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**Cultural Integration or Appropriation: How Do
Consumers Respond to the Usage of Symbols from
Foreign Different Cultures?**

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ABSTRACT:

Attitudes and culture have been a popular research topic in marketing studies. Ad attitude, especially, has been a focus of many studies. Research on cultural symbols in ads is not, however up to date. Previous research suggests that individuals with strong ethnic identification may react to the usage of symbols of their culture and using symbols in ads can lead to either positive or negative ad and brand evaluations. Companies face the dilemma of whether to standardize or localize their advertising campaigns and they must take into consideration how target market could react to foreign cultural symbols in the ads. The purpose of this study is to analyze how the usage of foreign cultural symbols can affect consumers ad and brand attitudes in two countries: Finland and Germany. The research question is: Do foreign cultural symbols in advertising affect the attitude of consumers toward a brand in different countries? The Hofstede model was used to study the cultural similarities and differences of the countries. The research method used in the study was quantitative analysis of responds from an online survey. The study included a pretest, and its results were used to choose the two ads for the experiment. The experiment tested respondents' ad and brand attitude as well as attitude toward cultural appropriation after being exposed either to an ad with cultural symbol or an ad without. The pretest received 32 answers and the experiment 153 answers which were analyzed with SPSS Statistics. Findings of the research suggest that using foreign cultural symbols does not affect the ad and brand attitudes of consumers, however the experiment did not test attitudes toward offensive symbols. Thus, companies could, with caution, use foreign cultural symbols in their advertising campaigns. This study adds to cross-cultural consumer behavior, international marketing literature and cultural research. There have been no previous cross-cultural studies regarding cultural appropriation and usage of foreign cultural symbols not belonging to either studied culture.

KEYWORDS: culture, advertisements, advertising, brands, consumers, attitudes,

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Asenteet ja kulttuuri ovat olleet suosittuja tutkimusaiheita markkinoinnin tutkielmissa. Varsinkin asenne mainoksia kohtaan on ollut monen tutkimuksen kohteena. Tutkimus mainoksissa käytettäviä kulttuurisia symboleita kohtaan ei kuitenkaan ole ajan tasalla. Aikaisemmat tutkimukset ehdottavat, että yksilöt, jotka samaistuvat voimakkaasti etniseen identiteettiinsä saattavat reagoida kulttuurinsa symbolien käyttöön mainoksissa ja symbolien käyttö mainoksissa voi johtaa joko positiiviseen tai negatiiviseen arvioon mainoksesta sekä brändistä. Yritykset joutuvat päättämään, yhtenäistävätkö vai lokalisivatko ne mainoskampanjansa, ja niiden täytyy ottaa huomioon, miten kohdemarkkina voi reagoida vierasperäisiin kulttuurisiin symboleihin mainoksissa. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus oli tutkia, miten vierasperäisten kulttuuristen symbolien käyttö voi vaikuttaa kuluttajien asenteisiin mainoksia ja brändiä kohtaan kahdessa maassa, Suomessa ja Saksassa. Tutkimuskysymys on: Vaikuttavatko vierasperäiset kulttuuriset symbolit mainonnassa kuluttajien asenteeseen brändiä kohtaan eri maissa? Tutkimus käytti Hofsteden kulttuurimallia tutkiakseen kulttuurien eroja tai yhtäläisyyksiä. Tutkimusmetodi oli kvantitatiivinen analyysi, joka analysoi verkkokyselyn vastauksia. Tutkimukseen kuului esitesti, jonka tulosten perusteilla valittiin kaksi mainosta varsinaiseen tutkimukseen. Varsinainen tutkimus testasi vastaajien asenteita mainosta ja brändiä sekä kulttuurista omimista kohtaan vastaajien nähtyä joko mainoksen, jossa oli kulttuurinen symboli tai mainoksen, jossa ei ollut. Esitesti sai 32 vastausta ja varsinainen tutkimus 153 vastausta, jotka analysoitiin SPSS Statistics -ohjelmalla. Tutkimustulokset vihjaavat, että vierasperäisten kulttuuristen symbolien käyttö ei vaikuta kuluttajien asenteisiin. Tutkimus ei kuitenkaan testannut asenteita loukkaavia symboleita kohtaan. Täten yritykset voisivat varoen käyttää vierasperäisiä kulttuurisia symboleita mainoskampanjoissaan. Tutkimus edistää monikulttuurisen kuluttajakäyttäytymisen, kulttuurien sekä kansainvälisen markkinoinnin tutkimuksia. Aikaisemmat monikulttuuriset tutkimukset eivät ole tutkineet kulttuurista omimista ja vierasperäisten kulttuuristen symbolien käyttöä, kun symbolit eivät ole kuuluneet kumpaankaan tutkittuun kulttuuriin.

AVAINSANAT: culture, advertisements, advertising, brands, consumers, attitudes

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	7
1.1	Research questions, objectives, and delimitations	11
1.2	Terminology	12
1.3	Structure of the study	13
2	Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	15
2.1	Advertising Effects/Effectiveness	15
2.2	Brand Attitude and Advertising Attitude	18
2.3	Culture in Advertising	23
2.3.1	Effects of Culture	25
2.3.2	Cultural Symbols	26
2.3.3	Cultural Appropriation and Integration	28
2.4	Country of Origin	31
2.5	Cross-Cultural Differences	33
2.6	Theoretical Framework	38
3	Methodology	40
3.1	Method	40
3.2	Analysis and Results	46
3.3	Discussion	51
4	Conclusion	56

4.1	Summary	56
4.2	Managerial Implications	58
4.3	Theoretical Implications	58
4.4	Limitations and Future Research	59
	References	64
	Appendix	79
	Appendix 1. The Questionnaire of the Experiment	79

Figures

Figure 1. Proposed model for the theoretical framework.	39
Figure 2. The process of research.	42
Figure 3. The summarized results.	55

Tables

Table 1. Hofstede's Dimensions.	38
Table 2. Means and standard deviations of the ads in the pretest.	43
Table 3. Groups of the experiment.	44
Table 4. The means of the ads of the groups.	46
Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha.	47
Table 6. Mann-Whitney between groups within the countries.	48
Table 7. Mann-Whitney between countries.	49
Table 8. Correlations of the attitudes.	49
Table 9. Significant variables for ad attitude.	51
Table 10. Significant variables for brand attitude.	51

1 Introduction

Douglas and Craig (1992: 306) note that out of the elements of the marketing mix, the element the most attention has been directed to is international advertising. They continue arguing that previous studies have examined issues between standardization and adaptation, analyzed the content of advertisements in TV and magazines and used content analysis for deriving cultural values. The fundamental function of advertising is to assist in generating sales for companies (Lavidge & Steiner 1961: 59), and the purpose of promotional communication is to have successful communication and getting accepted by the audience the communication is directed to (Holland & Gentry 1999: 68). However, advertisers must also be aware that consumers could create different meanings from the advertisements than what the advertisers expected (Grier & Brumbaugh 1999: 80). This communication process can lead to misperceptions with consumers because consumers can reflect on brand messages in their own ways, which is dependent on their experiences, background, and cultural context (Aguirre-Rodriguez 2014: 72).

Attitudes have been an essential part of marketing research as noted by Mitchell and Olson (1981). Brown and Stayman (1992: 34) came to the same conclusion a decade later: academics and practitioners share a growing interest on consumers' responses toward advertisements, and especially interesting is how ad attitude can affect brand attitude. Marketing and advertising literature has concentrated heavily on researching attitude toward the ad according to Muehling and McCann (1993) and Friestad and Wright (1994: 15) specify this interest to be about how consumers think or feel about an ad and how their brand attitudes toward the advertised brand might be affected through these feelings.

When researching attitudes, there are definite aspects of attitudes a researcher can focus and limit the research on, such as: consumers and their attitudes toward brands (e.g., Gardner 1985), how advertising type and brand cultural symbolism can affect brand liking (see, Kubat & Swaminathan 2015), what variables can have an impact on advertising attitude (see, Bush et al. 1999) and how consumers perceive advertising (e.g., Coulter et

al. 2001). In addition, Jin and Lutz (2013) studied whether consumers think about television advertising when talking about attitude toward advertising, Poels et al. (2013) researched attitudes toward in-game advertising, whereas Dens and De Pelsmacker (2010) studied attitudes toward brand extensions and new lines of familiar brands and how advertisement extensions can influence them. Zhou and Whitla (2013) studied consumer attitudes toward negative celebrity publicity. As can be seen, attitudes have been studied broadly in the past.

In addition to attitudes, culture, especially national culture, has been a popular topic of research. Culture (e.g., Hofstede 2001), cultural values (see, Okazaki & Mueller 2007) and cultural differences (see, Kaasa et al. 2014) have been studied in marketing and advertising research. According to Lenartowicz and Roth (2004: 24) for international business literature national culture is a central concept and nearly ten percent of the articles that were published in thirteen major business journals during 1996-2000 had used culture as their descriptive variable and of these journals the ones using national culture the most were international business journals. Also, cultural differences have been a key variable in various studies: they can influence attitudes toward assertive messages in advertising (see, Kim et al. 2017), advertising expressions and content in different cultures (e.g., Hong et al. 1987), as well as advertising appeals in different countries (see, Shavitt et al. 2011), and can influence new advertising forms (see, Zorn et al. 2016). In addition, Kastanakis and Voyer (2014) studied how culture influences perception and cognition. Furthermore, there are also differences within countries and not only between countries (see Kaasa et al. 2014).

According to Okazaki and Mueller (2007) in cross-cultural advertising research cultural values were the topic that was studied the most during the period of 1995-2006. They note that the most popular methodology was content analysis while surveys were the second most popular. They state that the most studied countries were North America and the original member states of European Union (EU) while research on newer EU member states, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and African countries is scarce. Engelen and Brettel (2011) also note the growth of cross-cultural studies (particularly in

consumer behavior, attitudes, and promotion) during 1990-2008, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions were the most popular frame of reference. The Hofstede model has been an important corner stone in cross-cultural marketing and advertising research (Okazaki & Mueller 2007: 504).

RESEARCH GAP

While advertisements have become more global, different cultural elements have been embedded into ads. According to Gertner (2019) using elements that are part of cultural groups without proper respect or an understanding of their meaning by outsiders has been growingly questioned and seen as cultural appropriation instead of appreciation. Given the amount of research done on consumers' attitudes toward advertisements and brands, their reactions to cultural symbolism in advertisements has been left for lesser attention, especially regarding cultural appropriation. However, different symbols have been touched upon in consumer research, such as Christian symbols in advertising (Taylor et al. 2010).

Nevertheless, only few studies have researched about cultural appropriation in advertising. The previous studies have focused on how cultural appropriation by a consumer can impact country-of-origin effects (Suh et al. 2016), in which case the cultural appropriation is not done by the advertising company or brand but the consumer. In addition, ethnic groups' reactions to the usage of their own cultural symbols (Holland & Gentry 1997) or ethnic cues, whether visual or textual, (Khan et al. 2015) have been studied before. However, none of these studies examine how people outside of these groups would react to brands or companies using cultural symbols of a group the company is not part of. Instead, they focus on how ethnic groups react to being targeted by the advertisements (Holland & Gentry 1999, Brumbaugh & Grier 2006, Massey et al. 2013) or consider how viewers react to a stereotypical portrayal of an out-group (Johnson & Grier 2012). La Ferle and Lee (2005) point out that advertisers must find correct representations of ethnic groups and use them to communicate the advertising message.

How ad attitude affects the attitude toward the advertiser, how the ad attitude is affected and how it can influence other cognitive, affective, and behavioral response variables should be studied (Muehling & MacCann 1993: 51, 53). None of the previous studies have researched how a consumer would react to a foreign company appropriating a different foreign culture that is not the consumer's or the company's own. According to Green (1999: 49) plenty of studies have concentrated on the majority population and how the member of the majority feel about advertisements with models of ethnic minorities in media for general public.

According to Hoeken et al. (2003) former research about cultural differences in value appeals and how they influence has only researched individualism-collectivism and the compared countries have been the United States and Asian countries. Engelen and Brettel (2011) demonstrate in their study that the dimension of individualism was most used in the studies they analyzed. Shavitt et al. (2011) also studied vertical and horizontal (individual and collectivism) differences of advertising appeals, however their study included European countries (Denmark, Korea, Poland, Russia, the USA). Hoeken et al. (2007) also note that most studies have examined the differences between respondents from the US and Asia (individualistic and collectivistic), however, in their study they included only Western European countries to study advertising appeals. This shows that more countries have been included in the present studies and not necessarily only in the range of individualism-collectivism, though it has been the most popular dimension.

