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**INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN PROCESS ON MNCs: THE
MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING ON ADAPTATION AND
STANDARDIZATION STRATEGIES**

Master's Thesis in
International Business

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ABSTRACT

Globalization and complex competitive environments have led companies to internationalize goods, services and marketing campaigns. A lot of debate continue to arise in order to figure it out which is the best option between standardize or adapt an advertisement. Previous studies suggest that culture and globalization are the most influential factors on deciding the marketing strategy on advertising. Supporters of standardization take in consideration more the cost benefits and other economic advantages for the company meanwhile supporters of adaptation consider cultural differences and consumer tastes still too important to consider. Empirical and managerial relevant researches do not exist, thus, it is of importance to understand how a manager should decide to implement an international advertising campaign, focusing in particular on how the message should be created and internationalized by the company.

The present study analyzes the message creation strategy from six multinational corporations, beginning from the development of a new international advertising process based on the empirical results gathered. Findings suggest that none of the two strategies is better than the other one, since every companies' choice is made following goals and objectives of the marketing campaign itself, meaning that, one strategy is the best choice for a company when it fits the company's objectives. Indeed, the management decision-making on standardization and local adaptation is made balancing a range of factors that are influencing their decisions on the creation of the international message. Every strategy results to be different, nevertheless, a message creation model based on management decision-making on standardization and local adaptation, it was possible to make. This helps to give a better understanding on how managers plan to launch marketing advertising within an international contest. All the main factors affecting the decision-making process are finally presented and discussed.

KEYWORDS: International advertising campaign, Multinational corporations, Standardization, Local adaptation, Culture, Globalization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The knowledge for a customer about product and service, its usage, price and offers is possible when managers are using marketing advertising on their strategies (Manish Patidar, 2013). The author stated that “marketing communication and advertising are the means by which organizations attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products, services, or brands”. International advertising, is studying the differences and similarities in advertising across countries and it can be defined as a subfield in advertising and international marketing (L. Ha, M. Abuljadail & W. Jiang, 2014).

In 2012 an article titled “Global Advertising: Issues and Practices” written by Sandra Moriarty and Thomas Duncan, closely analyzed the direction of international advertising research towards the future. The authors observed that it was of importance to define global advertising in order to understand and exploit better this phenomena, which is continuing to increase. Moreover, they emphasized that recent researches were showing too much trade-off between the decision to standardize or to adapt a global advertising, while new authors should begin conceptualizing global advertising versus local advertising as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy, since the best option is not yet caught (C. R. Taylor, 2005).

These two concepts are defined within the international advertising campaign process as the two main strategies that a company can choose while implementing the global advertisement. Indeed, companies have to decide when and how a campaign message should be standardized between countries and when it should be not. Anyway, these decisions are made by managers considering relevant factors that may influence the choice between the two strategies.

This study is meant to look into the international advertising campaign process and to develop particularly the “message creation phase” on which management undertakes decisions between standardization and local adaptation of the campaign out of the national borders. During this study, the final scope will be to produce a managerially relevant research and a management tool, meant to understand how advertisers and managers decide to create the advertising message, what they consider and why these decisions.

1.1. Background of the study

The Newspaper Advertising Bureau’s 1984 Delphi study of advertising’s next quarter century reported that it would soon be a global business and worldwide television advertising will be soon possible by using international direct broadcasting from satellite (S. E. Moriarty & T. R. Duncan, 2012).

A long debate has always been on the two strategies that can be made when choosing the way to create an advertising message campaign. Harris (1994), a supporter of standardization, argued that a number of published discussions make it clear that international advertising standardization is *one policy option*, which many multinational companies should consider when determining how best to deploy their marketing resources and money.

And over again, Elinder (1965), Fatt (1967), Levitt (1974) argue that culture should not be considered as an obstacle in international advertising field, considering the communication of the new century and their homogenization among markets and costumers (Harris 1994). On the contrary, there are authors like Buzzell (1968), Ricks, Arpan, Fu (1974) and Reichel (1989) that consider national culture *the key of the effectiveness* in international advertising field (Harris 1994).

Culture indeed, it is defined by Zimmermann (2015) as “*the characteristic and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts*”. There are a lot of issues that may arise if management choose the wrong way to communicate a message and those two decisions should be balanced within the international advertising process in order to succeed abroad and persuade in the right way the international audience.

In a broad sense, the total standardization perspective emphasizes “*the trend towards the homogenization of markets, buyer’s behavior and the substantial benefits of standardization*”. In contrast, the total adaptation perspective stresses the “*persistent differences between nations and the competitive and regulatory necessity to customize marketing strategy to individual markets*” (Andrus, Norvell & Zou 1997). While many studies on globalization and cultural influence in international advertising are done, no conclusion are reached yet on this topic and more can be done to define the management strategy on creating a global advertisement (Harris 1994).

1.2. Justification of the project, Research gap, Research Question and Research objectives

A look at international advertising articles appearing in the “Journal Of Advertising” over the past 10 years (September 1994 through the summer of September 2004) indicates that all the international topics are increasingly studied in comparison to the past. What it is evident is that nowadays, in every countries, this topic is deeply recognized and studied. A lot of contributions are made but still a lot could be done to shape new arguments in the global advertising field and create new knowledge (Taylor, 2005)

Miracle (1984) looked that a particular contributions of international advertising research was made in four areas: *theory, practice, public policy and research methods*

(Taylor 2005). A key conclusion of his work was that, as a discipline, international advertising had not yet reached the point where scientific generalizations based on conclusions of multiple studies could be made. However, what can be recognized is that a lot of progress in these studies are continuously done but managerial work still are not yet defined (Charles R. Taylor 2005).

As it emerged before, research on the international advertising campaign process has been relatively scarce (Zou 2005; P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson, 2008) and managerial relevance is weak in this field of research, since most of the studies are merely theoretical and descriptive without considering the real process of internationalize marketing effort. As Miracle (1984) argued, *“there is a need for more systematic research that builds on prior studies and related need to build analytical models based on generalizations that can be made from a body of research.”*

Therefore, a lot of theories and academic researches are made but they are mainly based on deciding which is the best option for corporations, without considering relevant fact of the process that may differ from one company to another. Despite 40 years of debate on international marketing strategy between standardization and local adaptation, it is concluded that researches with an extent on empirical studies, are too fragmented to have a clear fathom insight (Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2002). There are not researches that are trying to understand *how* and *why* management is deciding to internationalize advertising and its process on deciding the best strategy to create a campaign, meaning that the majority of researches are not relevant for whom it may concern.

This study would focus on management perspective instead of customer perspective, in order to understand not anymore which strategy would be the best one for customers' final decision, but how is the management process on deciding the strategy within the creation of the message and which of these strategies is finally efficient.

A major gap in the literature instead is find out in the developing world cases of research, on understanding whether our current knowledge can be generalized to foreign companies and in other nations. Firms from developing countries assume an increasingly important role in international competition, since many of the fastest growing economies in the world can be found in these nations (Andrus, Norvell & Zou 1997). The reason why this study will be focus on management-decision making point of view, is made in order to be useful for whom it may concern an easiest perception of the two strategies to undertake instead to merely analyzed the countries' perspectives, in order to implement a tool that would be useful at a general level.

Earlier researches have proposed that steps are necessary in planning an advertising campaign (Davies 1993; De Mooij 1994; Parente, Bergh, Barban, & Marra, 1996; Peebles et al. 1978). However, researches that are considering empirical data instead of theoretical reviews, are still scarce in this field (P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson 2008), meaning that there is the possibility to cover a gap on this particular field of international advertising, studying again the advertising process created from new information, looking further into message creation step and defining the best way to exploit a strategy on it.

Moreover, as it is argued by Taylor (2005), there is a necessity to study this phenomena and construct managerial tools that are intended to be useful in the real working life. There has been a long debate on whether it is feasible to standardize advertising and which factors influences this decision for management. As this issue is still unsettled, it merits further researches.

Moving forward to the empirical test that would be made through this research, the possibility to have a sample made by different multinational corporations is a new fresh point of view, since almost all previous research has been conducted from a US-firm perspective while in this study is intended to use different companies' perspective (David M. Andrus and D. Wayne Norvell, Shaoming Zou 1997). Indeed, international

advertising research has been criticized for frequently focusing on advertising from North America, especially the United States, and Asian countries such as South Korea and China considering only opposite cultures and nations and creating theories too restricted (Zhang 2014). Basically, international advertising literature prevalently analyzes North American versus Asian countries, which it does not bring new useful knowledge to be implemented from management of different nations.

The purpose of this study, is to analytically determine how international campaigns are planned by management, on the specification of the decisions between standardization and local adaptation of advertisement in the message creation step of the process. This research indeed, wants to extend the knowledge on international advertising campaign process, specifically on the message creation phase, in order to understand how management decide to internationalize a campaign abroad, why they undertake that specific decision and its final effectiveness within countries.

Based on this, the following research question is derived:

How management on MNCs decides to implement an international advertising campaign message and why they make these decisions?

