a car. The ad only shows the body of the driver, but not the face. He is wearing a blue pair of shorts. There is some Nike sports gear: a pair of white shoes with the Nike symbol in silver grey, and a basketball in dark organge next to the driver, on his right side. There is some text in white on the dark orange basketball.

\textbf{Connotative Level - US ad.1:}

The sportsgear has been placed in the optical centre of the ad, and can be said to belong to the sportsman driving the car. Normally a person's partner or family or friend would be sitting besides him in the car, but Nike has placed its sportsgear in the partner's seat of the car, which can be said to give the importance of a partner to its product for the sportsman. It seems as if the sportsman is married to his sportsgear. On the basketball, there is text which

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid. P.6
further strengthens this feeling, as the text reads: "And with this its Thee I wed." The fact that the sportsman is almost not visible and the dark colour of the seat, both bring out the presence of the shoeest more in the ad to capture the attention of the reader.

Linguistic Message - US ad-1:

The text in white on the basketball is in English and can be said to be the anchorage by means of interpretation of the ad, as it moves the reader in the direction the sender of the message, Nike here, wants him to go. Nike shows the sportsgear, as said to hold the importance of a partner and the words on the ball: "And with this its Thee I wed...... Even closer than one, cause you are always in my head....."

Denotative Level - US ad-2:

The main ad contains two ads whereby the ad on the left is a repetition of the main ad focusing more closely on the face and facial expression of the male model of the ad. The main ad is on the right side of the screen. It depicts a male model standing on a grass football field concentrating on the football game. He is wearing dark blue blue football sportswear, a white and black pair of football gloves with the Nike symbol on it in black, and a pair of black football shoes. On the man's forehead, we can see lines and his body structure is half bent towards the front. There are white lines on the ground showing some demarcations.

Connotative Level - US ad-2:

The atmosphere created in the ad puts the reader in the middle of a match although we can only see on player there. It gives the feeling of action. This feeling is mainly brought out by the posture of the person, leaning towards the front as if all set to catch a ball and succeed at saving the opponent from making a goal, though no ball is there in the ad. The lines of tense concentration on his forehead further enhance this feeling. By creating this atmosphere, Nike automatically also captures the reader's concentration as the reader also tries to find out in the first instance what the person in the ad is concentrating on. This way, as there are almost no
other objects in the ad, except the person and his clothing, and the game field, the focus of the readers automatically goes to the Nike symbols on the sportsgear the person is wearing.

Linguistic Message - US ad.2:

The slogan in the ad, Leave nothing, on the top left in white enforces the connotative meaning of the ad, which shows a concentrated player who will leave nothing to chance to win the game. This slogan with the Nike symbol in orange next to it is clearly anchorage by means of interpretation as it informs the receiver of the message about the success attached with Nike's products. The text insert at the bottom right of the ad in orange: "If I told you the play, you still couldn't beat me" is anchorage by means of interpretation as it steers the receiver's interpretation in the direction Nike wants it to go, which is the win and the success being reflected here through the player trying to win the game. The obvious insertion of the shoe with the Nike symbol on it in between the text insert further connects the connotative message of success to the same message that the linguistic message conveys that the player with the Nike sportsgear is unbeaten. There is a reference in white in the left hand corner of the main ad in white which gives the weblink: Nikefootball.com, in case the reader wants to get further product information.

Denotative Level - US ad.3:

The ad has two postures of the person, a magnified profile in the front of the ad, where the woman's face with its side view is shown along with part of her neck. On her neck is the symbol of Nike in yellow. The front view of the woman shows her sitting on her feet and balancing on her two hands. She is looking down at her hands or on the floor. She is wearing a bright yellow fleece sportswear, a jacket. Her bent legs are bare.

Connotative Level- US ad.3:
The ad shows the athlete, Marion Jones, which for those who identify her already connect Nike with excellence and success. The simplicity of the ad makes the receiver focus all its attention on the athlete on whose neck the brand logo of Nike is portrayed. The bright yellow colour of the clothing also stands out against the plain background of the ad, and perhaps intended by Nike to bring out a feeling of colour and fashion in life, especially as this is women's clothing line. There is no further distraction in the ad, so the main aim of Nike in this ad seems to have been to use the celebrity and athlete to convey the message of fame and success of the product, Nike. By using a woman celebrity, Nike, a sports brand, also gives the receiver the message of success of Nike connected with success of women, using this sports brand clothing. The face profile of the athlete shows all focus on her goal. The centre picture of the celebrity taking her position, seems to give the message to the receiver that with Nike, you are all set to go for success.

Linguistic message - US ad.3:

As in most ads of Nike, there is not much text here, except some product information in vertical, inserted on the extreme right corner. From what is readable, it tells us that the yellow jacket is made of fleece material, hence it can be said to be anchorage by means of identification, as it helps the reader to understand: what is it? or rather here: what is is made of?, hence direct information of the product.