As, according to Okazaki and Mueller (2007) the original states of the EU have been under more scrutiny along with the United States in cross-cultural studies, in this study the countries that are researched are Germany and Finland, neither a collectivistic country as noted by Hofstede Insights (2021). While Germany does belong to the original EU membership states, Finland joined later. Samiee and Jeong (1994: 205) note that studies including only one culture cannot be generalized in a cross-cultural environment as easily, and it does not provide enough information if one wants to understand international advertising better. Thus, this study aims to fill the research gap of how consumers react

to foreign cultural symbols and cultural appropriation and this is studied through a cross-cultural study.

1.1 Research questions, objectives, and delimitations

The purpose of this study is to analyze if consumers will have a more negative attitude toward a brand and the advertisement if confronted with an ad that includes foreign symbols of a different culture, in other words, cultural appropriation. Since the 1980s, cross-cultural studies researching advertising have become more popular (Samiee & Jeong 1994: 205), and this study aims to add on the growing literature of cross-cultural studies of international advertising. The focus of this study is on two countries, Finland and Germany, to see if consumers will have differing opinions between the countries or if their attitudes will be the same. The respondents are shown either an ad without foreign cultural symbols or an ad with a foreign cultural symbol that is not from either country. As the two countries are similar in cultures (Hofstede 2021) and both are developed Western countries their attitudes might not differ significantly. Finland was chosen as the other country since according to Okazaki and Mueller (2007) the countries that joined the EU later have been left to lesser attention than the original member states in which Germany belongs to.

This study tries to find out if brand attitudes of consumers are affected when they are exposed to ads that have potential elements of cultural appropriation of foreign cultures. Therefore, the research question of the study is: *Do foreign cultural symbols in advertising affect the attitude of consumers toward a brand in different countries?* Sub-research questions are also presented to get a more comprehensive view of the main research question: *Does national culture have an impact on consumer attitudes?* and *Does ad attitude affect brand attitude?* To support the questions, several hypotheses are developed based on the existing literature. The experiment is conducted through an online survey where the respondents of the experiment group are shown an advertisement with potential cultural appropriation and the control group one without appropriation. This procedure will be explained in more detail in chapter three.

To set the boundaries for this study the whole scale of attitude formation process is not researched. Purchase intention is not included in this study as the example product in the ad might have affected purchase intention. The objective of the study is to see if foreign cultural symbols influence consumers attitude toward the advertisement and the brand positively or negatively and if their attitude toward cultural appropriation will influence ad attitude. To get a more comprehensive view, two cultures were included in the cross-cultural study to see if the attitudes vary among different cultures. Even though country-of-origin -effect is included in theory, the study itself does not research how the respondents might have felt about the countries used for the experiment as it is not the objective of the study. However, it will be discussed about since the example company was made to believe to be French and the symbol Japanese, and it is possible that country of origin does have an impact on consumers' attitudes.

1.2 Terminology

Attitude: "an individual's internal evaluation of an object such as a branded product" (Mitchell & Olson 1981: 318)

Attitude toward advertising: a common predisposition in how to deal with messages of advertising (Boush et al. 1994: 168), a learned tendency to react in a consistent (either positive or negative) way to advertising (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989: 53-54).

Brand information: an executed cue that was created to convey the advertised message, such as brand name (MacInnis et al. 1991: 33.)

Culture: "customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation" (Guiso et al. 2006: 23), Culture can also be a system of common meaning that affects the construction of social perception, from the way people perceive commercial symbols to how human personality is expressed and experienced (Aaker et al. 2001: 506). For the sake of clarity, this study will address national culture, meaning the culture of a nation as opposed to, for example, a culture within a religion.

Cultural appropriation: an individual using cultural symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies of a different and foreign culture other than their own (Rogers 2006: 474).

Foreign cultural appropriation: To add to cultural appropriation, foreign cultural appropriation happens every time a member of a foreign culture borrows or uses symbols or artifacts of a different foreign national culture (Rogers 2006: 474) when they are not members of this foreign society or group.

1.3 Structure of the study

The first chapter of the study introduces the topic to the reader by giving a general explanation of the theme of the study. The first chapter identifies the gap in the current research and provides reasons for the necessity of the study. The research question, the aim and methodology as well as important terminology of the study are presented to the reader. The chapter finishes with the structure of the study.

The second chapter covers the theoretical framework and introduces the topic to the reader in more detail. The research hypotheses are included in this chapter as they are based on the existing theories. First, the chapter explains how advertising attitude and brand attitude are formed and how they might affect consumers' attitudes toward the advertiser and the brand. The following subchapter covers how culture can affect advertising attitudes of consumers and how culture can be represented in advertising. This is followed by defining and explaining how cultural appropriation could work in advertising. Country-of-origin and its influence and cross-cultural differences as well as reasoning for the use of the Hofstede model follow the subchapter of culture. The most important definitions are also presented in this chapter. The chapter finishes with the proposed theoretical framework of the study.

The third chapter explains the methodology and arguments for the selection of the research approach. The pretest, the experiment, and the design are introduced in detail to give a clear picture how the experiment was conducted. The chapter includes the results of the empirical research and the discussion based on the results. The hypotheses are also either rejected or accepted based on the results of the experiment.

The fourth and final chapter includes a summary of the study. The research question is answered, and conclusions are drawn based on the experiment and its results. Managerial and theoretical implications are presented at the end as well as future study recommendations and limitations of the study.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter covers the theoretical framework of the study. First, the most important terms of advertising related to the topic are explained in detail to give the reader a comprehensive understanding of the topic and how advertising works. The aim of the chapter is to explain how culture in advertising has been studied before and to give a base for the theoretical framework as well as to the hypotheses. At the end of the chapter the theoretical framework is created based on the presented literature.

2.1 Advertising Effects/Effectiveness

According to Friestad and Wright (1994: 1) it is crucial for consumers to understand how to deal with advertising. The authors continue that consumers can keep improving their knowledge of how persuasion attempts work and thus, they can better recognize and adapt to the influence efforts of marketers. Van den Putte (2009: 673) states that thoughts, feelings, and knowledge of the commercial are called advertisement effects as opposed to brand effects that are the same but about the advertised brand. However, according to De Mooij and Hofstede (2010: 97) there is no general advertising model. Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) demonstrate in their study that there are different models of advertising effects: models of market response, cognitive information, pure affect, persuasive hierarchy, low-involvement hierarchy, integrative, and hierarchy-free models. Nevertheless, the authors argue that while models of advertising effects with persuasive hierarchy category have been in use for 100 years, they have two problems: the idea of hierarchy does not have sufficient empirical support and the effects of consumers' experiences are not included in the models.

A popular topic of research for marketing researchers has been to examine how consumer behavior is affected by advertising or other methods of marketing communications (MacKenzie et al. 1986: 130). Mitchell and Olson (1981) propose that attitude toward the advertisement mediates both brand attitude and purchase intention. Shimp (1981) arrived at the same conclusion: attitude toward the advertisement functions as a significant mediator of consumers' brand choices. However, Van den Putte (2009)

suggests that former purchase behavior mostly accounts for purchase intention: advertising campaigns might not have considerable changing impact in purchasing behavior because consumers have their own routine shopping manners. Still, according to the author, even a small effect could have bigger results since if 1% of consumers are influenced by an advertising campaign it will have a positive impact on sales.

As Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) noted many theories about advertising effects on consumers have been developed. One of the better-known theories is the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) by Petty and Cacioppo (1981) which demonstrates one possible route for advertising effects. Petty et al. (1983: 135) explain that in ELM there are two routes for the consumer, central and peripheral, that lead toward attitude change. They continue that in the central route, a change in an attitude occurs when a person thinks information received feels valuable to a specific attitude as opposed to the peripheral route where the good and the bad points of the issue are not considered. Instead, the authors note, the specific attitude is connected to negative or positive cues of the issue, or different persuasion cues affect the conclusion the person makes about the quality of the proposed promise.

Petty et al. (1983: 138) also argue that different audiences may be influenced through different appeals as suggested by ELM. They mention that if a person is thinking about buying a specific product (high involvement) the person might pay closer attention to product's information and if he or she deems the information as persuasive, the person will form favorable attitudes and vice versa, negative attitudes if the information is not so strong (central route). Also, according to the authors, if the consumer is currently not thinking of buying the product (low involvement) the person will not consider the arguments for the product in the ad too deeply, but rather might concentrate more on other cues, such as the attractiveness or credibility of the promoter (peripheral route). According to Greenwald and Leavitt (1984: 583) the general agreement is that high involvement represents significant importance to the person. They note that communication does not influence low involvement the same as high involvement, but it can also affect low involvement individuals.

Baker and Lutz (2000: 4) note that when the information in the advertising message complements the information consumers are looking for while choosing between brands, the advertising is more likely to be effective. According to the authors, this information should also correlate with an information type that is more probably to leave a lasting mark in consumers' memory at the time the consumer is exposed to the ad. In their study Grier and Brumbaugh (1999) suggest that targeted and nontargeted consumers create different meanings from targeted ads. They state that target market consumers are more inclined to form meanings that connects the ad to themselves in a positive way which is contrasted by nontarget market consumers who are inclined to create meanings that relate negatively to themselves when examining an ad that was meant for a different group. Thus, according to the authors, there is a possibility of consumers creating different meanings from identical ads and, in addition, these meanings created from targeted ads could produce social debates or prevent cross-cultural understanding.

Lord et al. (1995) suggest that when attitude toward advertisement is constructed the responses and evaluations of message arguments of consumers affect this attitude directly, and it has a notable direct effect as well as an indirect effect mediated through brand attitude on purchase intention. The authors note that when consumers have more chances to process the advertising message its main content has a bigger effect on ad attitude compared to peripheral cues much the same way as in the Elaboration Likelihood Model. According to Ruiz and Sicilia (2004) ads that are consistent with the processing styles of consumers (affect or cognition) have a better chance to increase the advertising effect. They conclude that a more positive brand attitude and an increased purchased intention can be achieved by associating consumers' processing styles (thinking or thinking-feeling) to informational or informational-emotional advertising appeal.

Nevertheless, consumers might not always be entirely trusting toward advertisements. According to Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998: 160) skepticism toward advertising is defined as a disposition to be less trustful of arguments made by advertising. Obermiller et al. (2005) suggest that consumers who are skeptic toward advertising also do not believe advertising to be trustworthy and thus do not care to process it. They add that this

is different from advertising cynics who are cynical of advertising because of its manipulative characteristics but might still prefer ads with information. In short, not every consumer will be trustful toward advertising and instead might not process it or are critical toward its claims.

2.2 Brand Attitude and Advertising Attitude

According to Mitchell and Olson (1981: 318) attitudes have been a popular research topic because they are thought to be comparably consistent, and they can be used to predict how consumers react toward products or services. They define attitude as “an individual’s internal evaluation of an object such as a branded product”. Attitude toward advertising is defined by Boush et al. (1994: 168) as a common predisposition in how to deal with messages of advertising, and by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989: 53-54) as a learned tendency to react in a consistent (either positive or negative) way to advertising. However, Muehling and MacCann (1993: 51) note that there is no common definition for attitude toward the ad. Nevertheless, Maldonado (2011: 87) defines ad attitude as an inclination to react either negatively or positively toward the ad after encountering it, and this is also the definition this study uses.

One important definition is also attitude toward the advertiser, which MacKenzie and Lutz (1989: 53) define as “a learned disposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner toward the sponsoring organization”. They explain further that attitude toward the advertiser is thought to be more permanent because it depicts how information and experiences of it are gathered gradually. The authors also add that attitude toward the advertiser might influence cognitive and affective reactions of consumers toward the advertiser’s ads. Shimp (1981: 9-10) notes that there are two different approaches in advertising: attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the brand. He explains that in attitude toward the brand approach advertisers try to create positive attitudes toward the advertised brand to affect consumers’ brand choices. He notes that this is possible through advertisements that make consumers believe consuming the product would bring them good results and if the advertisers are successful in stressing product benefits and attributes there is a better possibility for brand

repurchases and improvement of attitudes. This, he contrasts with attitude toward the advertisement approach where advertisers pursue positive attitudes toward the ad so that after ad exposure consumers have favorable feelings. He states that the assumption is that what motivates consumers is to feel good.

Affect, such as emotional responses, attitude, and cognition are all important parts of advertising (Homer 2006: 35). Bagozzi et al. (1999: 184) consider affect a common category for mental feeling processes that contains emotions, moods, and potentially attitudes. Feelings should be taken into consideration when measuring how effective advertising has been as they have an impact on beliefs about the brand, ad attitude and brand attitude (Edell & Burke 1987). According to Burke and Edell (1989) feelings (part of affect) consumer has formed from being exposed to the ad influence evaluations of the characteristics of the ad, the brand attributes of the advertised brand, brand attitude, and judgements of the ad. They add that feelings have both direct and indirect impacts on cognitive and affective systems, and they can operate through either element. Batra and Ray (1986: 235) argue that affective ads can create for example feelings of happiness, sadness, fear, and warmth in us. They state that affective responses are not judgements of ads, instead they describe how the ad made an individual feel. Affective system can also influence the cognitive system, instead of the two systems working independently (Edell & Burke 1987).