To answer to this research question there are a series of objectives that would help the researcher to answer the research question step by step. In order to answer the research question, the research objectives are derived. These latter are divided in theoretical and empirical objectives.

Theoretical objectives are define as follow:

- To review the existing literature related to international advertising campaign process in order to define the main steps of this process and create a general overview of it.
- To suggest a theoretical framework which represents the factors that might influence the campaign process and management decision-making and to understand their importance on international advertising field.

- To examine standardization and local adaptation as marketing strategies in order to understand their main pros and cons.

While empirical objectives are:

- To compare different companies' advertising campaign process in order to understand contemporary events, facts and effectiveness and to create a new model of it.
- To study the main possible strategies that management does in order to define how managers are deciding and what they are considering.
- To construct a management tool where decision-making process on the message phase is defined.

By following these objectives, this study will firstly create a theoretical framework that would help to understand the main facts influencing the management decision-making during the implementation of an advertising campaign and its process. After having in mind which are the events that may be of interest, the second step that would help to answer the research question is to analyze six different international companies in order to understand how they decide to create the message, in order to be able to create a strategic model of decisions that would help to understand the most efficient way to implement it on the international advertising process.

1.3. Delimitations

It is widely known in the past few years that studies in international advertising field are broadly made. Zinkhan (1994) observed that during the first 29 years of its publication, the "journal of advertising" published 29 articles on international advertising. These 29 papers "seem to represent the 16% of the papers published within the journal of advertising". As the author said, it is obvious from these numbers that a special importance on international advertising is acquired. A lot of studies are continuously

made but these results indicate a promising trend toward more empirical research using more sophisticated analytical techniques on international topics (Taylor 2005).

As it is argued before, since these studies are widely discussed, this research wants to analyze within the international advertising campaign process, the strategy that a company does, while is deciding to create an international promoting message. Indeed, this research would be limited on management decision-making process point of view, between standardization of the campaign and local adaptation of this latter.

Firstly, the theoretical framework wants to analyze the major factors that influence the management decision-making, therefore, within this part only culture and globalization effects would be defined and examined as the main factors affecting the decision-making process. This decision is made by the fact that these factors are necessary and important to understand, in order to be able to construct a strategic process for management. Advertising as a general field is not included in the theoretical framework, since is not necessary for responding to the research question. While the international advertising topic, the campaign process and the strategies are included in the research.

The study will be limited also on the study of multinational corporations derived from different business sectors, in order to understand how, in general for a different range of industries, management decision-making internationalizes its advertising campaign abroad. The idea is though reasoning on the fact that, if the research does not include different managerial models, the empirical results would be not enough reliable to create conclusion for every corporation. Hence, this study wants to understand how multinational corporations are used to create an international advertising campaign. Therefore, small and medium enterprises and global start-ups are not considered in the research. Moreover, only business to consumers companies are selected for the sample. The idea is though reasoning on the fact that the major advertising errors can arise from the consumers perspective, hence, the business to business corporations are not included in the sample of research.

Moreover, the companies should come from different countries, in order to analyze a more general framework that may be implemented for the most of the cases. As it is said before, almost all previous researches have been conducted from a US-firm perspective, so studying the management process from an international perspective without taking into account any special firm perspective, helps to understand the process in a general manner and from a new fresh point of view.

1.4. Main concepts and Definitions

The main concepts used in this study are summarized below:

ADVERTISEMENT - An advertisement can be defined as a way how a firm or other organizations can use communication directed to the customers and the broad society. The vehicle used for use the advertisement are tv, radio spots, paid spaces, billboards and press media (Economic Web Institute).

INTERNATIONAL - “A company works abroad involving more than one country on its business” (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus).

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION - “A multinational corporation is defined as an enterprise from one country (home) that is operating in several countries outside of the company’s national borders” (Business Dictionary).

STANDARDIZATION - “It is a strategy that a company may follow and can be seen as the process of making things of the same type having the same basic features “(Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus).

LOCAL ADAPTATION STRATEGY - It can be defined as a strategy that a company can follow when it is deciding to suit goods, services and marketing effort for different conditions in the world (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus).

MEDIA - One of the main way to share information about goods or services from the producer to the consumer, who is a potential buyer of that item (Katz, 2008).

GLOBALIZATION - It can be defined as a natural phenomenon that can happen in both cultures and markets side where all the international exchange of goods, services, technologies, capital and knowledge are interconnected and allows a synergy through specialization (Boundless Management).

CULTURE - "The beliefs, values, behavior and material objects that constitute a people's way of life; the arts, customs, and habits that characterize a particular society or nation". (Boundless Management).

1.5. Structure of the study

The idea is to divide the study in two major parts. Firstly, there should be an introductory chapter which it includes the background of the study, the research gap, the research question, the research objectives and the literature review. This latter, would be divided in other sub-chapters that are meant to explain: first of all, the general topic of international advertising and the international advertising campaign process on which the research is mainly starting. A focus would be done on the "message creation" step on which the research wants to achieve new answers and the "media phase" which is influencing the advertising message. Then, the role of globalization on international advertising and consequently, the first management strategy of standardization of the message will be made.

Secondly, the role of the culture is analyzed. This part will explain the importance of the customers' values and beliefs and the second management strategy of local adaptation of the message. The second main part presents the empirical research and results. Firstly, the research methodology would be explained. In this part there is also the justification of the research method used and the explanation of the data collection. Continuing, this chapter is followed by the empirical examination and findings which includes the analysis of the collected data.

Here, finally, there is the comparative examination of the sample cases and the results should be raised. The examination of the datas will bring the research to the creation of the “message creation process model” which is intended to be managerially useful on the decision-making phase. The study will finish with a summary of the key findings, the general contribution for the research, managerial implications, limitations of the research and research suggestions for future studied. Then, only references and possible appendices of the research will be make.

The whole structure of the study can be seen in figure 1.

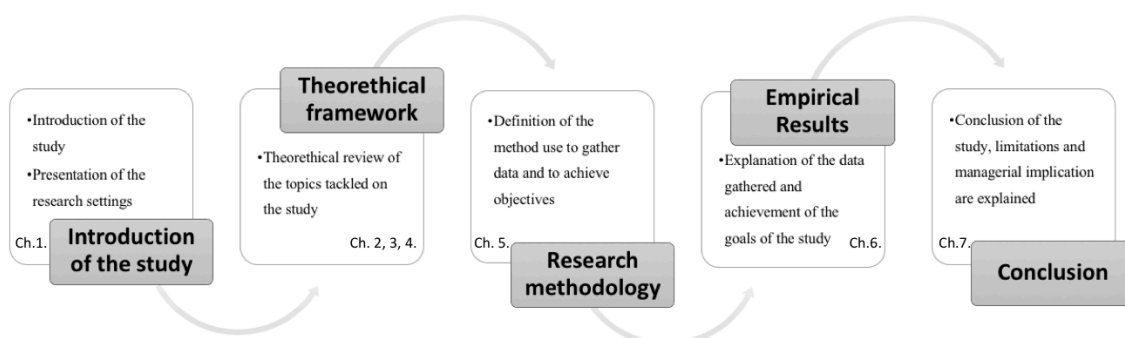


Figure 1. Structure of the study.

2. INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING

In order to develop a better understanding of international advertising, theory regarding this latter must be discussed. This chapter focuses in the definition of this subject in a theoretical manner followed by the presentation of the main theories on “International advertising campaign process” defined to understand how international campaigns are planned. Moreover, the explanation of the message content and its execution is explained and conceptualized. The media selection is finally considered, since the global marketing strategy, as it is explained later, is affected also by the media selection strategy.

2.1. Defining international advertising

Marketing communication and advertising is of vital importance in order to promote goods or services, even if a company is working within the national borders, marketing communication is essential for several reasons. Therefore, in order to inform customers about the existence or the development of a product, company needs to do marketing communication strategies. Nowadays communication can arrive everywhere and promotion campaigns reach worldwide audience and thus becomes cross-cultural communication. If in today’s global environment managers want to succeed, they must become proficient *cross-cultural communicators* (Munter, 1993).

The concept of internationalization for a firm has being described as the increment of the international involvement in new markets (P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson, 2008). During the past few years, companies started to do business abroad and some companies are global already when they are born. The globalization of markets lead to an homogenization and internationalization of products, brands and advertising. As the authors stated “in international markets the process of

communicating to a target audience, outside of the national borders, is more complex because communication takes place across multiple contexts, which differ in terms of language, literacy, and other cultural factors". That is why it becomes important to understand what is an international advertising, since it differs conceptually from the national advertising meaning and it considers different factors within the advertising plan (P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson, 2008).

As Douglas and Craig (2002) argued, in international advertising field, another element to consider is the usage of media. Media may differ in their effectiveness in carrying several appeals, since they could be different from one place to another. A message, may not arrived to the audience or a target people because they can not understand the content in the same way as another audience, therefore, may not directly arrived to the audience and people may not understand it (due to literacy problems), because they misinterpret the message by giving different meanings to the words or symbols used, or because they do not respond to the message due to a lack of income to purchase the advertised product. Media limitations also may differ too. They in fact, play an important role in the failure of a communication to reach its intended audience abroad. Another aspect to consider is that the advertising functions from country to country may also differ too, making different processes and results (Douglas & Craig, 2002).