Denotative Level- US ad.4:

The ad is divided into halves and separated by a slogan in between. Next to the slogan in black is the Nike symbol. The ad at the top shows a sports woman standing with her side pose looking left, but her face is turned towards the front. She is wearing a light blue t-shirt and is holding a tennis racket, black in colour. She points the tennis racket towards the front. She is dark-haired and is wearing silver earings. The ad at the bottom is of the same sports person, but with her front view. She is again wearing a light blue t-shirt, which has the word Athlete written on it in black, and is holding a black tennis racket in her hand. Her arms are folded in front of her and the tennis racket is held in her right hand behind her left arm.
Connotative Level - US ad.4:

Again here, Nike has chosen a very famous celebrity, Venus Williams, to model its clothing line. There is not much room for much connotative interpretation here, as both the text that separates the two ads and the famous celebrity convey the message of success at first glance at the ad. Even in the above ad, though a profile of Venus Williams, there is no difficulty in recognising the person as her face is turned towards the front and being a tennis player, she is holding a tennis racket. Her personal success naturally uplifts Nike's success. By pointing the tennis racket at the front towards the readers, she gives the feeling of directly addressing the person looking at the ad, then raising the question: There are two pictures in the ad, separated by the text: "Are you looking at my titles?" which shows the linguistic message of the ad, clearly serving as anchorage by means of interpretation as it beautifully connects both the pictures (bottom and top) and the text separating the two, both helping to control the reader's interpretation and steering it towards the success connected with Venus and thereby with the brand she wears. The ad at the bottom has her standing with her arms folded which gives the feeling of confidence and a natural obvious attitude of being used to success and winning the game, or the titles as she says.

Linguistic Message - US ad.4:

This has just been discussed as part of the connotative analysis of this ad, as both seem to go hand in hand. At the top left of the ad is Nike's web page address for readers to gather more information.

7.2 Japanese ads analysis
JP ad.1, SWIRLS, is an advertisement of the famous sports' brand, Nike in the Japanese market. Through this ad, the basketball apparel of the Nike sportsline is being promoted under the name of SWIRLS, which is quite clearly reflected in the ad through the sweeping hair and body movements of the players in the ad.

JP ad.2, BULLSEYE, advertises Nike's popular footwear in Japan and the advertising visual reflects the ad name: Bullseye

JP ad.3, KIRALEE HAYASHI, Nike makes use of a celebrity to advertise its clothing line

JP ad.4, DANCE, advertises Women's clothing in Japan

7.2.1 Power Distance: JP ad.1 shows that power distance is downplayed through the use of young players advertising the product. Also, each player is shown to be going ahead or swirling ahead individually to achieve his own personal success in the game. The ad does not really reflect a team feeling or feeling of interdependency amongst people, which is more typical of high power distance cultures, rather the individualism shown in the ad, as just described, points at low power distance. All this rather clearly defies DeMooij's theory of Japan being quite hierarchy conscious, as “in Japan...every contact must indicate the kind of degree of social distance between individuals” which points at high power distance, a culture where generally ads should actually keep youth in the background. Also, other factors such as using interracial players in the ad show that the brand favours internationality, which again points at low power distance in this Japanese ad. Though talking about America, but DeMooij states that "use of humour, innovativeness and creativity in advertising" can be seen in low power distance cultures. This statement is proven by this as lot of creativity and innovativeness can be seen in this ad that shows the players in foreground being driven to success through the Nike apparel, which does not straightaway catch the eye. In conventional and simple advertising, we would normally expect the thing being advertised in the centre of the page making it very clear. This ad comes closer to how Hofstede puts Japan on the index at 54, which is above average midpoint, but also describing it as "mildly hierarchical", and making it "not as hierarchical as most of the other Asian cultures".

179 http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html
The footwear ad JP ad.2 (Nike Brand: BULLSEYE) does not clearly reflect poser distance at one go. A closer shows that the shoe hitting the target, Bullseye, can be interpreted as achievement and being successful, a symbol of power and status, which is part of a high power distance culture. However, what may be interpreted here as high-power distance, can be said to be not aggressively communicated in the ad or supported by other high-power distance features, “like use of older people is more common in the ads of high power distance societies...”\(^{180}\)

JPad.3 shows Nike's clothing line campaigned after the celebrity Kiralee Hayashi, which distinguishes it from the other Japanese ads being analysed here. Use of a celebrity, one who can be said to influence and lead the society is generally part of high power distance cultures, as Japan is ranked to be by Hofstede, hence this ad supports Hofstede's observation about Japan. Leaders or celebrities help set trends, and when they use a brand, it automatically is associated with success, as leaders and celebrities symbolise success. The way power is distributed is usually explained from the behaviour of the more powerful members, the leaders rather than those led.\(^{181}\). Use of a celebrity that is a status symbol in society, using the brand, Nike places the trust of the buyer in the brand as he tries to identify with it. According to De Mooij, status symbols are more frequently used in large power distance cultures than in small power distance cultures. Also, an international celebrity like Kiralee Hayashi wearing the Nike clothes line would make Nike even more international, which means people around the globe use and trust the brand. This distinguishes a global brand (Nike here) from its competing brands, which again shows a so-called higher hierarchical position or status symbol important in large power distance societies. This is in keeping with De Mooij's observation, "In large power distance cultures, one’s social status must be clear so that others can show proper respect. Global brands serve that purpose."

In JP ad.4, Nike promotes its line of Women's clothing for Dance or Hip Hop through a group of young people. This displays low power distance in the Japanese society as per this ad's style, contrary to how Hofstede rates Japan to be: high power distance culture. De Mooij says: "In high power distance cultures, where elders are respected, ads also tend to refer to generations, for example, to fathers and grandfathers who also used the product or brand. In high power distance cultures, elder people who dress up as young ones are viewed as “not


\(^{181}\) Ibid. P.46
grown-up.”" 182 Hence the ad supports De Mooij’s observation. The ad displays the clothing line for women, perhaps designed to support the hip hop culture in Japan, through young people dancing and living out the name of the Nike clothing line: DANCE. So the ad can be said to depict creativity and entertainment and humour, which according to De Mooij states that "use of humour, innovativeness and creativity in advertising" can be seen in low power distance cultures. However, according to Hofstede, Japan is a high power distance culture.