Brand familiarity can also play its part in advertising attitudes. According to Campbell and Keller (2003: 293) consumers are likely to have differing types of impression of brands they are familiar with since they might have used it before, heard about it, seen it in an advertisement or learned about it in a press. However, they continue that for unfamiliar brands consumers might not have these types of associations since they have not previously interacted with the brand. Homer (2006) illustrates in her study that brand familiarity has an impact on cognition's role as a mediator of the affect-attitude relationship and it is different for negative and positive affect forms. She suggests that affect has a bigger role when consumers are forming attitudes toward brands they are not familiar with and with familiar brands it is more similar to keeping their information

up to date. The results of her study indicate that for positive affect cognition acted as a mediator for known brands while negative affect had a direct negative effect on brand attitudes. Campbell and Keller (2003: 293) suggest that consumers might think unfamiliar brands and ads about them as more interesting because the brand and the ad are new. Their results indicate that ad attitude has a smaller effect on brand attitude for familiar brands than for unfamiliar brands.

The language brands choose to use in their name can also affect consumers' evaluation of the brand. Salciuviene et al. (2010) studied how the language which brands used affected consumers perceptions about the brand. Their study suggests that consumers prefer some languages over others; French language was preferred (compared to German and English), and when France was the country-of-origin the services were seen as more hedonic. They add that brands with French names also led to more hedonic perceptions of utilitarian services. In their study Pagani et al. (2015) showed that European viewers from Germany, Italy, and Spain had a less favorable attitude toward television ads in English (compared to ads subbed or dubbed in the local language) and appeared to also have a less favorable attitude toward the brand when shown linguistically standardized commercials. Their results demonstrate that also the language choice and how it is adapted to ads have an influence on consumers' ad and brand attitudes.

As stated by Calfee and Ringold (1994) six decades of survey data imply that about 70% of consumers do not believe that advertising is truthful and instead believe its goal is to influence consumers to purchase things they have no need for, it should have stricter regulations, but it still presents important information. However, the authors mention that consumers usually think that advertising has more benefits than faults and these findings have been consistent over time. According to the study by James and Kover (1992: 81) people who already think that advertising is a reliable alternative for acquiring information about products have a more positive view of advertising as a way for getting useful information. Instead, the authors add that people who get upset by advertising might be examining it for a longer time to look for mistakes and lies.

In a study by Yoo and MacInnis (2005) the authors discovered that the ad execution format (emotional or informational) could influence the formation of brand attitudes. They add that if an emotional format is used in the ad, the feelings prompt brand attitudes: most negative feelings are followed by negative evaluations of the ad and the brand, while positive feelings improve the evaluations of the credibility of the ad. In addition, Pham et al. (2013) found that the feelings aroused by ads have indirect and direct effects on how a brand is evaluated, but bigger changes in ad attitude came from the indirect effects. In addition, their results indicate that the effects of feelings aroused by ads seem to be stronger for hedonic products compared to utilitarian products. Thus, according to previous studies ads and feelings evoked by them can influence the attitudes of consumers toward both the ad and the brand. Ad attitude was defined to be either a positive or negative reaction to an ad (Maldonado 2011: 87) and since in the experiment the respondents will either see an ad with a cultural symbol or an ad without a symbol, it is hypothesized that these two groups will have different feelings evoked by the ads as the ads are not the same. Therefore, it is proposed:

H1. There will be a significant difference in the ad and brand attitudes between the experiment and control groups.

MacKenzie and Lutz (1989: 53-54) suggest that consumers' affective reactions to the advertised brand are predicted in some level to influence how ad attitude is developed. They mention that in addition how consumers usually respond to advertising can influence their attitude toward a certain ad. According to the study by Massey et al. (2013) consumers' attitude toward the advertiser and the brand also affects purchase intentions; when consumers appreciate the ad their attitude toward the advertiser will be improved, and this will then enhance their brand attitude. They add that brand attitude is, in addition, powerful in predicting purchase intentions. The authors state that consumers' attitude toward the advertiser has a strong impact in their brand attitude. In addition, they mention that ethicality of the ad has a strong impact on attitude toward the advertiser (by affecting the likeability of the ad), and through that, the brand attitude.

According to the literature it seems that consumers' attitude toward the ad influences brand attitude. Therefore, it is proposed:

H2. There will be a significant relationship between ad and brand attitudes.

Massey et al. (2013) point out that if a consumer has positive feelings toward the ad, it will transfer to more positive feelings toward the advertiser, and through it toward the brand. Yoo and MacInnis (2005) also suggest that often negative feelings create negative ad and brand evaluations. In their study, also Holland and Gentry (1997) demonstrate that negative cultural images in ads can create negative brand evaluations, but positive images create positive brand evaluations. Khan et al. (2015) also suggest that advertisement likeability could improve brand likeability, while Yoo and MacInnis (2005) state that brand attitudes are also powerfully predicted through ad attitudes. According to the results of previous studies it seems that positive evaluations of ads lead to positive brand evaluations and other way around with negative evaluations of ads. Therefore, it is proposed:

H3. A positive(negative) evaluation of the ad will lead to a positive(negative) attitude toward the brand.

Still, some negative feelings could also have a positive impact on ad evaluations in some situations (MacInnis & Jaworski 1989, Yoo & MacInnis 2005). Yoo and MacInnis (2005) found out in their study that the ad is more attractive when it evokes both positive and relevant negative feelings and thus, ad attitude is affected positively since evaluative thought moderate the influence of these feelings. According to MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) sometimes emotions could have a reversed effect on attitudes: in particular, negative ad attitudes do not necessarily convert into negative attitudes toward the brand. Edell and Burke (1987: 423) agree with the notion that positive and negative feelings can occur at the same time, for example an ad can provoke both happy and sad feelings, but the feelings are provoked by different parts of the ad. In their experiment Yoo and MacInnis (2005) used an ad that could evoke feelings of sorrow or sadness, generally thought as negative feelings. Their results suggest that if the negative feelings from the ad are

matching to the purpose of the ad, then the negative feelings can have a positive influence on both ad attitude and brand attitude.

2.3 Culture in Advertising

Culture as defined by Hofstede (2001: 9) is “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”. Guiso et al. (2006: 23) define culture as “customary beliefs and values that ethnic, religious, and social groups transmit fairly unchanged from generation to generation”. Culture can also be a system of common meaning that affects the construction of social perception, from the way people perceive commercial symbols to expressions and experiences of human personality (Aaker et al. 2001: 506). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991: 246) how people understand their identity affects how they explain the world, but this awareness is restricted by social interactions which are features of their own culture. As noted by Maldonado (2011: 83) elements related to culture, such as the flags of countries, traditions, and cultural practices, have been popular in television advertising. According to Hofstede (2001: 10) culture, as a word, is usually used for societies such as nations, ethnic, or regional groups within or across nations. He notes that foreigners can identify members of a society since the groups usually share specific cultural traits even if there are various cultural groups within a society, like Asians, Hispanics, and other groups in the US. This study examines the national culture meaning the culture of a nation and its people instead of sub-groups within a nation such as immigrants or their descendants.

Kastanakis and Voyer (2014: 426) suggest that perception and cognition are affected by culture in both individual and societal levels. The authors note our views on life, thoughts, and reactions are molded by culture. They demonstrate this with an example: people in Western cultures have different reactions to an ad with a woman in a white dress (white color meaning purity) compared to Eastern cultures (white color associated with death). A culturally embedded ad is an ad with numerous cultural cues (for example, images or symbols) of one culture (Appiah 2001: 9, Johnson & Grier 2011: 238), like a black character ad including multiple black cultural cues (Appiah 2001: 9).

Holland and Gentry (1999: 69) state that many marketing messages are left unrecognized because there is too much information and consumers filter their senses. The authors note that even if consumers become aware of the message, they might not realize that they were the targets of the communication. The authors add that also cultural cues in the marketing message might go unnoticed and thus, consumers might not notice the ad was trying to accommodate them. However, the authors mention, if the consumers do recognize the message and/or realize the ad was trying to accommodate them, then their responses need to be determined and the responses will assumably be comprised of a cognitive and an affective element. According to Burke and Edell (1989: 70) cognitive elements are evaluations of the characteristics of the ad and the brand attribute while affective elements are feelings, ad attitude, and brand attitude.

Holland and Gentry (1999: 69) argue that if the consumers notice the symbols of their culture are used in marketing communication, they might try to find why the marketer has used them. The authors note that consumers' reaction to the accommodation attempt is then likely to be influenced by the motives of the marketers. However, in her study Maldonado (2011) discovered that both American and Mexican participants did not evaluate ads with their own cultural elements more positively which could mean that cultural elements do not have a large influence on the evaluation of television advertisements. According to her, only Mexican-American participants reacted more positively to Mexican cultural elements.

Kates and Goh (2003) note that when targeting foreign markets cultural meanings generally must be considered in advertising. Advertisers need to be careful when they are targeting culturally conservative groups because if these groups find the ad unethical, they most likely will dislike the ad (Massey et al. 2013). In the study by Zhou et al. (2015) the authors demonstrate that the attitudes of consumers toward ads are more negative when the culture of origin of product category and cultural identities of advertising appeals (for example, ethnicity of the model) are conflicting. Zhang and Gelb (1996) suggest that fitting the advertising appeals to the culture would form more positive attitudes.

Zhang and Gelb (1996: 31) argue that there are times when culture and advertising appeals are not a good fit to each other such as when an advertiser is using a standardized advertising approach with a collectivistic appeal for an individualistic culture. The authors state that in this case the appeal would not match the cultural values of the target country. Zhou et al. (2015) propose that it is crucial for advertisers to create harmony between global and local advertising appeals. Teng et al. (2014: 289) note that consumers compare ads so they can find an ad which is a best fit for them and cultural, verbal, as well as visual elements might affect their decisions. They add that this is especially important in international marketing: if the company has a global or domestic advertising strategy that is a suitable match to local or foreign culture the strategy can improve the ad and brand attitudes of consumers.

2.3.1 Effects of Culture

Armstrong (1999: 267-268) states that the main point of advertising is communicating effectively with the market that is being targeted and this relies on shared values. The author continues that ads must take into consideration how culture affects effective communication with various ethnic groups because individuals are affected by their cultures. Chan et al. (2007) propose that culture has an influence on how consumers respond to advertising that is perceived as offensive. Thus, according to Armstrong (1999) ads should be culturally suitable, executed without exploitation and instead improve the relationship with consumers.

According to Briley and Aaker (2006: 395) to create an effective message, the advertiser must know when and which kind of message they should match according to the values of the target group. In their study the authors found out that at times consumers' judgments and behaviors are directed by cultural forces but not necessarily all the times. They suggest that cultural knowledge can first take place in consumers' minds when consumers are unable to consider their judgement in detail. However, the authors add that when consumers think more deeply while developing their evaluations, knowledge that conflicts with their cultural norms becomes more apparent. Briley et al. (2000: 158)

suggest cultural knowledge is made of categories, beliefs, and decision principles that have an effect when an individual thinks about them.

Different groups might also react differently to the use of their cultural symbols in advertising. According to the study by Holland and Gentry (1997) ethnic groups who identify strongly with their heritage are likely to have a more powerful emotional response compared to people who have a weaker identity with their heritage when they see ads with their cultural symbols. However, in the study by Lee et al. (2009) the authors discovered that consumers who were more novelty-seeking and world-minded, as well as had better knowledge of other cultures had a bigger likelihood to have a better attitude toward products with foreign cultural aspects and a stronger intention of purchasing them.

Culture can also affect how individuals react to different ad stimuli. Liang and Kale (2012) suggest that for example East Asians have a more concrete manner of thinking as opposed to Westerners who think in a more abstract way. The authors explain that East Asians create concrete images even from abstract stimuli because of their affinity for concrete thinking but both groups create concrete imagery from concrete stimuli. They state that there are differences of perception because socialization practices between societies are not the same. Brumbaugh and Grier (2006) also note that people from different cultures might react differently to targeted advertisements. They state that white people favor an ad targeting them through a process of targetedness, while black people favor an ad targeting them through similarity. The authors demonstrated that both Indians and Asians related more to sources in a multiethnic ad, than to an ad with white sources however, only Indians had a higher attitude toward the advertisement. They add that Asians, on the other hand processed the ad in a more similar way to white people even when they felt more alike to the cues in a multiethnic ad.