Considering these factors, as it is stated by Douglas and Craig (2002) in a simplest way, international advertising implies the dissemination of a commercial message in more than one country direct to more than one target audience. These targets differ from one place to another in terms of how they perceive or interpret stimuli and symbols, respond to humor or emotional appeals as well as in levels of the language spoken.

The author continues to define international advertising viewing this latter as a *process of communication* that takes place in different cultures and countries that differs in *terms of values, communication styles, and consumption patterns*. In addition,

international advertising can be defined as a *business activity* involving advertisers and the advertising agencies that create ads and buy media in different countries.

The sum total of these activities constitutes a worldwide industry that is still growing in importance. International advertising is a major force that allows to share certain values worldwide reflecting social beliefs (Douglas & Craig 2002). As the authors Douglas and Craig (2002) stated, international advertising can also be defined as a business operation through which a firm attempts to offer products and services trying to inform an audience about the existence of the goods and persuade this latter to buy them in multiple countries.

Given the globalization effect, international advertising campaigns may imply a high level of standardization. Standardization is, however, often in contrast with the different cultures around the world. Standardized advertising does often not optimally fit with the cultures (Van Raaij 1996). Numerous publications related to international advertising campaign field have revealed at least three dominant perspectives, on international advertising field: *the total standardization perspective, the total adaptation perspective, and the contingency perspective* (Andrus & Norvell 2007).

Andrus and Norvell (2007) stated that in a broad sense, the complete standardization emphasizes the orientation of the markets and buyer's behavior towards an homogenization. In contrast, the total adaptation perspective reiterates "the persistent difference among countries and the competitive and regulatory need to customize marketing activities and strategies to specific markets". Finally, as the authors continue to argue, the contingency perspective is the usage of various degrees of standardization which are contingent on the internal organizational characteristics (goals, resources, commitment, and international experience) and external environmental forces (market demand, nature of product/industry, competitive pressure, government regulations, and technology). These international advertising perspectives are defined as the strategies

that a manager or the advertiser may undertake when is communicating with the international customers.

2.2. International advertising campaign process

Earlier researches have proposed that *steps* in implementing an international advertising campaign are necessary (Davies, 1993; De Mooij, 1994; Parente, Vanden Bergh, Barban, & Marra 1996; Peebles et al., 1978; P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson, 2008). Reviewing some of the already existing international advertising campaign processes, it can be cited the process created by Marguin (2015). The author, which is the head of research of Euronews, made six steps to implement a successful international communication campaign. The model is meant to develop a sort of “guide to international communications planning” on six phases. The campaign planning process can be seen to consist of the following main steps: *(1) Research market and media, (2) create an international media brief, (3) Position international media appropriately within the planning process, (4) Decide on single versus cross-platform, (5) Campaign execution, (6) Measure campaign success.*

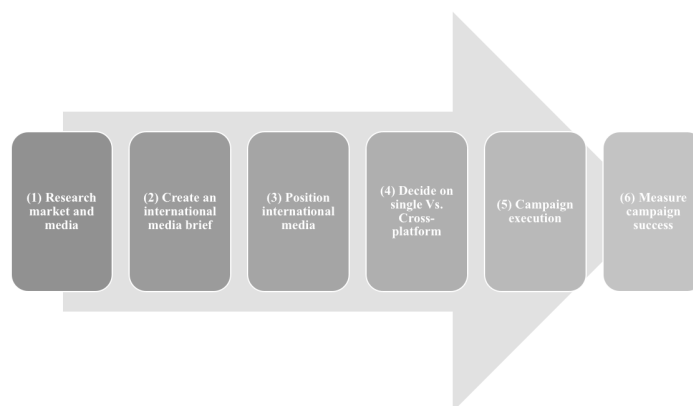


Figure 2. Six steps to implement a successful international communication campaign (Margin 2015).

As Marguin (2015) argued that company needs to use international advertising campaign if it wants to exploit in the best way company's values and objectives for a global target audience. The model starts with the analysis of the best media option for launching the international advertising campaign. As the author explained, the audience measurement and the analysis of which is the best international media channel for every country for reaching a specific target audience, *is essential* to achieve the desired results.

The second step is made in order to invest time in writing a clear media brief that summarizes the communications strategy, objectives and budget spend. It should include: *detailed background to the campaign including information on the client, product and positioning, competitors and previous advertising history; target audience; business and marketing objectives; priority countries and regions; preferred media platforms and any that should be disregarded; creative/content requirements; campaign timing; key performance indicators* (Margin, 2015).

For the author, it is of importance to include the specification of how is intended to achieve goals and objectives of the international campaign. The relevance of this part is to clearly create a project planning in order to avoid waste of time, costs and work. When the planning phase of the international advertising is confirmed and after having identified the best international media channels to effectively reach the target audience with the marketing campaign, the author suggests to plan the advertising on a local level in order to add market-specific elements to the international advertising campaigns and get the best from one country to another.

This can be reasoned from the fact that a strong unified message for the core international campaigns enhanced with geographically-tailored components can build even greater relevance world wide. At this stage, it is the moment to decide between standardization or local adaptation of the international advertising across countries.

“Reached this phase, the campaign may be finally executed, the creative material will be produced either by a creative agency, the advertiser or by the in-house creative team of the media owner so that everything is in place for the campaign launch” (Margin, 2015). The final step defined by the author is to measure the success of the advertisement. The best way of defining the success it is suggested to be through consumer surveys. This is reasoned from the fact that consumer surveys enable advertisers *to ask people about all the media channels they consume, as well as about the audience itself, its lifestyle habits and product choices*. So, advertisers can identify audience response such as changes in brand awareness, brand attributes and favorability. As with anything in marketing, the key is to test and learn as is going so that the company can be better informed and prepared for the next campaign.

Craig (2002), also supports that the process of communication in international markets involves a number of steps. First, the advertiser determines the appropriate message for the target audience. Next, the message is encoded so that it will be clearly understood in different cultural contexts. The message is then sent through media channels to the audience who then decodes and reacts to the message. At each stage in the process, cultural barriers may hamper effective transmission of the message and result in miscommunication.

It is important to take care about the codification of the message, since it is the core part for a winning international advertising. In addition, the message has to be encoded in order to attract the attention of the target audience and have more chances that the message is correctly interpreted from them. Advertisers need to select then media channels that reach the intended target audience. For example, use of TV advertising may only reach a relatively select audience in certain countries. Equally, print media will not be effective where there are low levels of literacy. Certain media may also be more effective in certain cultures while within national borders is different. For example, radio advertising has substantial appeal in South America where popular music is a key aspect of the local culture but may not be the same in other countries.

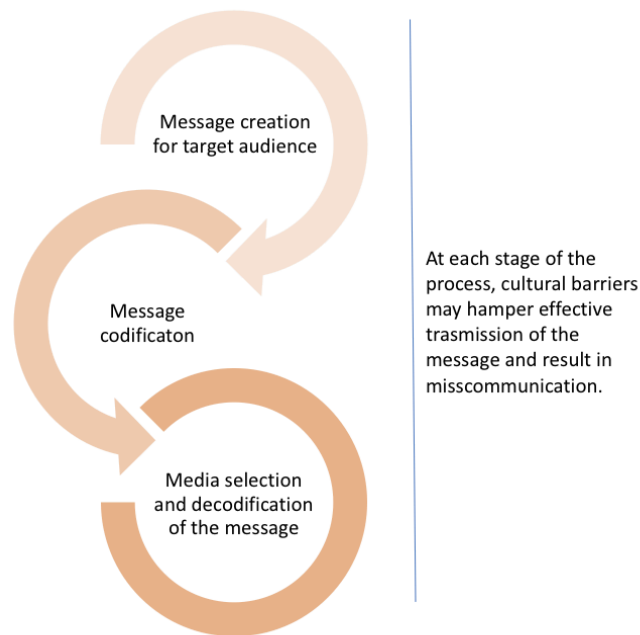


Figure 3. Process of communication in international markets (Craig 2002).

Continuing, also Gabriellson et. al. (2008) implemented an advertising campaign process on their article too. Based on their researches, the process can be seen on five main steps: (1) *marketing communication strategy and objectives setting*, (2) *budget decisions*, (3) *message creation and determination of the standardization alternative*, (4) *media decisions*, and (5) *implementation and evaluation*. This model is completed with the addition of some factors that influence the international campaign process and its execution. The factors affecting advertising campaign planning can be divided into: *the external factors of the company*, *the internationalization stage of the company*, *internal strategy*, *standardization levers*, *and resources*, and *factors related to the advertising agency*.