7.2.2 Individualism/Collectivism: Hofstede gives a score of 46 points to Japan on the individualism dimension, making it more collectivistic than individualistic. However, he also points out, "it is not as collectivist as most of its Asian neighbours."183 The JP ad.1 uses more than one individual, rather many playing the same game, which is a hallmark of collectivistic societies such as Japan is pointed out to be by Hofstede. Also, we can say that the ad is less persuasive in nature as the product is not boldly in focus through size or taking most of the centre space in the ad, but mainly uplifted subtly through the sportsmen using it. We can almost say that the ad conveys the feeling that through use of the Nike products, the players are swirled or driven to success, thus producing a sort of trust in the buyer of the product through its use. This advertising type, which is more characteristic of collectivistic cultures, helps "build relationships and trust between the seller and the buyer." 184

The JP ad.2 does not contain any human figure advertising the product, but the product itself is in focus on its own. It reflects a single shoe, hence of a single individual person, on an arrow or dart. The ad can be said to be persuasive insofar that the background of the ad is kept in the neutral colour of black and this gives more focus to the product, as the ad also has nothing, but two objects, the dart and the Nike footwear, the shoe, placed on the dart. The function of any dart is to hit the target, which is what it does with the shoe 'right on target', which can be interpreted as the person having made the 'right choice' by obtaining this Nike shoe, thereby also obtaining his target, Bullseye, or success. The singularity of product and objects in the ad (one shoe), product in optical focus with nothing else stealing attention in the ad, as well as the placement of the product - the shoe right on target (justifying the ad tag: BULLSEYE), thus denoting achievement and single right choice of the product can all be interpreted as elements pointing at Individualism in this case. This of course, then makes the ad defy Hofstede's score of 46 points making Japan more collectivistic, but also very close to

183 http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html
the mid-point between individualism and collectivism. The ad communicates with the buyer metaphorically through the way the product is placed in keeping with the ad's tag (BULLSEYE), the sober background colour scheming that uplifts the style of the product placement. However, there is almost no verbal messages or direct style of communication through use of any personal pronouns (you, we) towards the buyer. This reflects a collectivistic advertising style (Japan being more collectivistic), as clarified by De Mooij, "In advertising the direct style uses the personal pronoun (you, we), whereas the indirect style doesn’t address people directly but uses indirect methods such as drama or metaphors. Direct style communication also tends to be more verbal, whereas indirect style is more visual".  

The Nike ad, JP ad.3 advertises the clothing line through the celebrity, actress and stunt woman, Kiralee Hayashi, as the only figure in the ad. Leading and celebrated personalities lead by themselves, singularly, and use of one person in the ad are all pointers of individualism, as described by De Mooij, "Also, in ads from individualistic societies normally uses just one person in the ad, since in this society is more private in nature whereas ads in collectivist cultures is a more group oriented and the ads show more than one person." However, Hofstede's score of 46 points for Japan, so the Japanese society is said to be more influenced by collectivism than by individualism, but the previous observation proves otherwise, making Japan seem more individualistic. De Mooij goes onto say, "In collectivistic cultures, the acceptance of celebrities would be expected to be lower because being individually distinctive in context of daily life is not advised". This again defies Hofstede, who rates the Japanese society as more collectivistic. But use of celebrity to market the Nike clothing line in Japan would mean that the Japanese society is influenced by a celebrity used to market the product; and a globally popular brand such as Nike would surely have researched the cultural acceptance of this kind of advertising style; and communication is adapted to cultures as explained in the theoretical part of this thesis. As De Mooij says, "People look at how advertising works from the perspective of their own culture, which may indeed be very different from the perspective of their counterparts in other cultures." So the ad in this respect defies how Hofstede sees Japan.

185 Ibid. P.140-141
186 Ibid. P.144
187 Ibid. P.171-174
188 Ibid. P.159
The ad, **JP ad.4**, shows a 'group' of young people dancing together and advertising the Nike women's clothing line, DANCE. This is the first pointer towards collectivism in keeping with Hofstede's score of 46 points to Japan on the individualism dimension, making it more collectivistic than individualistic \(^{189}\) and this advertising style also proves De Mooij's statement to be true: "... ads in collectivist cultures are more group oriented and the ads show more than one person." \(^{190}\)

**7.2.3 Masculinity/Feminity**: Hofstede puts Japan at 95 on his Masculinity Index thus making Japan "one of the most masculine societies in the world" \(^{191}\). The **JP ad.1** justifies through use of masculine figures, sportsmen, symbols of success and assertive, what Hofstede refers to as features of a masculine society. This ad also proves true De Mooij's belief "Appeals of masculine culture are more task and success oriented..." \(^{192}\), as in the ad all players clearly seem to be racing ahead for personal success to achieve their goals, being driven to their goals using the brand being advertised. The ad seems to bring out clearly excellence and success of the men using the brand being advertised, and in the Japanese society both these qualities are associated with men according to Hofstede \(^{193}\). The ad lacks on any softness or display of dreams through imagery, which is more characteristic of feminine cultures.