2.3.2 Cultural Symbols

According to Hofstede (2001: 10) symbols, heroes, and rituals are manifestations of culture and groups often copy symbols from other cultural groups. Hoeken et al. (2003: 197)

note that while creating advertisements, companies have the choice between standardizing their market operations (same visual and verbal messages but language can differ) or adapting them to local environments. The discussion of globalization and adaptation examines if consumers have same tastes and decision-making habits in across borders (Briley et al. 2000: 157). Lwin et al. (2010: 245, 247) add that the option between a local or a global market approach is an important decision for global marketing managers. They note that this contains the possibility of using symbols symbolizing either the target market or the origins of the brand. They continue that by using cultural symbols advertisers try to get favorable responses from consumers, since effectiveness of the advertising message is improved through a positive consumer reaction.

According to Grier and Brumbaugh (1999: 80) marketers use cues like preferred language and shared cultural symbols to target specific consumer segments. The authors state that these kinds of targeted ads are thought to be effective because the characteristics of the ads have been fitted to the characteristics of the target audience. The authors add that the goal of the marketers is to get the target segment to understand the cues and thus create positive opinions of the product and the company. Appiah (2001: 8) notes that cultural cues can be values, symbols, ethics, rituals, traditions, material objects, and services that are created or appreciated by members of a society and the cues encourage where, when and how the members will react.

Standardized advertising can spare costs and be more efficient and by finding universal symbols advertisers who have various targets of different cultures can gain benefits, however with improper symbols miscommunications can happen and create negative results (Cohen 1996: 188). Nevertheless, inserting local symbols in the products (not just ads) could make locals think that the foreign global brand is respecting and understanding their culture (Guo et al. 2019: 82) which would make it an attempt of intercultural accommodation (Holland & Gentry 1999). Holland and Gentry (1997) found out in their study that using cultural symbols in advertising affected the consumers' evaluations of the ad and the brand. They suggest that cultural images that induce negative feelings

could lead to more negative brand evaluations and vice versa with cultural images that induce positive feelings.

2.3.3 Cultural Appropriation and Integration

Shugart (1997: 210-211) notes that appropriation happens every time instruments usually thought as belonging to another are used to the advantage of another. She continues that in addition, borrowing or imitating strategies of another can be appropriation even if the borrower does not want to dissemble or warp the meanings of the original. Cultural appropriation is generally defined by Rogers (2006: 474) as an individual using cultural symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies of a different culture than their own. Suh et al. (2016: 2722) are among the same lines: cultural appropriation is an individual taking as his/her own an element from a foreign culture. Rogers (2006: 474) notes that this usage of elements is unavoidable when cultures encounter each other. According to these definitions cultural appropriation happens every time an outsider (in this case a company) uses, for example, a symbol of a culture that the company is not a member of. To take it further, foreign cultural appropriation happens every time an individual borrows or uses symbols or artifacts of a different foreign culture (culture of a foreign nation) in which they are not members of. This is to define the difference between cultural appropriation (for example, of a religion or a company culture) and foreign cultural appropriation (of a foreign nation).

Close to the definitions of appropriation are multicultural advertising and intercultural accommodation. Johnson et al. (2010: 191) define multicultural advertising as a type of advertising where the goal is to communicate with target audience of multiple cultural backgrounds by using symbols and values from various cultures (cultural representation). Likewise, in intercultural accommodation, as defined by Holland and Gentry (1999: 68-69), the ones communicating use cultural symbols of a different group to improve their communication and so that they would be favorably regarded by the group they are communicating with. The authors note that companies who are targeting an ethnic market use both native language and cultural symbols (such as artwork, ethnic music, or actors) when advertising. However, according to Gertner (2019) the misuse and

exploitation of values, customs, and religious objects (cultural appropriation) has been increasingly questioned.

Cultural integration, on the other hand, is broadly defined as immigrants adopting traits of the host country (Cameron et al. 2015: 39). According to Kuran and Sandholm (2008: 201) cross-cultural interactions give birth to hybrid cultures, and the base for these cultures are the norms and customs that were parts of different cultures before. The authors note that this kind of cultural integration can however also create social pressure, for example movements defending the cultures already in existence. They state that this segment of cultural protectionism is usually driven by the idea that one culture is preferred by cross-cultural influences while other cultures are sacrificed. In this case, cultural integration would mean cultures combining when they are interacting with each other. A similar concept to cultural integration is consumer acculturation which is defined as “a general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country” (Peñaloza 1994: 33). In sum, in cultural integration the individuals are taking on characteristics of other cultures, which can also create hybrid cultures.

According to Green (1999) how strong an individual’s ethnic identification with the individual’s ethnic group is can affect purchase decisions and ad attitude. The author states that that the product type also influences individual’s evaluation of the advertisement as well as purchase intention. The findings of the author indicate that for racially neutral products (such as perfume) the race of the model in the ad might not be so significant when making a purchase decision. However, the author continues, for race-based products (such as foundation) the model’s race and role in an integrated background are important for strong ethnic identifiers. The results of the study by Khan et al. (2015) show significant correlation between advertisement and brand likeability when ethnic cues are used. The authors’ results demonstrate that ethnic cues increase the likeability of the advertisement and brand likeability for ethnic consumers. However, the authors note that the use of ethnic cues in advertisements can vary in effectiveness: textual cues are not as effective as visual cues in improving advertisement likeability and brand likeability.

According to the findings by Green (1999) strong ethnic identifiers of black heritage usually have more favorable attitudes toward ads with black people as primary models and which are featured in racially targeted media. The author adds that as an opposite, weak ethnic identifiers in general have a more positive attitude toward ads with white models in leading role and that are placed in media for general audience. Thus, the author concludes that weak identifiers seem to have a stronger identification toward the dominant culture. Torres and Briggs (2007) agree that ethnic identification has a part in the evaluation of an ad. They studied Hispanics and found out that the ones with weak ethnic identification did not react as positively to low- and high-involvement product ads as Hispanics who had a stronger ethnic identification. The authors argue that ethnic identification affected the Hispanics' reactions to targeted ads. As in the study by Green (1999) the results of Torres and Briggs' (2007) study demonstrate that people with stronger ethnic identification favored Hispanic models (their ethnic group), especially if the ad was about a low-involvement product. The authors note that ethnicity is a significant cue for people with a strong ethnic identification and it acts as a peripheral cue for low-involvement products. This is in line with the ELM where for low involvement products peripheral cues are more important for the consumer (Petty et al. 1983).

Visuals in ads influence both directly and indirectly (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver 2006: 54) and in the study by Mitchell and Olson (1981) the authors conclude that visual information (without brand information) can affect individuals' brand attitudes. MacInnis et al. (1991: 33) define brand information as any cue that was created to convey the message to be advertised such as name of the brand, how to use it, where to use it, cognitive or affective cue, or verbal or visual cue. Mitchell (1986) suggests that visual elements in ads could affect brand attitudes and had two ways of doing it: individuals can make conclusions about the brand based on the visual information they saw in the ad, and this can affect their beliefs about the advertised brand (forming or changing it); and, if the visual element gets a negative or positive evaluation, the evaluation can have an impact on ad and brand attitudes.

The results of the study by Johnson and Grier (2012) indicate that if an individual is exposed to an ad racially stereotyping his or her social group the individual has less positive affective reactions toward the ad and their ad attitude is affected negatively both directly and indirectly. In addition, the authors add that nonstereotyped viewers are also affected by stereotyped representation in ads. However, according to the authors, the non-stereotyped feel more hesitation and are not entertained by the ad while the stereotyped viewers are insulted and process the ad negatively. Chan et al. (2007) note that the more negatively an individual sees the ad the bigger the chances that the individual will not accept the advertised brand or product. Holland and Gentry (1997) also suggest that using cultural cues that provoke negative feelings affect brand evaluations negatively. Thus, if a respondent has a more negative attitude toward a company borrowing and using symbols from a foreign culture (cultural appropriation) similar to how stereotyped viewers have negative reactions to racially stereotypical ads (Johnson & Grier 2012), it follows that the respondent has a more negative response toward the ad too. This is because they might perceive the advertisement as offensive. Therefore, it is proposed:

H5. Consumers who have a negative attitude toward cultural appropriation will have a negative attitude toward ads with foreign cultural symbols not belonging to their culture.

2.4 Country of Origin

Moon (1996: 438) argues that attitudes toward a foreign culture are created from personal experiences like travel and education. The author suggests that attitudes toward a foreign culture can influence attitude toward an ad of the country meaning that a consumer with a favorable attitude toward the country might have a more positive attitude toward an ad with cultural framework of the country in question or a negative attitude if the attitude toward the country is negative. According to the findings of Maheswaran (1994) country of origin stereotypes give a chance to anticipate what kind of features a product produced in a specific country will contain. In their research Septianto et al. (2020) demonstrate that fitting positive emotions linked to a country with a less appealing country of origin image and the emotional appeal of the advertisement from that

country together creates a better ad processing and this improves the possibility of purchase. However, they note that for an ad featuring a country with a more positive country-of-origin image the effects are not as strong.

Chen et al. (2014) note that people's personal experiences with the country like traveling can be used to create more positive feelings toward the country same as with advertising campaigns with the same goal. According to Moon and Jain (2001: 123) consumers have specific attitudes and stereotypes, either positive or negative, about foreign countries and cultures. They argue that cultural content is always present in advertising, and consumers' country attitudes affect how they respond toward foreign advertisements. They add that the country attitudes (an inclination to judge a country positively or negatively) of consumers influence mostly how they react to the cultural aspects in foreign ads, such as foreign models, customs, and moral values. Moon (1996: 439) states that consumer attitude toward a foreign culture or a country is a tendency shown by judging values, customs, and lifestyles of a certain foreign country or culture.

Moon (1996: 436) notes that a strategy where brands use the same advertising, packaging, and manufacturing despite of the country they are sold seems cost effective since it does not require adaptations. However, according to the author it is not clear if this is the best way to interact with consumers of different countries. Ahmed et al. (2004: 102) note that consumers' product evaluations and purchase intentions are affected by brand name and price. However, they add that since companies relocate their production abroad and their goods are marketed throughout the world, country of origin has been added to factors affecting purchase intentions and product evaluations. The authors remark that the new factor can be a valuable sign for international consumers when they are able to choose from foreign and domestic products. Harris et al. (1994: 129) suggest that a product's origin is also one feature that consumers notice when examining advertising and choosing between products. Wu et al. (2016) confirm that consumers notice information of country of origin when it is included in the ads.

Hornikx and van Meurs (2017: 61) note that using a foreign language is thought to imply the country of origin where the language is used, and this should then improve how the

advertised product is assessed. The authors argue that without a product context, languages are connected to typical countries (such as German to Germany), however if the product advertisement uses a language to advertise it this language is connected to the country of origin that the consumer thinks the product is from (German could be Germany or Austria). In short, according to the authors consumers need to be familiar with the country of origin and the typical products of the country to be able to notice the foreign languages. Verlegh et al. (2005) suggest that country of origin can be an information and a source variable. They continue that it has a strong impact on how consumers evaluate products even if advertisement claims provide more information, and if the consumers do not observe the ad in detail, they are more dependent of country of origin. The study by Halkias et al. (2016) demonstrates that how a country is perceived has an important part in brand attitude formation and country stereotypes can positively enforce reactions toward the brand. Moon (1996) adds that consumers' attitudes toward a culture or a country might also have a direct effect on brand attitude. Thus, it seems that the attitudes consumers have towards the country of origin can influence product and ad evaluations.

2.5 Cross-Cultural Differences

According to De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) during the recent years, the interest in the effects of culture for global marketing and advertising as well as cross-cultural studies studying consumer behavior has been growing. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010: 85) state that the global-local dilemma creates the need to study cultures so global advertising can be understood. The authors add that during the past decades, different models have been created to understand culture, but the Hofstede model has been the most used in global marketing and advertising. Brumbaugh and Grier (2006: 35) note that in almost every part of the world there is one group that is in a position that dominates numerically, socially or in both ways. The authors argue that this group also dominates the knowledge of advertising effects, most advertising is targeted toward the members of this group, and this dominating group is the one that is most often compared against in research.

When studying cultures societies are compared to each other (Hofstede 2001: 15). De Mooij and Hofstede (2010: 86-88) argue that the Hofstede model has been applied to analyze variations of the self and personality (defined by cultural values), which explain why branding strategies and communications are different. They note that cultural models in general can aid a researcher to examine effects of culture on self, personality, and mental and social processes and how these elements affect global advertising strategy. In addition, mental and societal processes affect communications, and these have an impact on advertising appeals and styles. Nevertheless, they add that cultural models were initially not created to analyze how consumers behave. However, according to Beugelsdijk et al. (2015: 224) because Hofstede's cultural model has been extensively used and since the survey data the model is based on is decades old there are worries whether the model is stable. In addition, the authors question whether the scores still mirror the present globalized societies.