The model starts with the marketing communication strategy and objectives. The first stage to complete, is to clearly understand which are the goals to achieve with the international advertising campaign. The idea is to have firstly a strategic plan on how to

communicate with the audience. Then, the second important thing is to define budget decision. This change on the activities considered and also the target, specifically: consumers or business target. After defining the budget to spend on the campaign, the message creation could be made. Advertising agencies are often selected for an extended period and then used for a number of campaigns. Hence, agency selection is not shown as a separate step in the process. On this step, company decides if the message may be standardized between countries or not. Managers have to pay attention on this phase, if the message is wrong the company's reputation may be threatened.

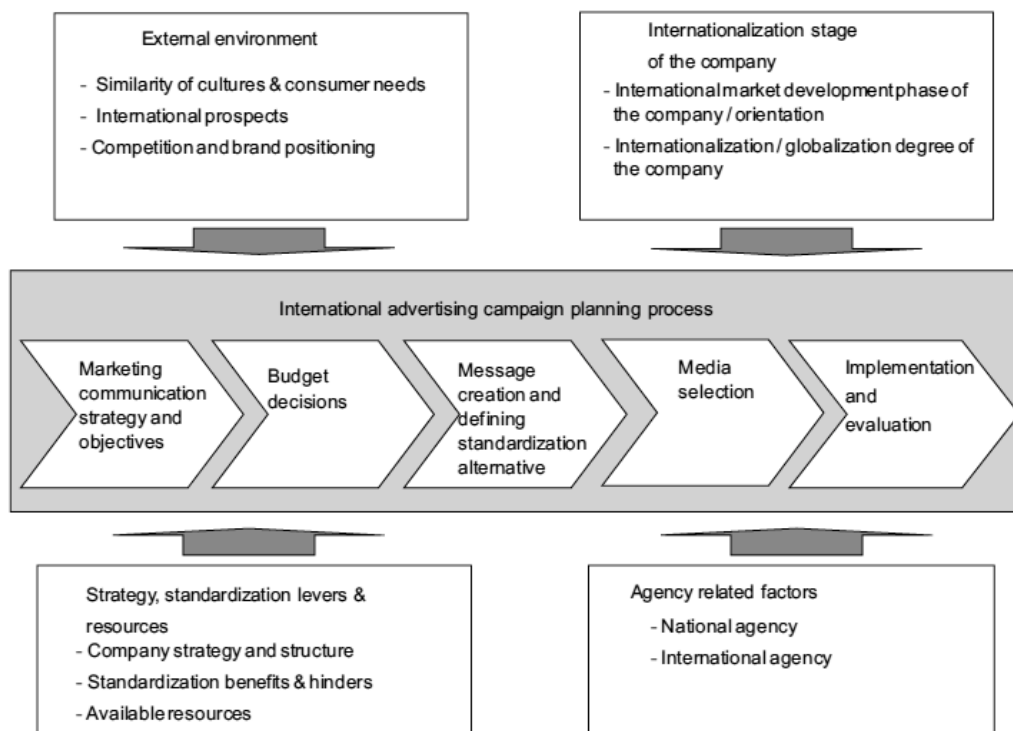


Figure 4. Framework for the international campaign planning process (P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson (2008).

In media selection step there is the possibility to variate the number of media selected and also the type of channel. This mostly depends on the country's usage of channels

and the audience target. Finally, when the message is created, the international campaign can be implemented and launched. On the last phase there is the evaluation of the success of the campaign. As it is said before, the evaluation of the campaign is very important in order to understand what went wrong and what was not. Several factors influence this process. What it is discovered by this article is that the degree of internationalization of the company influences the campaign process. It was found by the authors that on the earlier stage of internationalization, companies used to be more standardized. On the internationalization phase instead, it was founded that companies used to be more local adapted and localized advertising strategies. About companies that are developed and more international emerged that companies' strategies are more standardized.

2.3. Content and execution in advertising message

The creation of the advertising message content is one significant phase of the entire advertising planning process. There are multiple ways of convey an advertising message. However, an advertising message design is not an isolated process. It derives from the creative idea of the company but takes into account the media channel and its part in the wider integrated communication (Clow & Baack, 2001: 298). The definition of the nature and the form of the message needs to be done. Before the advertising execution, the advertising campaign needs to be translated from the creative idea and strategy. This translation needs to convince the customer and thus, not focus only on the seller objectives. Knowing the target audience is essential for encoding and decoding the message and creating the right one for the right people (De Pelsmacker et al., 2013).

An abstract conceptualization for defining what it is an advertising message is stated from Mueller (2011) who describes advertising message strategy as "*what is said*" in the advertising campaign whereas execution is "*how it is said*". Creative idea is the first step in the process towards advertising strategy and execution. The imaginative concept

designed for the advertisement and defining the creative solution. Several execution strategies, formats and appeals are used in order to share the idea to the final audience. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2013). The execution stage is fundamental because is the part that enable the creative idea and it makes possible is sharing. The idea can be executed in various ways and can contain various information but should take in consideration the various targets spread around the world.

In general, information in advertisements can be (1) *about the brand, brand attributes, benefits, users, or usage situation*; (2) *cognitive, emotional or subconscious*; and (3) *context information, including consumers' past experience* (MacInnis, Moorman & Jaworski 1991; Vakratsas & Ambler 1999; Anderson, Ciliberto & Liaukontye. 2012). As the authors Anderson et. al. (2012) distinguish, the firms has to do a trade-off between two types of advertisement content: *persuasion* and *information*. Since the advertisement has a limited amount of time, firm has to balance time to use to provide information about the goods/services and brand and the time used to persuade consumers to buy the brand through channels other than objective information.

Moreover, every type of advertising can be efficient in one country but not in others. Indeed, companies need to understand where the message could be standardized from one country to another and where it could be not. This fact, requires several adjustment of the message idea considering the different customers around the world. Anderson, Ciliberto and Liaukontye (2012) argued that there are a series of events that may arise considering the effectiveness of the message. First, *"the larger brands benefit less than smaller brands, from providing information, because they are already well known and have higher advertising goodwill and brand equity"* (Simon, 1993, Dekimpe and Hanssens, 1995; Andersson et al., 2012).

In other words, the incremental benefit is smaller when consumers are already more aware of features of commonly used products. The authors argue another fact: *"brands with a higher market share of generic substitute will have less informative advertising*

content than brands with lower generic market share". Thus, the content of the advertising should change in presence of possible product substitute.

Another assumption concerned is: *"if the market consists of branded and generic products, then each generic product corresponds to a particular brand, i.e. is the closest substitute for that brand"*. Therefore, informative advertisements can also increase demand for the generic products as long as consumer is aware that there are a lot of shared attributes between the branded product and its generic counterpart. Hence, when a company is providing a lot of information about the quality of its product, it is also providing free advertising for generic products (Simon, 1993, Dekimpe & Hanssens, 1995; Andersson et al., 2012).

The content of an advertising may change also considering intrinsic characteristics of a product. *Brands with higher levels of quality (on each of the quality dimensions for which we have data) will include more information cues in their advertisements.* (Simon, 1993, Dekimpe & Hanssens, 1995; Andersson et al., 2012). As the authors argue, when there are characteristics which are important to consumers are more likely to be communicated on an advertising, and additional strength in any particular cue will raise its relative information benefits and also make it more likely to be included in the advertisement.

The execution of an advertising instead, can be defined as the way a strategic idea is turned into a message and how that message is communicated to the final audience (Tuten 2014). There are several types of execution and they may be also combined through each other. For instance, an advertising may be: a demonstrations, comparisons, straight sell/problem solutions (functional), scientific/technical evidence, slice of life, spokesperson, testimonial and others like animation, personality symbols, fantasy and dramatization (Tuten 2014).

Chopra (2014) has stated that, “a demonstration execution defines the key advantages of the product or the service by showing them on usage or in a particular staged situation”. This type of content can be effective on persuading the consumer about the product’s utility, benefits and quality. Comparison advertising instead, “involves a real comparison, that can be direct or indirect, between the product brand against the competitors. A slice of life basically depicts people in their routine and normal settings. Usually, the spot is based on problem/solution type of format. An example may be an advertising scene made in a car, in a dinner table, and so on”.

Chopra (2014) continued to argue that testimonial advertising is applied with the usage of a testimonial that is describing his/her personal experience with the good or service. Usually, an advertisement can be characterized by a person speaking and describing the experience. Animation, is the advertising made by the usage of animated characters or scenes drawn by the computer while personality symbols advertising involved a central character that is delivering the marketing communication message. A character like that can take the form of a spokesperson, animated character or an animal.

Dramatization spot creates a suspenseful situation as the form of a short story. This type of advertising uses the problem/situation strategy approach defining how the product or the service may help a consumer on a particular situation (Chopra, 2014). All of these types of executions may be combined to each other creating a unique marketing campaign. What it has to be checked is the advertising’s effectiveness in a global scale, if the global customers react in a different way and if they can be persuade with the same message.

Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) identified that exist four verbal communication styles; *direct versus indirect, elaborative versus succinct, personal versus contextual, and instrumental versus affective*. In direct style of communication intentions are explicitly expressed on the advertisement whereas in indirect style of communication the intensions are embedded in a message. Elaborative versus succinct verbal style

includes three verbal styles; *elaborative* (use of rich expressive language), *exacting* (only required information is given), and *succinct* (use of understatements, pauses, and silences). They identify verbal personal style as *the individual-centered language and enhance the personal identity and orientation* whereas contextual style is *the role-centered language emphasizing the context-related identity*. Finally, sender-oriented instrumental style is seen as goal oriented approach. On the contrary affective verbal style is receiver and process oriented (Sofia Kivinen 2014).

2.4. Media placement

The media play a very important role in international advertising and its selection is crucial to gain success on promoting goods and services. Moreover, the media selection step influences the message creation phase since the different channels can communicate in different way the marketing message. With media everyone can see what has been happening in the world. Media help fulfill two basic needs —they *inform* and they *entertain* (Katz 2008: 2). As the author stated, the world of media can be very broadly divided into two types: *print* and *electronic*. Print media may be defined as *magazines* and *newspapers*, whereas electronic media cover *radio*, *television* and the *Internet*. Other media types are not quite as easily categorized.

Basically, they could be classified as follow:

1) Print media

- Magazines – Consumers, Farm, Business,
- Newspapers – National, Local
- Outdoor billboards
- Yellow pages
- Direct mail

2) Eletronic media

- Television – Broadcast, Cable, Syndication, Spot
- Radio – Network, Local
- Internet

Figure 5. Major Print and Electronic Media (Katz 2008: 3).

In the business world, the selection of the media is of major importance. When a company is deciding how to advertise its goods or services, a media can be seen as a way to transfer and convey information about goods or services from the producer to the consumer, who is a potential buyer of that item (Katz 2008: 4). There are various ways to accomplish that in business besides using radio, television, or magazines. Product or company publicity, sales brochures, or exhibits can all be useful ways of conveying information to potential buyers.

When managers want to promote goods internationally, they have to take into account that the usage of media may differ from one place to another. Media, indeed, may be standardized or adapted as well. Katz (2008: 7) has reported that the broad field of media can be broken down into three primary parts:

- *Planning how best to use media to convey the advertising message to the target consumer (the media planner).*
- *Buying media space and time for the message (the media buyer).*
- *Selling that space or time to the advertiser (the media seller).*

As the author explains, most large companies handle the media planning and buying functions through an advertising agency. The task of the media planner is to consider all of the marketing information available on the product and use that information to determine how best to reach the target audience through advertising media. In order to sell anything companies first have a product or service. Moreover, they have to decide how much they need to charge for it (the price) so in order to make a profit.

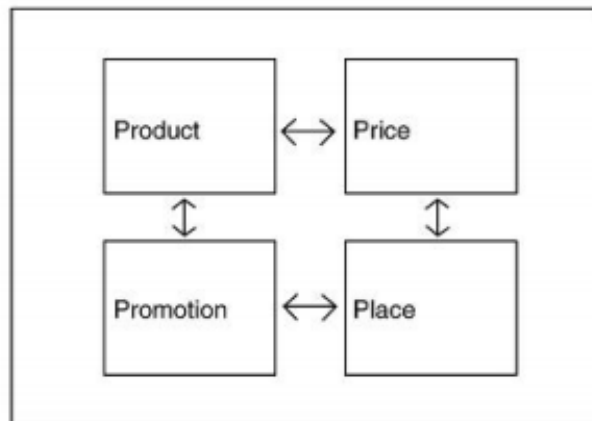


Figure 6. The marketing mix by Jerome McCarthy (1975).

Looking into the marketing mix, companies must also figure out how and where the product will be made available to people (place, or distribution). And last, but not least, companies have to consider how they will let potential buyers know what they are offering (promotion). Within this latter, as it is mentioned before, there are several key channels of communication: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, event marketing, and publicity. All can be thought of as media, or ways that companies can use to conveying information to the potential customers (Katz, 2008: 10). These four elements work together in what is defined as the marketing mix, presented in the *figure 6* up here. It is of importance to consider also the media plan within the advertising process since as it is said, it is of relevance in order to catch the most consumers that a company can get from the market. The task of the media planner and managers is to evaluate how to best reach the customers' target using advertising media as a way to catch the attention of the consumers and to share all the information available on the product in order to give the best chance to the company to be noticed more then other competitors. In this way, the media plan can be thought of as *the pivot point, or hub*, of the overall marketing and advertising plan (Katz 2008).

3. MAIN FACTORS AFFECTING ADVERTISING

This chapter aims to analyze the main factors that are affecting the international advertising planning process. As it is previously mentioned on the background of the study, supporters of standardization strategy are convinced that the consumers are homogeneous all over the world, so standardization is the best strategy to reduce costs and arise benefits. Meanwhile, supporters of adaptation strategy are convinced that cultural differences are still existing and should be taken in consideration in order to create the right message for every type of consumer. The goals of this chapter are to understand the two main general factors that may affect the management decision-making on implementing the strategy and their importance to be considered within the international advertising campaign process.

3.1. Conceptualizing Globalization

As it is mentioned before, the globalization of markets leads to homogenization of products, brands and advertising (Van Raaij 1996). One aspect of globalization is also the *convergence of income, media and technology, which in turn is expected to lead to homogeneous consumer behavior* (De Mooij 2003). Globalization, on the last century, deeply influenced the way of thinking of people, entrepreneurs and customers. This phenomena, in general, brings to an homogenization of consumer needs, tastes and lifestyles. As it is stated by Levitt (1983) “new technology would lead to homogenization of consumer wants and needs because consumers were expected to prefer standard products of high quality and low price”.

Globalization in the broadest sense is defined by Robertson (1990) as “*the concrete structuration of the world as a whole*”. For example, the creation of the concept of the ‘global teenager’ as all the teenagers that possess similar values even if they come from

different country of the world was born with the increase usage of cross-border music channels such as MTV, increased travel, and global communications (Assael 1998; Marieke De Mooij 2003). Choices between local or global need to be done considering the global marketing operations. Decisions depend on the different benefits that a company wants to achieve, taking the economic benefits of standardization production or accommodating local consumer need and habits for greater effectiveness. When companies decide to go global considering the customer as equal all over the world, they are defined as *production driven*, not people driven. In globalization mentality, *companies talk about products, brands and market, not people* (Marieke De Mooij 2014).

3.2. Why globalization influences international advertising process

“Global advertising campaigns may be formally or functionally equivalent (Przeworski & Teune, 1967; Poortinga, 1989; Van Raaij 1996). Formal equivalence means a complete standardization with identical campaigns in different cultures. Examples are Coca-Cola campaigns in American English language, even used in non-English cultures. Functional equivalence means that campaigns may have an identical mission or communication objective, but employ different concepts and executions to convey the same message” (Van Raaij 1996).

Advertisers in a global scenario take great pains to try to understand all the cultures and subcultures around the world. From the company’s home culture to the others, there may be a lot of differences that managers should evaluate if consider or not, while creating the advertisement. Many advertisers could decide to avoid to think about all of these differences and decide that one standard message may be sufficient and beneficial for the global consumer. The standardization strategy is defined as closer to the corporate culture rather than the markets’ culture and nations (Van Raaij 1996).

Many global advertisers are not market oriented; they are product oriented, avoiding to consider the customer needs but more the product potential in a global scale (De Mooij 2014). As the first phenomena of globalization brings standardize products and services, many advertisers could take the same strategy and try to catch the global customer around the world with the same marketing message that may be launched in the home market.

Of course this type of strategy is followed by a stream of benefits that globalization started to bring for businesses from the beginning. The globalization phenomena helps in cost saving for the company, which is the main reason why company may decide to standardize international strategies. As De Mooij (2014) stated however, in reality, “the cost of developing one great idea that truly crosses every borders is very high”. As the author continue to explain, “this type of strategy, as the most of the decisions undertaken in a multinational corporation, has to get the consensus by product managers, marketing managers, country managers, advertising managers, account supervisors, account directors and creative directors of advertising agencies and the like in various countries, all for the same great idea”.

Moreover, it appears that even if the globalization phenomena is the first main reason of the beginning of the standardization concept in international advertising field, it seems that many adaptations are still needed. The same author explains that “voice-overs or subtitles have to be made, pack shots must be changed and texts have to be translated, adapted or rewritten. More, slogan developed for global use have to be translated and in the end, some translations appear to include great changes of the meaning influenced by the culture”. The author stated that people of different countries speak different languages, and those languages represent different world views. Translation do not uncover the different world. However, the result of globalization brought global flow of capital, technology, media as well as changes in human behavior.

As De Mooij (2014) described, nowadays, levels of world trade are much higher than ever before and involve a much wider range of goods and services than it used to in the past. This influences the advertisers' point of view on doing business and strategy. Standardize advertising are expected to mould consumers into one global consumer culture in order to manage the huge flow of goods, services and informations that globalization brought.

What can be stated is that globalization influences in marketing are dominated by Anglo-Saxon authors. As a result, many of the most visible expressions mentioned as examples are Coca-Cola, McDonald's or Starbuck's. During 1980s when the globalization discussion started, the United States penetration of global markets was particularly aggressive and visible, stated Harvard professor John Quelch (2003). As a result, someone view globalization as "americanization" since most of the companies where American.