The ad **JP ad.2** comes close to the Masculine style of advertising through its style and clear conveyance of message, though visually. The product, the shoe, hits the target, Bullseye, that can be interpreted as achievement, and a sense of success and power and status, which are very masculine features in most societies, but especially in Japan. Even the use of a dart points at that, as the game of darts is usually played by men. De Mooij's states "Appeals of masculine culture are more task and success oriented...." \(^{194}\). Again, as with masculinity is the case, the message is clear in the ad and the ad simply places the product with its clear goal: achievement or hitting the target. Imagery, use of flowers or anything feminine is totally left out of the ad. The dart hitting the centre target through the shoe, a clear Bullseye in the dart game (which stands for achievement) can be interpreted as success through making the right brand choice, Nike. This brings out masculinity of the Japanese culture again, if we read

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Hofstede's views: "What you also see as an expression of masculinity in Japan is the drive for excellence...." 195

**JP ad.3** clearly uses a female celebrity to advertise the Nike clothes line. This, in the first instance, would make Japan seem as a feminine culture. However, Kiralee Hayashi is a stunt woman, and such action as stunts, as the ad also clearly depicts and further supports through the insert "MAKE YOUR MOVE", is associated with masculine figures. Further, celebrities as symbols of success in society, so through all these aspects, we can say that the ad justifies the very high scoring Hofstede gives Japan of 95 on the Masculinity Index 196. Also, the ad proves true what De Mooij notices of masculine cultures, "Appeals of masculine culture are more task and success oriented...." 197

**JP ad.4**, this ad contains a group of individuals, women and girls, advertising Nike, Women's clothing line, DANCE. A sense of winning or seriousness for achieving success does not come out in this ad, which is typical of masculine cultures. A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner / best in field.... At 95, Japan is one of the most masculine societies in the world. 198 In this ad, lack of men and things associated with them, such as success, and rather the ad is colourful and shows enjoyment and fun makes this ad belong to a more feminine culture and not supporting Hofstede's high score of 95, aiming Japan very masculine.

**7.2.4 Uncertainty Avoidance**: Japan is ranked very high on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index of Hofstede at 92. 199 In ads of countries with such high uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as Japan is said to be, we would expect more technical details about the product with more text and structure, and the **JP ad.1** does not seem to give any textual information on the product apart from mainly some text like the common Nike slogan "Just Do It", which is also only written in the corner of the ad. However, one can still argue that though structure and product details in text are missing, which would be expected of Japanese ads, the visual effect of the ad clearly compensates in bringing out the clear message of what the Nike product stands for, or actually would help its users to achieve: drive them to success and stability

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through success. One can also argue that much technical or working details of sports products in this ad, basketball gear are not really required to make the user understand how to use the product (Nike shoes or basketball gear), which is quite self-explanatory. Hence again, in my opinion, the visuals of the ad come close to proving Hofstede's high ranking of Japan as a high uncertainty avoidance culture.

In the ad, **JP ad.2** we see next to nil technical details on the product except briefly in the bottom right corner. High Uncertainty Avoidance cultures like Japan is said to be through a score of 92 as already mentioned above, this seems strange. However, the message that the seller wants to convey to the buyer is still very clear through the visual advertising style of communication and there seems to be no ambiguity as to what the product is about. For more information on the product line or the brand Nike, the company's website is mentioned in the top right corner of the ad. Perhaps, as already seen, Japanese ads maybe using less information and verbal communication in their ads through their more collectivism style of culture, which is indirect and without verbal communication and has partially affected the culture. Of course, the product is simple and known and does not require to be explained technically for its use. Brand and the product line can be seen on the Nike website, which is advertised on the right hand top corner of the ad. So the ad, simply by lacking detailed product information, on the face of it at least goes against De Mooij's statement, "Strong uncertainty avoidance cultures translate into the need for explanations, structure, test reports, scientific proof and advice by experts." And also does not have much to support Hofstede's high score of 92 on the Uncertainty Avoidance scale for Japan.

**JP ad.3** is similar to the other Japanese which have been analysed until now in that it lacks all product information whatsoever. The only text to be found in the ad is the slogan in the top right corner saying "MAKE YOUR MOVE", which supports the action of the stunt woman celebrity, Kiralee Hayashi advertising the Nike clothing in Japan. This is characteristic of low uncertainty avoidance cultures going against De Mooij's belief that need for explanations and advice for experts are part of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures (as Japan is perceived to be by Hofstede at a score of 92). De Mooij also says, "Stability is an important value of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures and change is not perceived as favourable." Celebrities symbolise success and success brings stability, so a brand being

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201 Ibid. P.179-182
used by a celebrity would help it to be better and longer established in the market, so the use of a celebrity here marketing the Nike brand in Japan would thus prove De Mooij's statement true. It maybe useful to remark here that the ad does not really show Kiralee Hayashi's face, so if she is not that well-known to some, the only way to know that a celebrity is advertising the product will be through the naming of the Nike, clothing line after Kiralee Hayashi, which removes ambiguity, a factor that takes the ad a bit close to the rating of Japanese culture as that of high uncertainty avoidance.

**JP ad.4.** any and every product or technical information seems to missing in this ad about Nike's clothing for women: DANCE, which is characteristic of low avoidance culture. However, Hofstede calls Japan a high context culture at a score of 92. You could say that in Japan anything you do is prescribed for maximum predictability. 202

**7.2.5 Long Term/ Short Term Orientation:** as per Hofstede, "at 80 Japan scores as one of the long term oriented societies."203 **JP ad.1** totally lacks in the usual typical slogans characteristic of Short-Term Orientation cultures as De Mooij clarifies, such as "Hurry..., Now 50% off" thus showing a sense of urgency and forcing the user to buy the product through forceful verbal slogans to consider buying something immediately. 204 On the contrary, it can be said that the ad through its visual effect harmoniously brings out the meaning of success, through collectivism (as not one person is used in the ad) and long-term orientation "with the objective to please the customer, not to intrude". 205 The ad also does not indulge in unnecessary entertainment to please the customer through use of flowers or other symbols, but rather conveys harmoniously conveys the message visually of what the product will help the sportmen achieve: success, as it may be understood. This can be said to convey durability, which go well with long-term orientation and also "helps build trust in the company."