With as much as Hofstede model has been used in previous studies it also has some problems. Steenkamp (2001: 32) points that the definitions of the dimensions and the items they were measured with do not correspond sufficiently. He adds to the concerns that the items might not signify same things in other countries, samples of company's employees do not automatically portray the country in question, and because the items were originally about the employees' values related to work which might not be entirely same with their values in different roles. Others have found concerns in the Hofstede model as well. Kaasa et al. (2014: 831) also note that the items were concerned about work-related values of the employees. They add as a criticism that the analysis was mostly done in country level (not in regional level for example).

Baskerville (2003: 1) also counts some concerns with the Hofstede model: regarding nation and culture as the same, the problems of measuring a culture that is depicted through cultural dimensions, and the consistency of cultural differences as the data used in Hofstede's model was published in 1980. In addition, Soares et al. (2007: 281) remark that the data collection happened 1967-1973 and therefore the results might not be up to date anymore. Nevertheless, they continue that Hofstede's model is a useful

instrument for including cultures in research. Furthermore, De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) state that the Hofstede framework has been proven to be a convenient model to recognize variations of consumer behavior in different cultures.

De Mooij and Hofstede (2010: 101) argue that in cross-cultural research when countries are compared, variables of culture are collected from the characteristics of the individuals of the certain country, however culture does not assess individuals since within a society exists many types of people. Instead, the authors note that the cultural variables can help to explain differences of countries. However, regarding the comparisons of only two countries, according to Engelen and Brettel (2011) these comparisons do not enable to find differences between specific cultural dimensions of nations. They add that it is impossible to be completely sure that other factors (like system of law) do not affect the results, so the researcher is not able to see if the variations in results are because of certain cultural dimensions of nations.

Regarding cross-cultural studies Douglas and Craig (1992: 299) note that there are issues with regarding a country as a unit of the analysis since consumers are more mobile across borders and because there is more international communication. Samiee and Jeong (1994: 208) raise some concerns about treating nations as cultures and using nation as the unit of an analysis. They note that country as the unit of an analysis can be suitable when the within-culture of the country is quite similar but not if there are apparent cultural differences between large groups within the country. Otherwise, they state it is impossible to identify cross-cultural differences. Steenkamp (2001: 36) agrees that if there is enough similarity within the country and differences between the countries in culture, culture can be regarded as a nation. Brumbaugh and Grier (2006: 35) also argue that focusing on two groups in a study (especially when the other group is a dominating one) can reduce the possibilities for generalizations of ethnicity's effect on responses to advertising. However, they add that with two groups in a focus in a study it is easier to manage the sizes of the samples and it is not so difficult to draw conclusions of the possible differences.

Steenkamp (2001: 31) argues that international marketing researchers can use the cultural models for designing studies and cross-national theories as the models help to understand various cultural levels and test if cultures stay consistent. Furthermore, Soares et al. (2007: 280) state that the Hofstede model is helpful for cross-cultural studies when creating hypotheses. Even with some concerns regarding the Hofstede model as noted by different authors, it has been the most popular model in global marketing and advertising (De Mooij & Hofstede 2010: 85), and while acknowledging its problems this study will also use the Hofstede model for cross-cultural comparing. There are also some concerns noted by Engelen and Brettel (2011) about two-country comparisons, mainly that they do not make it possible to separate other factors from cultural influences. However, as Brumbaugh and Grier (2006: 35) noted it is easier to interpret differences in studies of two groups. Therefore, this study will compare two countries and discuss the possible impacts of other factors in limitations.

Next, Hofstede's dimensions will be explained in more detail.

Power Distance

According to Hofstede (2001: 98) power distance explains how people with less power within a country accept and expect the unequal power distribution.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance shows how much uncertain or unknown situations intimidate members of the culture (Hofstede 2001: 161).

Individualism and Collectivism

Hofstede (2001: 225) defines an individualistic society a place where individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their closest family. In comparison, he notes that in a collectivist society, individuals are thought to belong to in-groups, and to get the protection of these groups the individuals are undoubtedly loyal to them.

Masculinity and Femininity

According to Hofstede (2001: 297) in masculine societies gender roles are distinctive. He argues that men are tough and forceful and material success is important and women, on the other hand, are soft and modest and they are more interested in their life quality. However, he states that in a feminine society there are no clear differences between the roles: quality of life is important for both genders, and both men and women are assumed to be soft and modest.

Long Term Orientation and Short-Term Orientation

Hofstede (2001: 359) states that long term orientation is about being focused on the rewards in the future. He continues that short-term orientation is about both past and present and supporting virtues regarding respect for tradition, saving face and taking care of social responsibilities.

Indulgence

Indulgence expresses how much people control their desires and impulses (Hofstede Insights 2021).

As Table 1 demonstrates the two countries are similar, with notable differences in the last three dimensions: masculinity, long term orientation, and indulgence. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010: 93) suggest that for collectivistic cultures measuring of attitude toward the ad to understand advertising effectiveness will work differently as it does for individualistic cultures. However, both countries in the study are individualistic (Hofstede Insights 2021), so this does not apply here. According to Hofstede Insights (2021) the countries differ in the following way: Germany is more oriented toward success, it is not as indulgent as Finland, and status and performance are valued more. The data of Hofstede Insights (2021) shows that in Finland, on the other hand, wellbeing is more important, status is hidden, and leisure time is valued. There are some cultural differences between the countries, which is expected, however Germany and Finland seem to be rather close culturally especially in the first three dimensions and therefore, it is proposed:

H5. Finnish and German respondents will have similar attitudes toward the ad, brand, and cultural appropriation.

Table 1. Hofstede's Dimensions (Hofstede Insights 2021).

Dimension	Finland	Germany
Power Distance	33	35
Uncertainty Avoidance	59	65
Individualism	63	67
Masculinity	26	66
Long Term Orientation	38	83
Indulgence	57	40

2.6 Theoretical Framework

According to the study by Mitchell (1986) brand attitudes could be affected through visual elements in ads; the visual elements can be a reason for consumers to form a conclusion about the brand, which in turn can affect their brand belief. The author notes that the visual elements can also get either a positive or negative evaluation which can then have an impact on brand attitude through consumer's attitude toward the ad. Consumers can form more negative brand evaluations when confronted with cultural images that provoke negative feelings in them and positive evaluations with cultural images that provoke positive feelings (Holland & Gentry 1997). Since foreign cultural appropriation means using or borrowing cultural symbols of foreign cultures (Rogers 2006, Suh et al. 2016), this borrowing of foreign cultural symbols in the ads could affect consumers attitudes toward the brand. In the study by Holland and Gentry (1997) ethnic consumers' brand attitudes were affected when the brand was using cultural symbols of the consumers' culture. However, in this study the symbols used will be of an outside culture.

The proposed theoretical framework of the thesis is illustrated in Figure 1. It follows the suggestion that cultural symbols in ads can affect consumers brand attitudes (Holland & Gentry 1997). The proposed model of the theoretical framework shows that consumers might create either negative or positive evaluations of the cultural symbols, which affect their ad attitude and through that their brand attitude (Massey et al. 2013). The

hypotheses of the study will be tested through an empirical experiment. The hypotheses are examined through cultural appropriation; what the respondents think about cultural appropriation, how they react toward cultural symbols of a foreign country in an ad, and how and if their attitude affects their ad and brand attitudes. The cultural differences and/or similarities are examined through the Hofstede model and its cultural dimensions. It is assumed that as the two countries are similar in cultures, culture will affect the attitudes of consumers in similar ways and thus the ad and brand attitudes would be similar in the same groups between the countries.

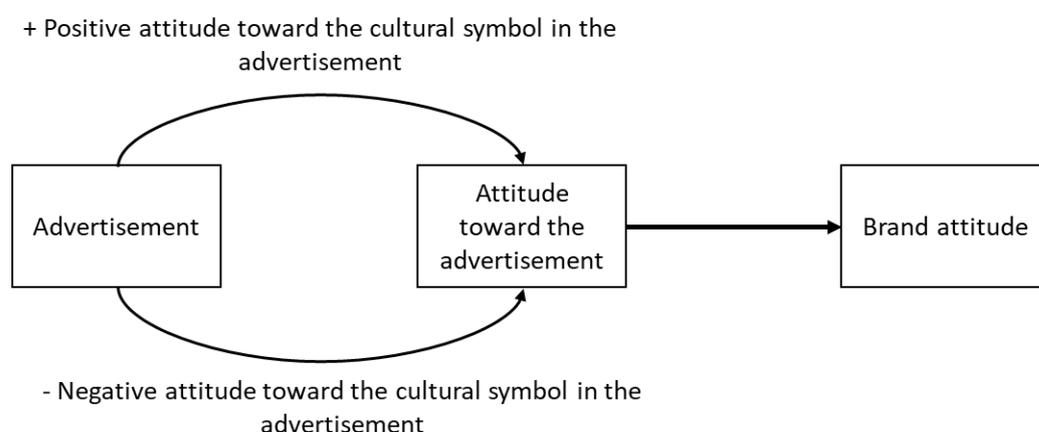


Figure 1. Proposed model for the theoretical framework (adapted from Massey et al., 2013, p. 11).

Halkias et al. (2016) demonstrate that country perceptions have an important part in brand attitude formation. Consumers' attitudes toward a culture or/and country can also have an impact on brand attitude directly (Moon 1996). Thus, it is possible that also country-of-origin could influence ad and brand attitudes of consumers. This has not been considered in the proposed model since the experiment did not study the country-of-origin attitudes, instead it was studied if the respondents thought the brand to be French origin. Nevertheless, the study considers that the country of origin can influence the attitudes of the respondents and this is addressed in the limitations.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology of the study is covered. The chapter will explain in detail how data was gathered and how the experiment was done. It provides information and argumentation on method selection as well as on how the research was conducted. It will move on to analysis of the data and at the end of the chapter the results of the empirical research are presented as well as discussed.

3.1 Method

According to Saunders et al. (2007: 3) method refers to how data is acquired and analyzed and thus questionnaires, observations, interviews, and both quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis are included. Methodology, they add, instead addresses how research should be conducted. As noted by Saunders and Rojon (2014: 74) a clear method section is fundamental for research since studies and their settings can be hard to understand, which is why a researcher needs to be transparent of how data was collected and how it was analyzed so the research findings can be deemed reliable. Bryman and Bell (2015: 26-27) note that an epistemological issue discusses whether the social world can be researched the same way as the natural sciences and a central issue is to define the accepted knowledge in a field. They explain that positivism is an epistemology of natural science that includes elements of deductive approach and inductive strategy and the goal of research is to verify new theories as well as create laws based on the data produced from the tests.

According to Bryman and Bell (2015: 23) in a deductive approach, hypotheses are first formed based on existing knowledge of the subject and they are then empirically tested (confirmed or rejected) and the results can lead to modifications of theory. However, Bryman and Bell note (2015: 25) that some researchers prefer the inductive approach where research prevails theory and theory will be the result of research meaning that conclusions or theory come from observations or findings. Nonetheless, they add that both theories can include elements of each other. In the case of this study, the theory and the hypotheses are first formed based on former research and then tested with an

empirical test. Therefore, a deductive approach is better suited to describe the approach of the study.

Creswell (2014: 4) explains that mainly three different research types are used: quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods incorporating both research types together. To differentiate between the research types, he describes that in quantitative research variables and their relationships to each other are analyzed. He adds that the variables can be measured with numerical data and analyzed with statistical procedures. Bryman and Bell (2015: 37) note that the emphasis is on analysis of data and its quantification when it is collected. They add that a deductive approach is useful in quantitative research since it examines the relationship between theory and research and the importance of testing the theory is stressed.

In contrast, Creswell (2014: 4) defines qualitative research as a type where a researcher is trying to understand the meanings given to social or human problems by individuals or groups and in the qualitative research questions and processes can emerge during the research. He notes that compared to quantitative research data is usually gathered in a setting with participants and analyzed inductively with the researcher making interpretations of the data. Bryman and Bell (2015: 38) also note differences in qualitative research compared to quantitative: in qualitative research quantification of the data and its analysis is not as important as words. They continue explaining that inductive approach is more dominant, the formation of theories is more important, and the researcher tries to find out how individuals understand their social world.

Bryman and Bell (2015: 38) summarize that the relevant differences between the two approaches is that quantitative research is more deductive where theories are tested and by contrast qualitative research is more inductive where theories are created. Lastly, in mixed methods both data types are collected, and the idea is that one can understand the issue more deeply by using both types instead of only one (Creswell 2014: 4). Because this study examines the relationships between ad attitudes, brand attitudes and attitude toward cultural appropriation (variables) and bases the theory and the

hypotheses on existing research, the study will be quantitative research with a deductive approach. It follows the process of quantitative research as illustrated in Figure 2.