De Mooij (2014) has reported that the higher level of homogeneous global segments across borders is one of the main reason and precondition of the standardization strategy. Advertisers that want to follow this strategy are usually searching "*global communities*" or "*global tribes*" where it is easiest to standardize messages and create a marketing idea, focusing on similarities between people.

3.3. The meaning of culture

Culture is one of the main factors that explains why companies are adapting locally international advertisements. Culture is a notoriously difficult term to define (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). It is defined as "the characteristic and knowledge of a particular group of people, characterized by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts" (Zimmermann 2015). Hofstede (1980), has stated that "culture pervades our daily lives through the products we use, the buildings we live in, and the television

programs we watch”. It is also defined by the same author as “the *collective programming of the mind*, the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human's group response to the environment”.

The majority of these definitions previously made, argued that culture is something that is shared by a group of people that agreed with the same ideals, values and habits. Culture differ from one place to another, creating unique places and for this reason, it may creates barriers on international advertising process.

Some countries are really closed to each other, others instead, completely differ, leaving space to uncertainty and confusion. All of these commonalities are being transferred from generation upon generation, it can be from parents to their children or simply from the community. Culture may change, everything may be taught but not learned from people, but at the deepest level, i.e. the level of values, cultures may change only slowly.

Culture can be defined as Hofstede (2005) explained on the theory of “*The Onion Model of culture*”. The Onion Model of Culture shows how culture has a number of layers. There are a number of interpretations of this model but the simplest one consists of four key layers (Maclachlan 2010). He distinguished four layers, when describing culture.

On the deepest level of a culture there are *values*, which have been defined by him as “broad preferences for one state of affairs over others to which strong emotions are attached and by which one group distinguishes itself from other groups.” Values refer to such preferences as freedom over equality or equality over freedom. Going outer, there are *rituals* and *traditions*. This could include how people greet each other, eat meals, get married or practice their religion (Maclachlan 2010).

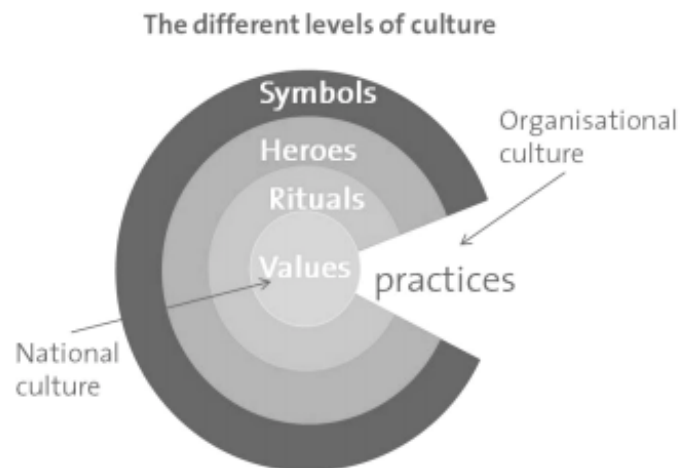


Figure 7. The onion: Manifestations of culture at different levels of depth (Hofstede 2005: 7).

Heroes instead are meant to explain culture of a nation thanks to their myth that did the history of the country. Heroes tend to represent many of the values and beliefs that characterize a country. The outermost part of the onion is defined by *symbols*. Symbols are meant to define *architectural style, traditional clothes of the country*. Those symbols are the most visible and recognizable from the others. Moreover, symbols, heroes and rituals are defined by the author as practices since they are the visible part of a culture. These parts are the surface of the onion because are the most amendable parts of the culture, from generation to generation and from a culture to another (Hofstede 2005: 7).

Symbols and heroes in international advertising field are very important to consider for an advertiser since they change from one culture to another and they can bring disruption and misfortune when launched in another country outside of national borders. Heroes are a big part of a culture because they are seen as role models by the members of a certain culture, thus affect even the values in a culture. Heroes can be real life persons or imaginary ones and they create characteristics that are prized in a culture. Rituals are for example the ways of greeting or ceremonies in a culture. They are

considered as an essential part of a culture and are implemented for their own sake. (De Mooij 2005: 37-38, Hofstede 2005: 7-8)

Values are found in the centre of the onion because they present the core of a culture that cannot be easily seen by outsiders. Also to the members of a culture the core values can sometimes be difficult to observe because people are not consciously aware of them. Values are acquired already in a very early part of our lives in an unconscious way. It is self-evident that values affect the way advertising is interpreted in a culture by its members and so affect also the dilemma of adaptation and standardization (De Mooij 2005: 38-39, Hofstede 2005: 8).

The functions of culture are to provide meaning, communality, norms, values, and symbolism to people, and to regulate their behavior. grants are educated and socialized to become part of the dominant culture. Ideology and religion may be part of a culture, and influence culture as well. Culture is interactive and it influences language, communication, products, behavior patterns, and is influenced by these factors (Van Raaij 1996).

Another definition was made by Schein (1990) which in analyzing the culture of a particular group or organization distinguished three specific levels at which culture manifests itself: *(a) observable artifacts, (b) values and (c) basic underlying assumptions*. Observable artifacts are defined as all the observable acts that an individual can see while entering into a group. This category includes everything from the physical layout, the dress code, the manner in which people address each other, the smell and feel of the place, its emotional intensity, and other phenomena, to the more permanent archival manifestations such as company records, products, statements of philosophy, and annual reports (Schein 1990: 111).

The second level defined by the author are values, that are considered as the way a group of human behavior is acting and consider to be right. Values may be visible or

may be not, it is however hard to clearly understand them without entering in contact with these individuals. To really understand a culture and to ascertain more completely the group's values and over behavior, it is imperative to delve into the underlying assumptions, which are typically unconscious but which actually determine how group members perceive, think and feel (Spencer-Oatey, H. 2012). This represents the third level of cultural manifestation.

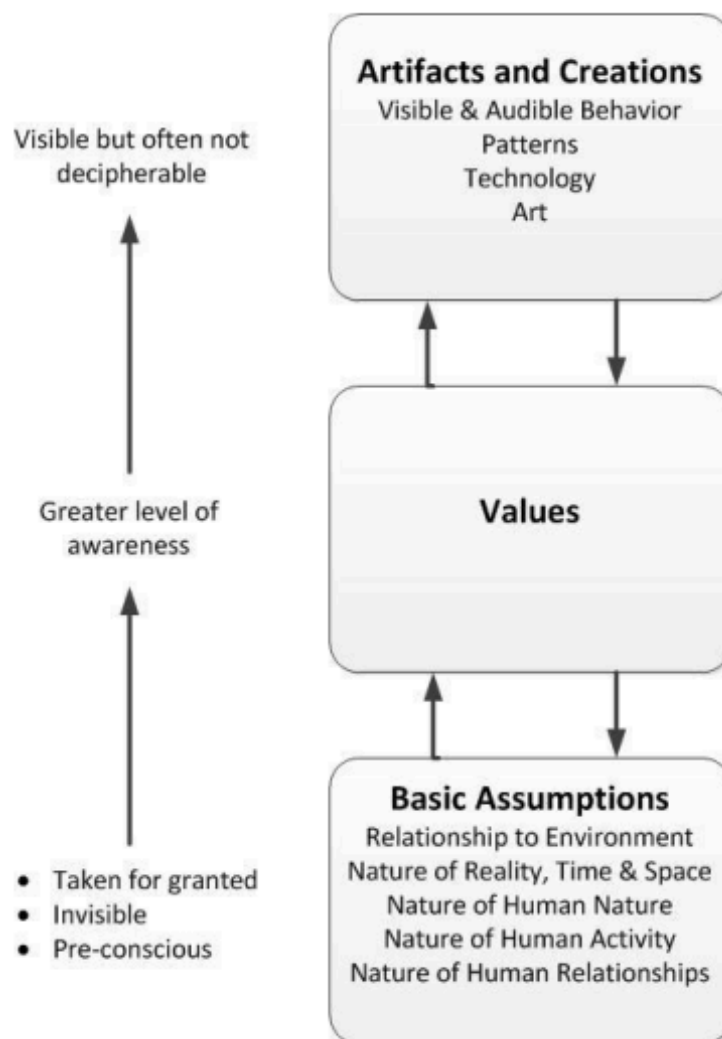


Figure 8. The Levels of Culture & their Interaction (Schein, 1984: 4)

3.4. Dimensions of Culture

When internationalizing, companies want to know to what extent host markets are different from the home market. Experience in a few different countries or language skills are not enough. For global marketing, sometimes there is the need to understand the differences among cultures (De Mooij 2014). In the past 25 years, a lot of theories were developing a classification of the cultures in order to easily understand the main differences and similarities and used that for various management's aim. Some of these may be applied in understanding customers' behavior and communication, in order to develop the best advertising. Cultural differences have to be measured and documented (De Mooij 2014).