**JP ad.2** is a simple ad with a sober and singular (simple colour scheming) advertising style of the product that is focused in the ad, without any imagery of nature, which is normally a

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203 http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html
205 Ibid. P.236
206 Ibid.p.236
207 http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html
hallmark of long-term orientation cultures such as Japan according to De Mooij, "A strong value in long-term orientation cultures is reverence for nature. Pictures symbolizing harmony of man with nature and symbols of nature are important elements of advertising in Japan, China, and other Asian cultures." 208 However, lack of pushy slogans totally in the ad such as "Buy Now" make it more long term oriented style of advertising in keeping with Japan's culture as per Hofstede. 209

**JP ad.3:** the ad through use of a popular, global and young celebrity marketing the Nike clothing can be said to be more future oriented than traditional or historical in its style. This is in keeping with De Mooij's observation: long-term orientation is the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view. 210 As noted already, Hofstede puts Japan high on Long Term Orientation. This ad, like the others, also contradicts De Mooij: "Pictures symbolizing harmony of man with nature and symbols of nature are important elements of advertising in Japan, China, and other Asian cultures." 211

The use of colour, entertainment and movement in **JP ad.4** could be said to make it more short-term oriented. However, "at 80 Japan scores as one of the long term oriented societies." 212 The ad, advertising the product through a group of youngsters and totally lacking in any sort of imagery of nature, also does not do justice to De Mooij's statement "A strong value in long-term orientation cultures is reverence for nature. Pictures symbolizing harmony of man with nature and symbols of nature are important elements of advertising in Japan, China, and other Asian cultures." 213

**7.2.6 Hall's High and Low Context cultures:** **JP ad.1** approaches the customer with almost no explicit verbal information or product details, but can be seen as communicating through purely visual advertising. This ad thus easily relates to being from a High-Context culture according to Hall's theory, "A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, very little is in the coded, explicit,

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211 Ibid. P.85  
212 http://geert-hofstede.com/japan.html  
transmitted part of the message...." 214. This advertising style with almost no explicit textual communication (barring short inserts on the corners of the ad in very small font compared to the rest of visual ad) also absolutely proves De Mooij's statement true, "Most Asian cultures are regarded as high-context...." 215. Japan can thus be interpreted as a High context culture through such advertising style.

JP ad.2 has also lack of any verbal messaging or rhetoric towards the buyer. All communication is visual and simply through the product and product placement. This style of advertising matches De Mooij's observation, "....advertising in high context cultures is characterized by symbolism or indirect verbal expression.." This means that Japan's culture is one of high context; further proving De Mooij to be true, who says, "Most Asian cultures are regarded as high context, whereas most Western cultures are low-context cultures.216

JP ad.3 style can be said to be solely visual with no explicit information or description of product. The only textual communication is that of the slogan insert (MAKE YOUR MOVE). This reflects De Mooij's explanation of Asian cultures: "Most Asian cultures are regarded as high-context...." 217. Hall's statement also holds good with this advertising style where the celebrity conveys all that has to be conveyed (success through use of the brand Nike, which is worn by a successful celebrity) A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.... 218. This makes Japan a High Context culture.

JP ad.4 about the Nike Women's clothes: DANCE portrays youngsters advertising the colourful Nike clothes line. Little verbal information is present in the ad through the insert that looks like the text of a song about love, which is in tune with the type of clothes line scene being advertised here under the name of DANCE. According to De Mooij, "Low context cultures are characterized by explicit verbal messages." However there is not much information conveyed to the buyer, which makes this advertising style one close to High Context Culture.

214 Hall, Edward T. and Hall, Mildred Reed (1990): Understanding cultural differences. P.6
217 Ibid. P.56-57
7.2.7 Denotative Level, Connotative Level & Linguistic Message

Denotative Level- JP ad.1:
The ad shows male sports persons, basketball players. The player at the front is wearing sportswear, a t-shirt and a pair of shorts. The front of the t-shirt is white with patches of orange brown colour. There are numbers, number 12 in orange with black outline, and some text, AM in dark brown. The back of the t-shirt is black like long socks the player is wearing. The shoes are white in colour, with spells of black, and black and white stars. The players seem to be running while playing the game. There are three more players in the background. The one on the right side, right behind the player in the front is balancing an orange basketball with his right hand. He is wearing a sleeveless sports t-shirt, white in colour with some text on the front, and a white pair of shorts with some orange colour on the side of the shorts. His socks are also white in colour, covering his knees, and he is wearing a grey pair of sport shoes with a broad black stripe on the side of the shoe. The two players behind and towards the centre of the ad are wearing sleeveless sports t-shirts, white in colour with orange and grey colours at the back of the t-shirt, and their shorts are also white with some orange colour on the side of the shorts. The third player, who is more towards the centre is wearing a short pair of white socks and a grey pair of sport shoes. The legs of the player right at the back are not clearly visible. All players are dark-haired. All over the ad are basketball shadows in grey and swirl lines in grey and black. Right at the front bottom of the ad is a basketball almost touching the ground. The basketball is light orange, black and brown.

Connotative Level- JP ad.1:
The sportsmen in the ad and the many balls and swirls show a lot of motion and action in the ad. This gives the feeling to the receiver of action towards making (basketball) goals or moving ahead to achieve one's goals, as all players seem to be moving ahead. Again Nike has cleverly, without any text, conveyed the message of a success-oriented brand through visuals in the ad.
Linguistic Message - JP.ad.1:

The ad contains the famous Nike slogan at the bottom right of the ad: Just do it, with the brand's logo next to it. The slogan is anchorage by means of interpretation as it well-connects with the connotation of the ad that depicts motion and the will to move ahead, thus controlling or driving the thoughts of the receiver in a particular direction: with Nike, go ahead and "Just do it".