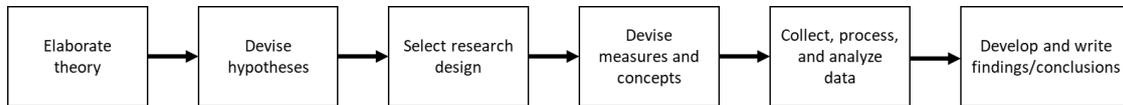


Figure 2. The process of research (Shortened from Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 161).

The data was gathered through an online survey which was sent to Finnish and German respondents. A survey design was chosen as according to Creswell (2014: 155) with a survey it is possible to quantify trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by taking a sample of the said population and examining it. He adds that from the results of the sample conclusions and generalizations of the whole population can be made. As the aim of the study is to examine attitudes and draw generalizations of the two nations, a survey design was chosen.

Pretest

Before the actual survey was distributed a pretest was conducted at the beginning of August in 2020. The experiment of the study was cross-sectional (data collected only at one point in time) (Creswell 2014: 157). The pretest got 32 respondents from Finland and the goal of the survey was to see if the respondents realized there were cultural symbols in the ads. For this reason, all seven ads (four without symbols and three with symbols) were shown to the respondents in a randomized order since the pretest was a within subjects test. The respondents were shown all seven ads and asked on a 7-point Likert scale if they saw any cultural elements in the ads (1 meaning there were no cultural symbols and 7 meaning there were very strong cultural symbols). This was done to find the ads with the most and the least cultural symbolism to be used in the actual experiment. In addition, the respondents were asked if they thought the fictitious brand was a French brand and what was the country-of-origin of the brand based on the ad. At the end of the survey were the demographical questions as well as a chance to leave feedback.

The results of the pretest (see Table 2) show the ad number two (with a geisha and a perfume bottle) has the biggest mean (6,69) with a 99% confidence interval 6,43-6,95 and 95% confidence interval 6,49-6,88. It also had a minimum of 5, meaning that options 1-4 in the scale were not chosen for this ad. This ad was chosen to be the ad with cultural symbols in the actual experiment based on the results. The other ad without cultural symbols was chosen to be ad number six (with a perfume bottle and a splash of water) as it has the lowest mean score 1,84 with a 99% confidence interval 1,21-2,47 and a 95% confidence interval 1,38-2,31. The standard deviation of ad number six was higher (1,298) compared to ad number two (0.535) however it was the lowest of the other ads that got a low mean score.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of the ads in the pretest.

Ad	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ad1	32	1	7	5,47	1,502
Ad2	32	5	7	6,69	0,535
Ad3	32	1	6	3,63	1,827
Ad4	32	5	7	6,47	0,621
Ad5	32	1	7	2,63	1,699
Ad6	32	1	7	1,84	1,298
Ad7	32	1	6	2,59	1,898

It must be noted though that according to the feedback of the pretest not everyone might have understood the meaning of a cultural symbol, even when it was provided under every ad. This could have somewhat affected the results of the pretest.

Design

The real survey was conducted at the end of August and in the beginning of September in 2020 and it was also cross-sectional. The survey was an anonymous Internet survey powered by Webropol, and it was distributed through social media and social contacts. In the survey the respondents were shown ads by a fictitious French perfume company, both the company and ads made up for the survey. The company name was modified and “de France” was added at the end of the name in the actual survey to make it seem more French. The pictures used for the ads were created with pictures from Unsplash

and Pixabay (free picture banks). According to the results of the pretest an ad with a Japanese geisha was chosen as the ad with cultural symbolism and an ad with a splash of water as the ad without cultural symbolism. The two countries chosen for the experiment were Germany and Finland, both developed countries from Europe with similar cultures (Hofstede Insights 2021). The countries were chosen for the experiment to see if there were any differences between them even if their cultures are similar and to see how developed countries react to cultural appropriation when it is not their culture being appropriated.

Subjects

Subjects were both from Germany and Finland and their age groups ranged from 18-20 to over 60 years old with five years interval between the groups except the first and last ones. There were altogether 153 answers, 77 from Finland and 76 from Germany. There were more females (92) than males (60), with one (1) specifying their gender as other. The age group 21-25 had most respondents (62) followed with the age group 26-30 with 32 respondents. Other age groups were smaller. Most respondents were also employed (74) or students (51). There were some working students (26) and retired (2) respondents. In education, most respondents had their master's degree (54) with the groups of bachelor's degree and high school diploma being equal size with 45 respondents. In addition, there were some with only a basic education and some with a Ph.D. or higher. All in all, the subjects were from varying age groups but most of them with high education making the sample a more educated one.

There were two groups in both countries: ones who saw an ad with a cultural symbol and ones who saw an ad without a cultural symbol (see Table 3).

Table 3. Groups of the experiment.

Country	Group	N
Finland	Without symbol	43
	With symbol	34
Germany	Without symbol	41
	With symbol	35

Table 3 illustrates that the groups were similar in sizes. Both countries had more participants in the group seeing the ad without a cultural symbol (control group). As the survey randomly chose the ad shown to the respondents, this was not a controllable factor in the survey.

Procedure

In the survey (see Appendix 1 for details) the respondents saw either an ad with cultural symbolism or without and this was randomized. After looking at the ad they were asked about their opinions of the ad and the brand (What is your opinion about the ad?; What is your opinion about the brand?). A semantic differential scale was also used to explore the respondents' opinion about companies using/borrowing foreign cultural symbols in their ads (cultural appropriation). This was followed by questions about cultural symbols in the ad (whether there were any, if the symbols were from a country other than France, and from what country the symbols were from) and the brand origin which were slightly modified from the pretest to make them easier to understand. One choice was also added to the question asking if the cultural symbols were from a different country than France, enabling the respondents to choose that there were no cultural symbols in the ad to make the question clearer. However, some words were changed in the actual survey to make the scale more logical in both likert scale questions (*Were there any cultural symbols in the ad* and *How French they thought the brand was based on the ad*). In addition, one question was added based on the feedback from the pretest: the respondents were asked what country they thought the cultural symbol was from if it was not from France. At the end of the questionnaire were the demographic questions (sex, age, occupation, education, and country). Lastly, the respondents were able to leave feedback about the survey.

Measures

Ad attitude (Aad) and brand attitude (Ab) were measured through a seven-point semantic differential scale with four items, the items created by Yoo and MacInnis (2005). As, to the knowledge of the author, there are no studies so far on how consumers feel about

brands using foreign cultural symbols there was no scale that could directly be used to measure consumers' attitudes toward cultural appropriation. However, Mitchell et al. (1981) studied consumers' attitudes toward graphic symbols and the measure of attitude toward cultural appropriation was based on this and the items were by Yoo and MacInnis (2005). It was also a seven-point semantic differential scale with four items (see Appendix 1 for further details). Ad attitude and brand attitude used the same word pairs, while in the attitude toward cultural appropriation the last word pair was changed.

3.2 Analysis and Results

Manipulation check. To check if there were any changes in attitudes toward the brand when shown an ad with cultural symbols a control group was also included in the study. They were shown only an ad without any cultural symbols and afterwards also asked about their attitudes about the brand, the ad and possible cultural appropriation. As the brand used for the survey was fictitious the respondents could not have had any attitudes toward it beforehand. As a manipulation check the respondents also answered the same questions about whether they saw cultural symbols in the ad as well as the origins of the brand as the respondents in the pretest. This was done to see if the two ads differed in the intended way. The results of the means of the ads of both tests are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The means of the ads of the groups.

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ad with cultural symbol		
Pretest	6,69	0,535
Real experiment	5,67	1,184
Ad without cultural symbol		
Pretest	1,84	1,298
Real experiment	2,44	1,547

The mean differed somewhat between the pretest and the actual experiment, however, with ad with a cultural symbol the mean was still closer to six and without cultural symbol closer to two. In general, in the actual survey respondents perceived the other ad to

have more cultural symbolism than the control ad as was intended. France was chosen as the country of origin more than the other provided choices for both ads. For the ad with a geisha Japan was the second most popular country of origin after France.

The internal reliability of the scales was tested through Cronbach's Alpha (see Table 5). According to Bryman and Bell (2015: 168-169) internal reliability is usually tested when there are multiple items to measure for each question and the answers are rounded up for an overall score to see if the answers are coherent. They add that Cronbach's Alpha is often used to check the internal reliability of the test and usually the figure 0.8 is used as a benchmark for accepted level of internal reliability. The results show that the scales' internal consistency reliability was high enough (over .8) to use in the experiment. These are consistent with previous studies (Holland & Gentry 1997, Yoo & MacInnis 2005).

Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha.

Attitude	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Ad attitude	4	.917
Brand attitude	4	.947
Attitude toward cultural appropriation	4	.959

Validity expresses if the indicators of the study measure what they are supposed to measure (Bryman & Bell 2015: 170). To validate the scales used for the experiment, the scales were adopted from previous marketing studies of attitudes. As to the knowledge of the author there is no previous scale for attitude toward cultural appropriation a similar scale was used as for ad attitude and brand attitude, except the last word pair was changed. This was based on the study by Mitchell et al. (1981) where they assume that a graphic symbol could communicate brand attributions and so it is assumed in this scale that cultural appropriation can be communicated though a foreign cultural symbol. The items were based on the items by Yoo and MacInnis (2005) since they had been used for previous attitudes. In addition, to measure the attitudes more correctly the questions were phrased as clearly as possible, and the words were explained to respondents to guarantee they understood what they were asked.

At first, Mann-Whitney Test was conducted to see if there were any significant differences between the groups. Mann-Whitney was chosen as the variables are ordinal data and the design of the study was a between groups design (Morgan et al. 2004: 140). According to hypothesis H1 there should be a significant difference between the experiment and control groups in their attitudes toward the ad and the brand. In addition, it was checked if there were differences between the countries. The only significant difference was between the control and experiment group in Finland and only in their ad attitude. There were no other significant differences and in Germany the differences were not significant between the two groups in any of the attitudes as can be seen in Table 6. There were no significant differences between the brand attitudes in either countries.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney between groups within the countries.

Countries and Attitudes	Ad	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Finland						
Ad attitude	Without symbol	43	44,63	489,000	-2,490	0,013*
	With symbol	34	31,88			
Brand attitude	Without symbol	43	41,74	613,000	-1,230	0,219
	With symbol	34	35,53			
Attitude towards cultural appropriation	Without symbol	43	38,85	724,500	-0,067	0,947
	With symbol	34	39,19			
Germany						
Ad attitude	Without symbol	41	41,51	594,000	-1,292	0,196
	With symbol	35	34,97			
Brand attitude	Without symbol	41	42,34	560,000	-1,656	0,098
	With symbol	35	34,00			
Attitude towards cultural appropriation	Without symbol	41	38,56	715,000	-0,026	0,979
	With symbol	35	38,43			

*Difference is significant when $p \leq .05$
Grouping variable: Ad

Between the countries there were no significant differences between the attitudes of the two groups (see Table 7). However, the mean rank of control group was higher for both ad attitude and brand attitude, even if the differences were not significant. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to fully support H1, and it is only partially supported in Finland. However, the results support hypothesis 5 where it was proposed that the attitudes in the two countries will not differ significantly.

Table 7. Mann-Whitney between countries.

Groups and Attitudes	Country	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Control group						
Ad attitude	Finland	43	44,99	774,500	-0,960	0,337
	Germany	41	38,89			
Brand attitude	Finland	43	40,40	791,000	-0,825	0,409
	Germany	41	44,71			
Attitude towards cultural appropriation	Finland	43	40,66	802,500	-0,711	0,477
	Germany	41	44,43			
Experiment group						
Ad attitude	Finland	34	33,00	527,000	-0,819	0,413
	Germany	35	36,94			
Brand attitude	Finland	34	35,65	573,000	-0,266	0,79
	Germany	35	34,37			
Attitude towards cultural appropriation	Finland	34	33,25	535,500	-0,716	0,474
	Germany	35	36,70			

Grouping variable: Nationality

Next, the correlations of ad attitude and brand attitude were tested to see if there would be any kind of correlations between the attitudes. The same test was conducted for ad attitude and attitude toward cultural appropriation to see if there was any correlation between the two. The test used for this was Spearman's correlation as Table 8 demonstrates. According to the results there seems to be a stronger correlation between ad and brand attitudes in the experiment groups than in the control groups. The Spearman rho for the experiment groups were: $r_s(32)=.78$, $p=.000$ (Finland) and $r_s(33)=.83$, $p=.000$ (Germany). In both cases the correlation had a strong positive relationship, meaning that a respondent with a better brand attitude tended to also have a high brand attitude, and other way around with a negative attitude. Hypothesis 2 proposes that there will be a significant relationship between ad and brand attitudes and the results support this. Hypothesis 3 suggests that a positive evaluation of the ad results in positive brand attitude and vice versa with negative ad attitude. The results also support this hypothesis.