As it is known, cultures differ and there could be some ways to gather cultures in dimensions and clusters. In international advertising field it is quite important to know those dimensions because it helps managers and advertiser to classify countries for characteristics and ethics. One of the first author where are clearly explained those dimensions is Hofstede. The Hofstede model is defining cultures according to dimensions: *power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-/short-term orientation*. This model provides scales from 0 to 100 for 76 countries for each dimension, and each country has a position on each scale or index, relative to other countries. This model was originally implemented on 1970, many replications of Hofstede's study on different samples are done confirming that his model can be considered still valid (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

The power distance dimension can be defined as "*the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally*". In high power distance cultures, it is clear the hierarchy on the society between individuals. In these types of societies the distance between people is respected and the authority to people is given naturally. Usually, older people is respected on high power cultures whereas low power distance cultures older people want to look younger. Advertising in

high and low power distance countries is different because the goals differ between them. For example in a high power culture a company wants to get their brand as a number one brand in the country but in a low power culture challenger brands are often favored. (De Mooij 2005: 60)

Individualism and collectivism dimensions instead can be defined as “*people looking after themselves and their immediate family only, versus people belonging to in-groups that look after them in exchange for loyalty*”. Hofstede explains that an individualistic culture is the one where the individual’s identity is the own person. More precisely, People are ‘I’-conscious and self-actualization is important. Individualistic cultures are universalistic, assuming their values are valid for the whole world. They also are low-context communication cultures with explicit verbal communication. In collectivistic cultures, people are ‘we’-conscious. Their identity is based on the social system to which they belong, and avoiding loss of face is important. Collectivistic cultures are high-context communication cultures, with an indirect style of communication (De Mooij & Hofstede 2010).

Masculinity/Femininity dimensions are defined by the author as followed: “*The dominant values in a masculine society are achievement and success; the dominant values in a feminine society are caring for others and quality of life.*” In a masculine society achievement and success are highly valued whereas in a feminine society caring for others and quality of life are found very important.

In masculine societies men are supposed to be tough and focused on material success whereas women should be modest and tender. In feminine societies both women and men are supposed to be modest and tender. In a masculine society the members tend to think the bigger and the faster the better. On the other hand in a feminine society small is beautiful and the society is more people oriented. Feminine cultures appreciate modesty and no one should brag about their success. (De Mooij 2005: 65-67, Hofstede 2005: 120)

Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as “*the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid these situations*”. People of high uncertainty avoidance are less open to change and innovation than people of low uncertainty avoidance cultures. This explains differences in the adoption of innovations (Yaveroglu & Donthu 2002; Yeniurt & Townsend 2003; Tellis et al. 2003; De Mooij & Hofstede 2010).

Long- versus short-term orientation is “*the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-orientated perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view*”. This fifth dimension was finally added by the author later thanks to Hofstede’s study in co-operation with Chinese scholars. Values included in long-term orientation are perseverance, ordering relationships by status, thrift, and having a sense of shame. The opposite is short-term orientation, which includes personal steadiness and stability, and respect for tradition (De Mooij and Hofstede 2010).

Another theory that divides culture in dimensions might be the “Values Orientation Theory” (1961) by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s. This theory proposes that all human societies must answer to a limited number of universal problems, that the value based solutions are limited in number and universally known, but that different cultures have different preferences among them (Hills 1998). Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) developed a theory which put these principles into action. They started with three basic assumptions:

- *"There is a limited number of common human problems for which all peoples must at all times find some solution"*.
- *"While there is variability in solutions of all the problems, it is neither limitless nor random but is definitely variable within a range of possible solutions"*.
- *"All alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times but are differentially preferred"*.

The authors suggested that the solutions given by societies for these problems reflect that society's values. They suggested five basic types of problem to be solved by every society. Considering these type of problems a culture can be defined and shaped.

- *On what aspect of time should they primarily focus – past, present or future?*
- *What is the relationship between Humanity and its natural environment – mastery, submission or harmony?*
- *How should individuals relate with others – hierarchically (which they called "Lineal"), as equals ("Collateral"), or according to their individual merit?*
- *What is the prime motivation for behavior – to express one's self ("Being"), to grow ("Being-in-becoming"), or to achieve?*
- *What is the nature of human nature – good, bad ("Evil") or a mixture?*

3.5. The role of culture in international advertising

In 2000, the declination of profitability brought the Coca-Cola company to move closer to local markets. Coca-Cola's CEO was quoted in the Financial Times (27 March 2000) as stating that *"We kept standardizing our practices, while local sensitivity had become absolutely essential to success."* Coca-Cola's marketing chief stated that the firm's *'big successes have come from markets where we read the consumer psyche every day and adjust the marketing model every day'* (Byrnes 2000; De Mooij 2003).

Muller (1987: 52) stated that advertising is referring to any message that is directed to the customers in order to catch they attention and motivate them to buy those goods and services promoted in the message itself. The advertising may catch attention to customers that do not even need a product but they are brought to buy it just because of the right advertising message. Many researchers have examined advertising from a single culture or country from the past until these days. One of the most recent works

underlying reasoning of this stream of research on this field, concluding that when an advertising is reflecting cultural values on the message, the advertisers should prefer adaptation strategy instead of standardization (Saleem 2016). As it can be seen from the last author mentioned, recent years have seen increasing interest in the consequences of culture for global marketing and advertising, meaning that culture, is still important on creating an advertising message.

Following the same ideals, many researches point out that there is a need to adapt marketing strategies to the culture of the customers. Recently studies have demonstrated that an adaptation strategy is more effective on advertising than standardization (Dow 2005; Calantone et al., 2006; Okazaki et al., 2006; Wong & Merrilees, 2007).

As it is previously explained, culture may be classified by different dimensions and models on which Hofstede model is the most used. In advertising, the relevance of cultural aspects is seriously relevant since without considerations of these aspects, marketing efforts may be waste.

Pollay (1983) defined advertising as a “*carrier of cultural values*” and argued that advertisers work on shuffling these values in a way that creates a linkage between consumer values and the product or service. Hence, values are of relevance in order to sell products and “advertisers frequently use, reinforce, endorse and glamorize some of the consumer values in advertising in order to help move the commodities” (Pollay, Gallagher 1990). In a nutshell, the ability to understand consumers values and reporting these last into advertising is of essential importance in order to persuade different customers. Many companies started to centralize operations and marketing strategies ignoring the cultural differences and instead of increasing efficiency, it resulted in declining profitability. Several large multinational firms have seen their profits decline because centralized control lacks local sensitivity and are consequently changing their strategies from global to local. (De Mooij, 2003).

4. STRATEGY CHOICES IN GLOBAL ADVERTISING PROCESS

After having on mind a conceptual framework of what is an international advertising, its process and the main factors affecting this latter, it is the moment to define which may be the global strategy that managers and advertisers may decide to implement when they are processing a new international advertising campaign. This chapter is meant to describe standardization and local adaptation campaign strategies as the two main strategies used for a global marketing action abroad. Moreover, since the two strategies are defining the entire advertising process, they are finally compared, in order to understand the main pros and cons between the two.

4.1. Standardization and local adaptation in international advertising

In international marketing field, the fierce debate whether to standardize international advertising across countries or to adapt it to countries is highly studied and discussed. Till today, international advertisers continue to be confronted with the question of whether to “standardize” or “adapt” their commercial messages within the advertising process. This debate over the standardization versus adaptation issue has involved both advertisers and advertising researchers since the 1950s to the present (Agrawal 1994).

As the author Krishnamurthy (2016) explains, on one hand, standardization offers significant cost advantages, but it fails to address some of the differences associated with each individual market. On the other hand, adaptation strategy offers the possibility to take in consideration every individual market and customers’ difference; however, adaptation comes for an extra cost and this fact may compromise price competitiveness of relevant products and services. Lot of authors support the idea that standardization on international advertising is a better choice, since it brings benefits like reduction of costs in advertising planning and control. Others instead, support the

contrary, arguing that there are still differences among countries, specifically, culture, consumer needs, languages, legislation, media availability, and stage of country development.

Some recent studies have recognized that neither complete standardization nor adaptation of advertising is always the best solution and the advertiser can decide to create more a continuum between the strategies based on the situation (Quelch & Hoff, 1986; P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson, 2008). Other authors support this idea, considering these strategies as a continuum instead of two different options separated to each other (Theodosiou & Leonidou 2002).

However, these two concepts appear to be one the opposite to the other. Managers have to be careful on their decision during advertising planning. Anyway, cultural differences seem to become less important as we grow towards a universal, global and homogeneous culture, at least as consumer behavior and entertainment is concerned. This picture is, however largely misleading, indeed, “Cultural differences will remain important and regional cultural differences should be enhanced rather than reduced”. (Van Raaij 1996). It seems that both strategies have pros and cons and managers have to undertake the best decision in order to not fail in a market. To better analyze the two strategies, the later will be separately described.