Denotative Level- JP ad.2:

The ad shows a dart file in the centre in blue with the feather in bright yellow at the rear end of the dart file. At the front end of the dart file is a shoe in bright yellow. There is a Nike symbol on the front side show in dark blue or black, and laces also in the same colour. The background of the ad is black in colour. At the bottom of the ad is a Nike symbol and slogan in red.

Connotative Level- JP ad.2:

The totally dark background of the ad and its straightforwardness by placing the product in the optical centre diverts all attention of the receiver to the product and its placement. Even the colour scheme of the adrt file has been kept similar to that of the shoe probably so as to show the synchronicity of the precision of a dart file aiming for success and that brought by the wearer of the Nike product. The advertising design though simple is highly creative as with little lots had been conveyed to the reader, namely again's the product, the football shoe, going to hit the target, Bullseye, by which the receiver will feel he is making the right choice in buying this product.

Linguistic Message - JP ad.2.:
This ad totally lacks and information except for the webpage address in red at the top right corner for product information. At the bottom, right side of the ad, what a dart file stands for: Bullseye, is written perhaps as the name of the ad, serving as anchorage by means of interpretation, as it directs the reader to believe that the product is the right choice, Bullseye.

Denotative Level - JP ad.3:

In the ad is a young sports or stunts woman jumping over a brown, horizontal pole. The woman is very slim and her face is pointed towards the ground, with her body stretched and hands wide open in the air. She is wearing a white and black t-shirt inside, with a dark brown jacket on top and a black pair of track suit pants. As she jumps over the pole, there is a white coloured smokey shadow on the other side of the pole. The background shows a blue sky. At the top of the ad is a Nike symbol on the left hand side in red and some text on the right side in black.

Connotative Level - JP ad.3:

The bright blue clear sky in the ad show that it is spring or summer, a time when a lot of outdoor sports are done. The young woman jumping so high up in the sky and over a pole connotes success especially for women, who may wear the Nike women's clothing.

Linguistic Message- JP ad.3:

Besides the slogan text at the top right of the ad, Make your move, and the Nike brand logo in red at top left of the ad, there is no text or verbal message in the ad, as is the case with most Nike ads. The slogan: Make you move is anchorage by means of interpretation as it controls the receiver's interpretation of the ad at the connotative level, and also links the message of the brand in relation to the picture (showing activity): Make your move.
Denotative Level- JP ad.4:

This is very colourful ad with many young girls dancing. They are wearing bright coloured leisure clothes. The girl in the centre of the ad is wearing a silver grey jacket with her sleeves pulled up to her elbows. Below the jacket is a pink top and she is wearing a pair of blue coloured jeans. There is maroon coloured wrist band on her left wrist. Her hair is sand-coloured and tied behind her head with the front part falling on the side of her face. She seems to be looking at the ground. At the front right is a young girl looking up, with his left hand running through his hair. The girl is also wearing a silver-grey jacket and a pink t-shirt underneath. On the left hand side of the ad are four girls also dancing. The one upfront left is wearing an orange blue jacket with a blue cap. Her right hand is stretched out in front of her. The girl next to her is dark haired, wearing a blue t-shirt and a purple jacket on top of it, along with a black pair of trousers. her right hand is lifted with a light-coloured half glove with her fingers showing, whilst her left hand rests on her left leg. Her mouth is open. The young girl right next to her is also dark haired with a pink sweatshirt on and a dark pair of trousers. There is a pink and black wristband on her right wrist. Her left arm cannot be seen, but seems to be lifted, whilst her right arm is in front of her chest. In the middle of the ad is some text in white and a slogan in big letters right next to it. In the background of the ad is a lot of colourful graffiti on the wall.

Connotative Level- JP ad.4:

At the connotative level, the receiver get the message of a leisurely youth of Japan mingling in the hip-hop culture, which must be the in thing in the country. Through the use of hip-hop culture in the ad, it can be said that Nike has used adaptation towards what is the in thing in its style of advertising, maybe so the youth can better identify itself to the ad and the product being advertised, Nike's Dance wear. The colourfulness of the ad, through the leisure-time clothes and even the graffiti in the background, all may connote the easy mood and style, as well as the comfort, fun and trendiness attached to the product. All this helps in emphasizing the youthfullness, for which the product being advertised stands. All this along with the dance mood depicted in the ad is something that will make the product appeal more to the youth. More on connotative analysis as part linguistic analysis.
Linguistic Message- JP ad.4:

This ad compared to all other ads has quite a bit of text in the optical centre of the ad, even if only in the form of a song: "When I fall in love...." "My blood pushes twice as fast" "This is Love", is totally in tune with the mood and the people in the ad: youth living out the relaxed and trendy hip-hop culture. This text is at anchorage level by means of interpretation as it totally controls the impression of the receiver of the product: youthfulness, trendiness and in tune with the modern times. Putting the textual part "This is Love" in big font size also may make the product better appeal to the younger generation as Love is the most important emotion the younger generation identifies itself with. At the bottom right of the ad is, along with the brand logo, the webpage address of the company, not the corporate webpage, but the one especially only for this product: Nikewomen.com, so that the reader can collect more information.

8 Comparative Analyses

In this section of the thesis, the focus will be on drawing a comparative analysis between the Nike advertisements from the U.S. and Japan. While comparing the ads, the analyses will show both differences and similarities between the two cultures by giving some examples from the ads' analyses that has already been done. Where applicable, the analyses will also reflect whether the advertisements were adapted as per the two markets and due to the differences in their cultures; or whether the ads were kept standard by Nike if any similarities in both the cultures were noticed.