Table 8. Correlations of the attitudes.

Attitudes	Finland				Germany			
	Control group		Experiment group		Control group		Experiment group	
	rs	p	rs	p	rs	p	rs	p
Ad attitude and brand attitude	0,65	0,000	0,78	0,000	0,58	0,000	0,83	0,000
Ad attitude and cultural appropriation	0,32	0,037	0,4	0,019	0,35	0,026	0,52	0,001

Correlation is significant when $p \leq .05$

In addition, it was checked if there was any kind of relationship between cultural appropriation and ad attitude. Ad attitude and attitude toward cultural appropriation had a moderate positive relationship except for the experiment group in Germany, where the relationship was strongly positive. In this case too, the correlation implies that if ad attitude decreases so does attitude toward cultural appropriation (and vice versa) and if either one increases so does the other, albeit not as strongly as with ad and brand attitudes. This would support hypothesis H4, however since the control group and experiment group did not have significant differences it is not possible to make conclusions based on this study regarding cultural appropriation and its effects on ad and brand attitudes.

Lastly, an ordinal progression was run to see if any other independent variable (such as nationality, age, sex) affected the results. The model fits for all three attitudes as its significance was .000. For ad and brand attitude the Goodness-of-Fit was not significant meaning that the observed data was consistent with the model, however for attitude toward cultural appropriation this was not the case. Nevertheless, because the Pseudo R-Square values were not high enough (for all attitudes less than .7, ad and brand attitude were around .6, and cultural appropriation around .3) there could be more independent variables not examined in the study that could have affected the results. Therefore, caution must be exercised when interpreting the results.

In the ordinal regression it was tested if age, country, the ad, sex, occupation, or education affected the attitudes. Sex, occupation, country, and education did not have significant influence on attitudes (significance was bigger than .05), except for attitude toward cultural appropriation where sex had a significant influence (.000) and males seemed to have a slightly better attitude toward it compared to women. For ad attitude, the ad had a significant difference which means that the ad which the respondent saw would affect their ad attitude (see Table 9). In addition, brand attitude had a significant difference.

Table 9. Significant variables for ad attitude.

Variables	Estimate	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Brand attitude	1,992	,000	1,577	2,408
Ad	,869	,004	0,272	1,466

Significant when $p \leq .05$

For brand attitude (see Table 10), the independent variables with significant difference were ad attitude (.000) and attitude toward cultural appropriation (.001). Their estimates were both positive, meaning that if the ad attitude or attitude toward cultural appropriation was positive, it is estimated that the brand attitude would be positive too.

Table 10. Significant variables for brand attitude.

Variables	Estimate	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Ad attitude	1,826	,000	1,439	,600
Cultural appropriation	,372	,001	,144	2,213

Significant when $p \leq .05$

This supports hypothesis H3, where it was estimated that a positive(negative) attitude toward the ad will lead to a positive(negative) attitude toward the brand. Nevertheless, it seems that other independent variables did not significantly affect the attitudes, except the sex of the respondent for the attitude toward cultural appropriation where males had only a slightly bigger estimate for attitude toward cultural appropriation than women ($m= 19,433$, $f= 18,539$). Also, brand attitude had a significant difference. However, since the model did not fit the attitude toward cultural appropriation these interpretations have to be considered with caution.

3.3 Discussion

The study did not yield the expected results. There were no significant differences between the control group and the experiment group in regards of ad and brand attitude, except in Finland for ad attitude. Between the countries the differences were, likewise,

insignificant. Thus, hypothesis H1 was not fully supported. Of course, as according to Hofstede Insights (2021), the countries are quite close to each other, differing highly only in masculinity (Finland more feminine) and long-term orientation (Germany more long-term oriented). Finland is also more indulgent of the two countries meaning that the Finns are more likely to act upon their impulses to enjoy life (Hofstede Insights 2021). The closeness of the two cultures could explain why there were no significant differences between the countries. Also, both are developed countries and not part of minority cultures which could explain why the countries do not have strong attitudes toward cultural appropriation. Samiee and Jeong (1994: 208) also point out that it is possible that there are culturally similar groups in different countries, so it is possible that the sample happened to be of a similar group in both Germany and Finland.

The difference in attitudes was low and with this study it cannot be proven that seeing a foreign cultural symbol in an ad would affect brand attitudes of consumers. However, even when the differences were not significant, the overall attitude toward the ad and the brand were better with the control groups than the experiment groups, implying that a use of foreign cultural symbol could affect ad and brand attitudes. Still, the results of the use of cultural symbol were low compared to the results of Holland and Gentry (1997). This could be in part because the symbol used was from a foreign country (Japan) and not a symbol from either of the countries participating in the study as it was the purpose of the study.

The design of the ad was also intended to not look like a negative representation (however, this was not directly tested) of the culture to see how the respondents would react to cultural appropriation overall. With a negative ad (for example, extremely stereotypical and negative look) perhaps the results would have been affected. In addition, the cultural symbol was not from an oppressed culture or from a minority group. However, since cultural appropriation is defined as a usage/borrowing of symbols of a culture that the individual is not a part of (Rogers 2006: 474), the ad with a cultural symbol still fits in this definition. It might be that the respondents did not perceive it as a cultural appropriation or as a negative thing necessarily.

Regarding the hypotheses H2 and H3 the results seem consistent with previous studies (e.g., MacKenzie & Lutz 1989, Yoo & MacInnis 2005). As expected, according to the results there was a strong positive relationship between ad attitude and brand attitude, indicating that a positive evaluation of the ad would lead to a positive brand attitude (and a negative evaluation to a negative brand attitude). This suggests that the two attitudes do have a strong relationship. However, since there were no significant differences in brand attitudes between the control and the experiment groups it could not have been proven that cultural appropriation as used in this study would have affected the evaluations strongly.

Regarding hypothesis H4, it was proven that there is a mediate positive relationship between ad attitude and attitude toward cultural appropriation. The ordinal regression analysis also indicated that ad attitude affected brand attitude. Nevertheless, the attitude toward cultural appropriation was quite neutral as in every group its mean was close to four (a seven-point scale, where four is right in the middle). This indicates that in the whole there were not enough strong feelings towards cultural appropriation among the respondents. However, what was surprising was that according to the results of the ordinal regression analysis cultural appropriation had a significant difference toward brand attitude but not ad attitude. This would indicate that ad attitude did not act as a mediator between cultural appropriation and brand attitude and instead a positive attitude toward cultural appropriation was more likely to result in positive brand attitude. Nevertheless, it cannot be said for sure if cultural appropriation affected the ad or brand attitudes if it was even perceived in the ad with a cultural symbol. Especially, since there were no significant differences between the control group and the experiment group, it cannot be said with confidence that a possibly perceived cultural appropriation in the ad would have affected the attitudes.

Lastly, regarding hypothesis H5, it was supported that both countries had similar attitudes. With ordinal regression analysis it was checked that other variables such as age, sex, or education did not affect the results. The only variable other than the ad affecting the attitudes seemed to be sex and only for cultural appropriation. The results imply that

men have a better attitude toward cultural appropriation compared to women. Since it seems that other independent variables of the study did not affect the results, with caution it is suggested that culture could have influenced the similarities in the attitudes because of the similarities in the cultures of the examined countries. Thus, it is suggested that hypothesis H5 is supported.

In addition, it is possible that some variables are missing from the experiment, for example country-of-origin attitude. Since the model of ordinal regression was somewhat lacking it is not possible to reject the possibility of other variables affecting the results. It was not researched how attitude toward the country of origin could have affected the results. It is possible that a positive attitude toward the country of origin (France) or toward the country appropriated (Japan) could have had an influence. In addition, the cultural symbol (a Japanese geisha) might not have been perceived as negative or as a stereotypical cultural representation which could explain why the differences were not significant enough. In short, the cultural symbol did not evoke significant differences in feelings or attitudes of the respondents.

The results of the study are summarized in Figure 2. It shows that while ad attitude had a correlation with brand attitude, with this study it could not be proven that cultural symbols would affect ad or brand attitude significantly. In addition, cultural appropriation seemed to have a direct effect on brand attitude, but this was not sufficiently proven. Therefore, cultural appropriation was not perceived strongly enough, or the respondents did not have strong negative feelings toward it. The figure demonstrates the suggested possibilities between the attitudes based on the results of the study.

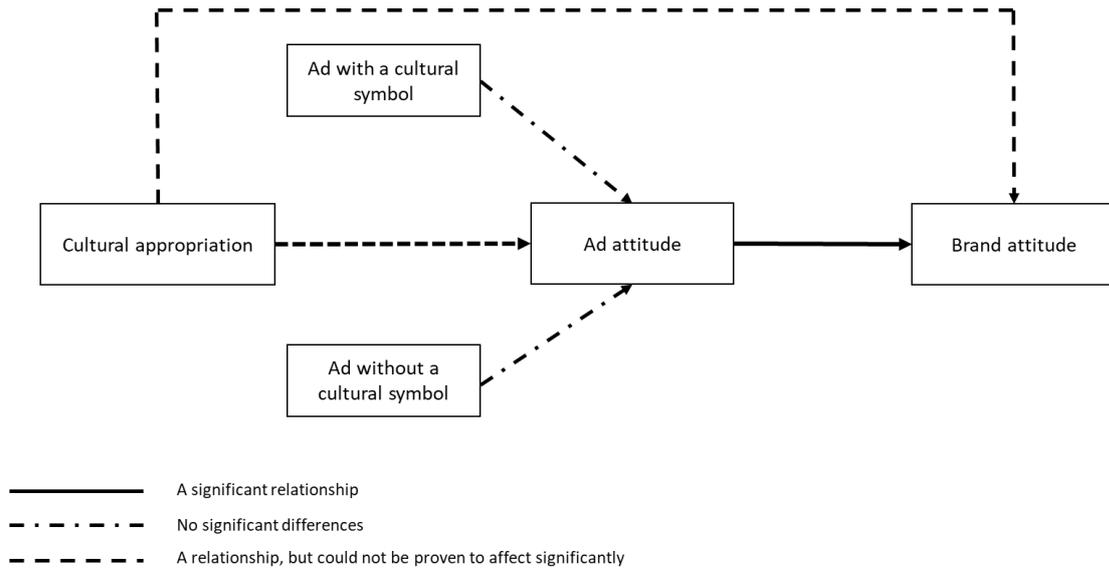


Figure 3. The summarized results.

4 Conclusion

In this chapter the conclusions are presented as well as the summary of the thesis. The research question will be discussed as well as the hypotheses. The chapter also covers managerial implications, the limitations of the study and possible future research questions.

4.1 Summary

This study wanted to explore how consumers react to the usage of foreign cultural symbols. The research question was: *Do foreign cultural symbols in advertising affect the attitude of consumers toward a brand?* and this was studied through a cross-cultural study with a control group and an experiment group in both countries. The sub-research questions were: *Does culture have an impact on consumer attitudes?* and *Does ad attitude affect brand attitude?* Five hypotheses were formed to help answer the research question and the sub-research questions. H1 stated that there will be a significant difference in the ad and brand attitudes between the experiment and control groups. This was not supported as there were no significant differences, except for ad attitude in Finland. H2 stated that there will be a significant relationship between ad and brand attitudes. This was supported by correlation analysis and ordinal regression analysis. H3 stated that a positive evaluation of the ad will result in a positive brand attitude and vice versa with negative ad attitude. The correlation and regression analyses also support this.

H4 stated that consumers with a negative attitude toward cultural appropriation will have a negative attitude toward ads with foreign cultural symbols. This was also supported, however since there were no significant differences between the groups it is not possible to conclude with these results that attitude toward cultural appropriation (or the cultural symbol) would have had a significant influence toward ad and brand attitudes. Lastly, H5 stated that Finnish and German respondents will have similar attitudes. This was supported. According to the results there were no significant differences between the countries. This implies that in the chosen countries according to the sample respondents, the usage of a cultural symbol does not necessarily lead to either positive

or negative attitudes toward the ad or the brand. Thus, the answer to the research question is that according to the results of this study the usage of foreign cultural symbols does not affect the brand attitude of consumers.

Based on the results the answer to the first sub-research question is that culture might affect the attitudes, however it is possible other variables also influenced the attitudes. It is also possible that it was not the national culture affecting the results, but instead the possible similarity of the groups in the two countries. The answer to the second sub-research question is that ad attitude and brand attitude are suggested to have a significant relationship, meaning that they affect each other. Most of the study subjects were also highly educated, so the results of the study could be generalized to similar countries and cultures and for similar groups in these cultures (highly educated).