Comparative Analysis based on Hofstede and Hall’s dimensions

Hofstede rates Japan as a high power distance culture when compared to Western cultures and the US as a low power distance culture. The analysis however showed that most ads revealed Japan to be low power distance, as most Japanese ads advertise using young people and with some ads even having a colourful, and creative style. All these factors show that Japan is not a high power distance society. At the same time, use of celebrities in ads, such as Kiralee Hayashi make Japan high power distance, as celebrities are show hierarchies and status symbols and lead societies, which proves Hofstede's statement of Japan being more high power distance than low power distance to be correct. America is rated as low power distance by Hofstede, which is true some times, as in the Nike basketball gear ad, which reflects low power distance through its originality and innovativeness as the product, the ball
and the shoe are not advertised in the expected way of a sportsman wearing the shoe being advertised, but the shoe and the basketball as being seated on a car seat, just as an individual would be, next to the driver of the car perhaps a basketball player to whom these products belong. Low power distance is also revealed in this American ad through use of a young driver wearing a cool blue pair of shorts. However, Nike uses Marion Jones, a celebrity athlete to advertise the Nike Clothing line in the US, and the use celebrity in itself in this ad contradicts America being called a low power distance culture, as according to De Mooij, status symbols are more frequently used in large power distance cultures than in small power distance cultures. Hence, Nike has used a standard approach here by using celebrities in both markets of dissimilar power distance.

Hofstede rates the US to be highly individualistic, and this could be seen as true in most every American ad, as in the Nike football ad: Leave Nothing behind, through use of a single person here as in all American ads, and the urgency revealed by the manner and expression of the person in the ad, who can be interpreted to focus on success by waiting to stop a goal from happening, as well as the slogan on his forehead on the side of the ad, "Nike Leave Nothing Behind" probably reflecting what he is thinking, as well as the third factor: the insert in the centre and towards the bottom: all show visual persuasiveness, which is part of individualism, supporting Hofstede's who ranks America at no. 1 as being most individualistic. "Also, in ads from individualistic societies normally uses just one person in the ad, since in this society is more private in nature whereas ads in collectivist cultures is a more group oriented and the ads show more than one person. This was also found true of American ads, as all ads show single persons in the ads, unlike Japan, where collectivism is shown for example through the ad defining Women's clothing: Dance, with a group of youngsters in the ad. This proves Hofstede's statement true of Japan being a more collectivistic culture. However, Nike's use of celebrity again accounts for a more individualistic culture, where success is important.

According to Hofstede, America is a masculine society although below Japan in comparison. Most of the US ads clearly show Masculinity. Taking some examples, we see in US ad.1 that a man advertises the sportsgear, there is no softness through nature. The US ad.2 also has a sportsman that reflects success, again a sign of masculinity. The US ad.4 although has a woman modelling the Nike clothes line, but she stands singularly in the ad and also focuses on achievements and success by saying "Are you looking at my titles", both of these things point at masculinity of culture, proving Hofstede right. As said already, Japan is classified as
a highly masculine society, which can be clearly seen in JP ad.1, where all sports figures seem to be running and aiming for success, connoting a masculine society where success is very important. The JP ads 2 and 3 also point at success as a very important factor, a hallmark of masculinity, although in JP ad 3, a woman models the Nike sportswear. However, the celebrity Kiralee Hayashi is a former 'stunt' woman, an attribute closely associated with men. JP ad.2 is very product focused and concentrates on connoting the excellence of the product, and leaves out any softness, use of explicit language, things which are associated with feminism. The dart carrying the shoe, hitting the centre of the target (bullseye), again shows masculinity through achievement of success, a symbol of power, which is well-known of the Japanese society.

On the scale of Uncertainty Avoidance, comparing the US and Japan, Hofstede puts Japan very high at 92 points and the US scores only 46 points. The ads, however, show both countries as low uncertainty avoidance cultures, though Japan can be said to be slightly higher through the visuals of the ad, like the dart with the show hitting the target and clearly telling the reader that Nike is the right choice (bullseye) of product. The ads of both the countries lack technical details, explicit text, or product information, which are all pointers of low uncertainty avoidance. One would have expected the Japanese ads to be giving explicit technical or product details scoring as high as it does on Hofstede's scale. However, the visuals of the ads do convey the message quite well, and one can argue that technical details are not really needed in sportswear ads, as is Nike. Both countries' ads do 'certainly' succeed in bringing the message across to the reader and pointing out to him the excellence and success orientation of the product, Nike, quite clearly through use of celebrities and sportsmen in the ads.

The US is said to be a very Short-term oriented society as compared to Japan. Comparing the ads of both the countries, we do see the US to be a short-term society where quick personal success and goals achieved fast are very important, but the Japanese ads also can be said to be along the same line of short-term orientation, as all ads depict fast success through sportsmen and celebrities. They totally leave out use of different generations in the ads (only the youth models the sportswear in the ads), and also there is no use of nature imagery or trees, as would be expected, as that would show stability and harmony, contracting DeMooij,
who says: "Pictures symbolising harmony of man with nature and symbols of nature are important elements of advertising in Japan, China,..."\(^{219}\).

Both the US and Japanese ads contain almost no product information or very little verbal information, which is part of high-context cultures. At the most, there is a weblink and some brief brand slogans at the corners of the ads. Of course, one can argue that special product information or verbal messages is not really needed for advertising sports' products. The message that the sender wants to convey is done so mainly through the visuals of the ad. This advertising style is in keeping with De Mooij's Japan's classification of a high-context culture, but does not go with the US being a low-context culture.

Hence, the comparative analyses shows similarities and standardisation in the advertising styles across countries (use of celebrities and pointers of success in both the US and Japanese ads). So it can be said that Nike has not always really gone by the traditional elements of culture in each society (or at least those of Japan, actually a high uncertainty avoidance culture and long-term orientated culture), but there is some generalisation in advertising its products across different countries. The advantage of applying a standard advertising strategy can be corporate identity and easy identification of the product across the globe. However, it can lead to less appeal in a given society, if it goes against the local culture and thus work against the popularity of the product. I think Nike has reasonably well employed a good mix of both standardisation and adaptation in Western (US) and Eastern culture (Japan).

**Comparative Analysis of Denotative Level, Connotative Level and the Linguistic Message**

This paragraph will focus on briefly pointing out the differences and/or similarities between the US and Japanese ads as part of the visual and verbal advertising styles and strategies used by Nike in its ads.

In the ads of both the countries, there is one common thread or standardisation style, which can be seen right at the first glance: almost all ads in both countries contain very little to no linguistic or textual information. The ads mainly bring out the message through very strong visuals (hence on a more denotative and connotative level), which of course can also be said to be easier to convey without much linguistic or textual messages for a sports brand through simply displaying its products, which do not need much explanation or technical information. Also, in ads of both countries the Nike slogans: Just Do it or Make your Move, along with the corporate brand logo, are usually placed in top or bottom corners of the ads and seldom in the optical centre of the ad. The font size of the slogans and logo is usually kept quite small. Also, Nike seems to have a weblink set up per product, showing the exclusivity of the product within its business as well, instead of a common corporate weblink. This weblink is also shared with the reader in the ad. Perhaps these factors show a sort of a corporate identity across different countries with Nike, hence standard. This could imply that the brand is famous already in both countries and people must be able to easily relate sports wear and products mostly with the Nike brand. All this shows a certain general standardisation in the style of advertising across different countries.

Another common factor in most ads is that there is a strong implication of success and winning in almost each and every ad that comes through the visuals of the ad, which perhaps has been used as firstly sports are attached with winning, so the brand tries to bring out that element, so the sportswear may appeal to the sports people and the youth more. Another reason for this could be that both Japan and the US being masculine societies, the element of winning is very important. So this can also be seen as adaptation to cultural values of both societies. Few more examples of adaptation of the advertising style by Nike to the local culture of both countries can be seen in its use of famous celebrities, such as Venus Williams and Marion Jones, in American ads, as success and fame are hallmarks of the American society. Also in all American ads, only singular and individual figures have been used whereas in Japanese ads of the same product (e.g. basketball) groups of players and young girls have been used, Japan being a collectivist society where the society and groups are more important, hence people will be able to better relate with the product. With the hip hop culture catching up in Japan, Nike used this cleverly to get its youth wear to appeal to the local youth of Japan in its women's line. Again the advertising style and strategy has been adapted here to some extent as per local cultures.
Hence, we can see that though there is some standardisation in Nike's styles of advertising, but the brand also adapts its ads to the local cultural aspects to enhance its appeal and popularity with the local public.

9 Conclusion

As mentioned in the problem statement of this thesis, the purpose of this thesis has been to study if the American organisation, Nike Inc., considers the "cultural element" while designing its advertisements for the local and international markets. The various parts of the thesis, that is, the theoretical information related to advertising and communication, as well as the practical analysis of the selected print ads of Nike Inc. from the U.S. and Japan have been combined to help conduct this whole study successfully and deductively the advertising strategy used by Nike has been arrived at.

Hofstede's value dimensions have been employed while analysing the ads in regard to the local cultural elements reflected in the verbal and visual styles of the US and Japanese ads of Nike. I can say that most of the times the ads reflected Hofstede's classification of the US and Japanese societies, but at times they also contradicted Hofstede's theories, as with the element of Uncertainty Avoidance, especially in the case of the Japan, which is classified as being a very high-uncertainty avoidance society. However, the Japanese ads lack in all product or technical details, which we would have expected. Also, through use of youth in most ads as well as the colourful style of some ads shows Japan to be more low power distance. On the other hand, I found the ads to mostly be in keeping with Hofstede's classification of the both the Japanese and the US societies being more masculine, as well as the Japanese being more collectivist and the US being very individualistic. The ads were also briefly studied on the basis of Hall's high and low context cultures. Hall's classification of the US being a low context culture did not apply to the ads due to lack of product information or less to no verbal messages in the ads, though one could argue that the visuals in the ads made the products self-explanatory. However, this is a common feature of high-context culture.

Barthe's three message styles: denotative, connotative and the linguistic message types were also found to be practical in analysing the ads in terms of visual and verbal analysis of the ads, and thereby to differentiate the cultural elements of the print ads. It was found that Nike has to some extent applied a standardised global approach in its ads through use of little to no
linguistic or verbal messaging in its ads due to lack of any product information, besides maybe just a short slogan or giving its weblink. The ads highly depend on strong visuals, which act as anchorage to convey to the receiver the message the sender wants him to get.

Though its layout of ads in terms of placement of slogans and its weblink is standardised, as already pointed out, Nike modifies its advertising style in keeping with the local culture. This could be seen as some important values of collectivism in Japan were reflected in most ads through showing groups of sportsmen or youngsters. Similarly, individualism was clearly shown in every US ad through use of single, success-oriented person in the ad.

The contemporary trend of hip-hop culture in Japan was also put to best use in the ad of the Nike clothing line for the youth, so the product would better appeal to the targeted consumer group. Hence, on the whole, I can conclude in fairness that Nike has a good mix of standardising and adapting its advertising and communication strategies for the same product across two different cultures, Eastern-Japan and Western-US.

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