The study was conducted through an internet survey. It included a pretest with 32 respondents from Finland to test which ads would be used in the actual study. The actual experiment had 153 subjects from two countries: Finland and Germany. Both countries had a control group (an ad without a cultural symbol) and an experiment group (an ad with a cultural symbol). The product that was used was a perfume bottle. The attitudes were tested through a seven-point semantic differential scale with four items for each attitude. The survey also included a manipulation check to see if the ads were perceived as they were intended. The company and the ads were created for the study, and the company was said to be French. As the company and ads were made up for the experiment, the respondents could not have had any attitudes toward them before seeing the ads. As such, it was only tested if the attitudes between the groups differed as it would have been impossible to test if their pre-attitudes changed. However, in future studies this could be studied by using a real company.

Perhaps, with a more negative ad or a symbol from a minority culture the results of the study would have been different. Nevertheless, the results show that ad attitude can influence brand attitude and the two attitudes have a strong positive relationship. This is in line with previous studies (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989), but the results were in contrast with studies about cultural symbolism (Holland & Gentry 1997). However, the study adds

to the growing literature by showing that consumers might not react to cultural appropriation if it is not their own culture appropriated or the culture appropriated is not a minority one. This could be studied further in future research.

4.2 Managerial Implications

This study did not prove the expectations of consumers reacting to foreign cultural symbols. However, it did suggest that ad attitude and brand attitude have a strong positive relationship between themselves which would be important for managers to consider. A positive evaluation of the ad can lead to a more positive evaluation of the brand (Holland & Gentry 1997, Massey et al. 2013, Mitchell 1986). Managers and companies would need to keep in mind to create ads that consumers will evaluate positively to avoid negative brand attitudes. The results of the study also imply that consumers will not have a strong negative reaction toward the usage of foreign cultural symbols, however caution is still required when using cultural symbols since symbols can create miscommunications (Cohen 1996: 188). The results contradict the study by Holland and Gentry (1997), but since this study did not explore how consumers would react to their own symbols used by foreign companies, manager and companies should keep in mind that the results could differ in practice.

Moreover, smaller ethnic groups and minorities could have different reactions. As mentioned before, the respondents in the study could have also had different reactions if a symbol from a minority culture had been used. All in all, it is advised that managers and companies use caution when using foreign cultural symbols and if possible, test the ads before.

4.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings of the study support previous research that ad attitude influences brand attitude (Holland & Gentry 1997, Yoo & MacInnis 2005, Massey et al. 2013, Pham et al. 2013). While with this study it was not possible to prove that cultural symbols of a foreign nation affect attitudes negatively or positively the results imply that with positive ad

attitude a more positive brand attitude could be attained. Nevertheless, there have been no prior studies to the knowledge of the author about cultural differences between two dominating groups and their reactions to cultural symbols in advertisements. As Brumbaugh and Grier (2006) note most studies comparing two groups use a dominant group that is most often compared against. While it may be argued that Finland is not a dominant group or nation in Europe, regarding its economy, size, or population, it is still predominantly white and not a minority group (e.g., Asians, Africans and so on) that would not be a target of advertising quite as often. Thus, it was examined if there are differences in attitudes between two similar countries. Based on the results, it seems that there were no significant differences, however, it is possible other variables than culture were affecting the results. It is also possible that the sample from both countries happened to be of a similar sub-group (most were highly educated) and this could have affected the results.

Nevertheless, this study contributes to international advertising literature in the following way. So far there have been no cross-cultural studies of attitudes toward cultural appropriation and the usage symbols that are foreign to both groups. This study aimed to fill this gap and the results suggest that cultural symbols might not be as important to consumers when evaluating an ad and a brand, especially if the symbol is not from a minority group. This study adds also to cross-cultural studies of attitudes where Nordic countries have not been as regularly studied by studying the attitudes of Finnish consumers and comparing them with Germany, a bigger European country. In addition, it suggests that there might not be cross-cultural differences between similar countries and instead, they might have similar attitudes. Regarding studies about cultural symbolism, the study adds to the literature by studying how groups react to foreign cultures or symbols and suggests that consumers might not care about foreign cultural symbols in the ads if they do not seem too offensive or it is not about their own culture.

4.4 Limitations and Future Research

Same as in the study by Mitchell and Olson (1981) the design of this study is artificial and does not provide a real examination of ad and brand attitude formation. According to

Mitchell and Olson (1981) attitudes form over time with successive repetitions. In this study the exposure was forced, and the individual saw the ad only once, and the ad was not embedded in editorial material, making some of the limitations the same as with the study by Mitchell and Olson (1981). Moreover, the brand was a made-up brand, so the respondents had to form their attitude toward the brand based on only seeing the ad once. According to Agrawal and Kamakura (1999) in an actual purchase situation, consumers are likely to spend more time in searching information, so for example, country-of-origin will be one cue that competes with other information sources. Likewise, they might not pay that much attention to the cultural symbols of the advertisement in a real-life setting.

It is also possible that the respondents did not understand what cultural symbol meant even if the definition were provided for them (this was the case in the pretest) which could have affected their reactions. In addition, according to the feedback of the survey at least one respondent could have thought the ad to be Japanese instead of from a French company. Another limitation is that only one ad was used for both groups. Especially with big companies consumers usually see many ads through different channels and form their attitudes through repeated exposure, but this was not the case of this study. The attitude formation was forced and based only on one picture.

Regarding attitude toward a country and a country-of-origin, this study did not research how the consumers felt toward Japan (the culture of the ad) or France (the country-of-origin of the brand). Perhaps positive feelings toward these countries could have affected the results and the results could have been different if the study had used countries that consumers had negative attitudes toward. Furthermore, only two countries were used in the study and Engelen and Brettel (2011) note that they do not give a chance to examine cultural differences as well as with studies with more countries. Samiee and Jeong (1994) also note that treating nations as cultures can be problematic if there are huge within-nation differences. In future studies it would be better to have larger sampling of both countries or even more countries to be able to make generalizations of the results.

In addition, since the ads were of a perfume bottle and the bottle itself could be perceived more girly than manly (however, this was not checked) it is possible that not everyone thought of themselves as the target group. As according to the study by Grier and Brumbaugh (1999) targeted consumers are more inclined to create meanings that connect the ad more positively to themselves than non-target consumers this could have affected the results. Another limitation was the fact that the ads were in English and not in the local languages. According to the study by Pagani et al. (2015) this could also create more negative attitudes. However, since there were no significantly apparent negative attitudes the language might not have affected the results too much. Nevertheless, in the future the studies could use ads in the local language to see if it would affect the results.

Further limitations of the study according to the feedback from the survey were that some wondered if text and words were to be considered as cultural symbols. As the brand used was made to believe to be French, there were some French words in the ads. This could have confused some respondents to think that they were also cultural symbols, however, since they were symbols of the country of origin, they should not have interfered with the possible interpretations of cultural appropriation. Still, this might have affected the results. Furthermore, even though the respondents were from two different countries, it is possible that they belonged to a similar subgroup of their countries, such as education, socio-economic status, or urban residency as pointed by Douglas and Craig (1992: 299). These could have affected the attitudes and explain why they were so similar.

The ads were constructed through Photoshop and they were not professional ads, which could have resulted in negative opinions instead of the used cultural symbols. At least one respondent did not think that the ads were real. There is no indication whether this fact was apparent to the other respondents as well and if it influenced their answers. Another respondent noted that the aesthetics of the ad did not match the product which resulted in their low opinion of the ad. However, it cannot be said how many of the respondents would have had similar thoughts as these were only from two respondents.

There was also feedback that for some respondents the questions were confusing, and they did not understand the differences between the words (for example, good and positive) when asked about ad and brand attitudes (nor did they necessarily understand what the difference was between the question about attitude toward the ad and the brand). This could have also had an influence on how they answered the questions and whether they could give their true opinions. However, to some the questionnaire was clear enough. In the future, this could perhaps be avoided by making the questionnaire in paper, as in a mobile version it could look confusing.

In this study it was only studied how consumers react to cultural symbols from a foreign culture. How consumers react to their own symbols used by foreign companies was not studied and the culture used was a big one (Japan). In addition, this study used a made-up brand which the subjects would have not been able to know before. This means that they could not change their attitudes toward the brand as they could not have had any previous attitudes. In future studies, one possible way to research the effect of cultural appropriation on consumers' attitudes is to test if their attitudes towards an existing and real brand change when seeing possible foreign cultural elements in the ads.

According to the feedback of the survey at least one respondent might have not thought it as cultural appropriation if two countries who are about the same borrow cultural symbols from each other, compared to a case where a dominant culture uses symbols from an oppressed culture. However, according to the feedback of the survey, some respondents did think the Japanese geisha ad was distasteful or racist. In future research one could also study if there are differences between a bigger culture that has not been oppressed and a minority culture that could feel that they have been oppressed and study if they would react toward foreign cultural appropriation differently. Future research could also study how consumers react to culturally offending pictures that also include cultural appropriation. One possible way to study the effect of cultural appropriation is to have an individual from a different culture using symbols of a foreign culture in the ad (instead of individual of the culture that is appropriated) and research if that would affect consumers' attitudes. There are still numerous ways to study how cultural

appropriation might affect consumers and the ones presented here are suggestions for future researchers to study the topic in more detail.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. The Questionnaire of the Experiment

This is a cross-cultural study between Germany and Finland and the aim is to research how consumers understand ads. The company used in the survey is a small and relatively new French company called *Élé de France*, specializing in perfumes for men and women. Its products target mainly European customers and are sold only in Europe.

Next you will see an ad by the company *Élé de France*. Please look at it carefully as you will not be able to look at it again and then answer the questions in the following pages.

You will not be able to go back in the survey so please answer the questions carefully.

Ad by *Élé de France*. Please look at the ad carefully as you will not be able to look at it again.

1. Have you seen the ad before?

Yes

No

Next, you will be asked about your opinion of the ad you have just seen. Please choose the most appropriate option.

2. What is your opinion of the ad? (Yoo & MacInnis 2005)

Dislike * * * * * Like

Negative * * * * * Positive

Bad * * * * * Good

Unfavorable * * * * * Favorable

Next you will be asked about your opinion of the brand, *Élé de France*, based on the ad you have just seen. Please choose the most appropriate option.

3. What is your opinion about the brand? (Yoo & MacInnis 2005)

Dislike * * * * * Like

Negative * * * * * Positive

Bad * * * * * Good

Unfavorable * * * * * Favorable

Next, you will be asked about your opinion about companies using cultural symbols of foreign cultures in advertising. Please choose the most appropriate option.

4. What is your opinion about companies borrowing/using cultural symbols of foreign cultures in their ads? (Mitchell et al. 1981, Yoo & MacInnis 2005)

Symbol is "a sign, shape or object that is used to represent something else" (Cambridge Dictionary 2020). Cultural symbols represent a specific culture. For example, the Statue of Liberty symbolizes the United States and a boomerang can be a symbol of Aboriginal Australians.

Bad * * * * * Good

Dislike * * * * * Like

Negative * * * * * Positive

Distasteful * * * * * Tasteful

Next, you will be asked about your perceptions of the ad and the brand. Please choose the most appropriate option.

5. Were there any cultural symbols in the ad? Please choose the most appropriate option.

Symbol is "a sign, shape or object that is used to represent something else" (Cambridge Dictionary 2020). Cultural symbols represent a specific culture. For example, the Statue of Liberty symbolizes the United States and a boomerang can be a symbol of Aboriginal Australians.

1. No cultural symbols at all.
2. Hardly any cultural symbols

3. Few cultural symbols
 4. No opinion
 5. Some cultural symbols
 6. Strong cultural symbols
 7. Very strong cultural symbols
-
6. If there were any cultural symbols were they from any other country than France (the country of origin of Élé de France)?
Yes
No
There were no cultural symbols.
-
7. If the symbols were from a different country, what was the country they were from? Please write the name of the country here.
-
8. Based on the ad what do you think is the country of origin of the company Élé de France?
France
Germany
Finland
China
USA
Japan
None of the above
-
9. Based on the ad to what extent you believe the company Élé de France is French?
Please choose the most appropriate option.
 1. Not French at all.
 2. Hardly French
 3. Slightly French

- 4. No opinion
 - 5. Moderately French
 - 6. Rather French
 - 7. Extremely French
-

Demographic questions

10. Sex

- Female
- Male
- Other

11. Age

- 18-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- 51-55
- 56-60
- 61+

12. Occupation

- Student
- Working student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired

13. Highest completed education

Basic education (Comprehensive school)

High school or equivalent

Bachelor's Degree (University)

Master's Degree (University)

Ph.D or higher (University)

14. Which country are you from?

Finland

Germany

Please leave questions or comments here if you have any. For example, was there something you did not understand or was something unclear?

Thank you for taking part in this survey!