4.2. Standardization strategy

Globalization is an effect that surely is affecting the strategy of multinational enterprises (Rugman 2003: 409; Fastoso & Jeryl Whitelock 2010). Proponents of the standardization approach view the globalization trends in the world as “the driving force behind greater market similarity, higher convergence of consumer needs, tastes, and preferences” (Levitt 1983; Ohmae 1985; Marios Theodosiou, Leonidas C. Leonidou 2002). As the authors argue, the standardization strategy in international marketing field

is becoming always more easy to use considering the international communication channels, the global market segments and the internet diffusion all over the world.

Standardization has been conceptualized in different ways. For instance, it can mean that in all markets it is applied the same strategy (Samiee and Roth 1992), or it can mean that in a foreign market the domestic strategy is applied (Cavusgil et al., 1993; Shaoming Zou, David M. Andrus, D. Wayne Norvell 1997).

This strategy on international advertising may bring some benefits. These benefits are defined like “significant economies of scale in all value-adding activities, particularly in research and development, production, and marketing; the presentation of a consistent corporate/brand image across countries, especially in light of the increasing consumer mobility around the world; and reduced managerial complexity due to better coordination and control of international operations“ (Levitt, 1983; Douglas and Craig, 1986; Yip, Loewe and Yoshino, 1988; Marios Theodosiou, Leonidas C. Leonidou 2002).

Buzzell (1968) stated that “the major benefits of international marketing standardization include significant cost savings, consistency with customers, improved planning and distribution, and greater control across national borders”. Ohmae (1985) contended that, in the triad of the USA, Japan, and Europe, consumer demand has become fairly homogeneous. Firms must not be blinded by the seemingly heterogeneous cultures, economies, and political systems across countries. Companies should treat the world as a single global market and catch the opportunity to rationalize their international operations.

Hamel and Prahalad (1985) also stressed the increasing interdependence between country markets. He also stated that “to be effective global competitors, firms have to overcome national fragmentation of markets and cross-subsidize their operations in different parts of the world. One way to facilitate cross-subsidization is using the

standardization of the goods and marketing efforts in order to enhance the benefits of global effect”.

Even if there are positive effects on standardization of marketing campaign, drawbacks of the strategy exist. As Douglas and Wind (1987) pointed out, only considering some conditions, the standardization of all the global marketing operations may be feasible. These include the existence of a global market segment, potential synergies from standardization and availability of a communication to deliver the firms’ offerings to target customers worldwide. Marketing standardization is subject to both internal and external constraints.

Internally, the company’s existing worldwide network of operations may be incompatible with a standardized strategy. Moving too quickly towards global standardization can result in the disruption of established operations and the loss of key assets and managerial skills (Douglas and Wind 1987; Quelch and Hoff 1986; Shaoming Zou, David M. Andrus and D. Wayne Norvell 1997).

Externally, a standardized strategy is subject to diverse government regulations and the advertising may be not efficient as well as on the national borders. Thus, customers are not anymore on the centre of the scene but are set aside in order to focalize on cost benefits that company encounters deciding on an international standardize strategy. Those are the most crucial problems that the company may have when is not considering the customers as an important part of the winning company strategy (Cateora, 1993; Ricks, 1983).

Continuing that line, cultural differences and competitor strategy are external factors related to standardization and the standardized approach may be feasible only in some markets where cultural differences are not significantly high. Indeed, companies should be aware of cultural sensitivity even when they are choosing a standardization approach

for international operations, taking always in consideration that differences exist. (Cateora, 1993; Ricks, 1983).

Therefore, if target groups are similar across countries, an international strategy with standardized communication may be easily employed. A target group may be similar based on age, high level of education (like having the knowledge of English language and having a broader interest), higher or lower income level and on cosmopolitan lifestyle with travel and use of international media. Although consumers may not belong to these groups, they may aspire and emulate the behavior of these groups and thus accept a highly standardized communication campaign. (Van Raaij 1996).

As Raaij (1996) stated “if consumers may be gathered in groups, and those consumers are similar, the management strategy may be based on standardization of advertising campaign. This strategy should reduce the possibility of negative impact and failure. If the target group considered does not have these characteristics of similarity, the standardization strategy is likely to be less effective. In that case, a local adaptation strategy may be more effective in order to catch advantages of cultural differences”.

In conclusion, this strategy has some pros and some cons. Firstly, it helps to increase economies of scale since the international advertising are standardized everywhere. Logically, the set up time is faster since there is less time spent to research customers' needs on a specific way. Company using standardized strategy will have a single and coherent global image, without risking to damage itself using different values and beliefs across countries. The cons on this strategy instead are, more than everything, the possibility to lose advertising effectiveness. In fact, since this strategy is more focused on the cost benefits for the company, it does not look to the real customers' values and this may damage its marketing power around the world. The reactivity and flexibility of the advertisements may be lower. Finally, if the advertising does not consider some cultural values and customers' beliefs, it may create negative reactions from customers.

4.3. Local adaptation strategy

Proponents of the adaptation school of thought argue that managers and advertisers should taking into account differences among culture (Britt 1974; Nielsen 1964; Agrawal 1994). Using an adaptation strategy offers advantages like the customers satisfaction and comprehension of the message and brand and the possibility to meet the local market and gaining customers' loyalty (Krishnamurthy 2016). The strategy, in this case, is focused more on customers values, deciding more on which are the customers' needs instead of the cost saving strategy that may be done with standardization. Indeed, local adaptation is defined by the author as an effective customer-orientation technique.

Pratt (1956) was strongly in favor of the localized approach to advertising. He stated that "every market must be considered as a single unit and area and the adaptations must be defined in consideration of that". Kramer (1959) also felt that using domestic advertising for international purposes was unsatisfactory. He in fact reported that every story on the advertising should be created considering the psychology of the people and their temperament.

The same author argued that there are too much differences between countries that should be taken in consideration before internationalizing. For instance, he brings the example of "showing a cow on an advertising in India, since it is a sacred animal for Indian people and would bring problems and shock over Indian customers. And more, colors, symbols and figures mean different things among countries". While translating advertisement copy, one must take expert assistance. *Trade marks and trade names should be chosen carefully for international markets*, according to Kramer, since advertising depends heavily on symbolism.

Red Bull GmbH, Austrian energy drinks manufacturer uses for all the element of the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) an adaptation strategy. For example, Red Bull can in North American market is designed in red, silver and blue colors.

“According on local culture in North America red color perceived as a symbol of action and courage, whereas blue color is associated with youth and dynamism” (Brown et al., 2012). Red Bull in Chinese market, on the other hand, is designed in gold and red colors, because gold color represents wealth and happiness in China and red is associated with good luck (Krishnamurthy, 2016).

The particular attention on details, may help the company to promote the goods and services in a specific country. Sometimes, a wrong color, symbol or brand name may ruin an entire international marketing campaign and bring damages to the company’s reputation. However, local adaptation strategy when it is use in an extreme scale, it may compromise some general benefit factors and competitive advantages of a global brand causing a disparity of the brand around the world and an incongruity of the message of the company (Krishnamurthy, 2016).

This strategy has pros and cons. Adaptation strategy helps on respecting local specifications and expectations, on doing that, the company may arise its brand image since it is closest to the customers. The cons using this strategy on marketing field are surely the higher cost on research and development department, used to understand the best options for each country. Time consumed will be higher and the speed of execution on advertising is low, since every country needs special attention from the management. Moreover, it is really difficult to understand and to finally know what customers really want.

4.4. Comparison between the strategies

In conclusion, on the one hand, a manager may decide to consider the benefits stemming from the standardization strategy, on the other, a manager might decide to pay more attention on giving the right message to the right target through the right media, even if it would be more costly. As it is emerged from the previous analysis, both of the

strategies have some pros and cons that characterized them. In order to better view those characteristics, a comparison table between the two strategies is hereafter done.

Table 1. Comparison between standardization and local adaptation strategy

	Standardization Strategy	Local Adaptation Strategy
Economies of scale	Higher	Lower
Time costs	Lower	Higher
Brand Image	Lower	Higher
Advertising effectiveness	Lower	Higher
Financial Costs	Lower	Higher
Customer consideration	Lower	Higher
Speed of advertising execution	Higher	Lower

It is now more clear that both of the strategies allow to gain some positive factors but in the meanwhile, to lose others benefits. Economies of scale are highest on standardization strategy because departments as research and development and marketing are the same for every country and costs are less since everything could be done in a single area. Instead, on the contrary, with a local adaptation strategy, those departments have to deeply analyze each country in order to understand every culture, values and perceptions. Time costs are lower for standardization strategy. Indeed, time and costs spent for a globalized advertisement are surely less, since works behind those advertising are lesser.

It is more difficult to understand which would be the strategy that increase brand image more. If the standardization strategy across countries is effective, the fact that the message is the same may bring coherence to the company's values and beliefs. On the table by the way it is written that brand image is higher for a local adaptations strategy. Indeed, looking to the customers' micro-reaction, a local adapted strategy should be more understood by customers, meaning that, the brand image is effectively more recognized from this strategy.

Continuing within this argument, the effectiveness of the advertising should be higher on a localize strategy, since it is more easy to achieve marketing's objectives and company's goods recognition. However, it is often difficult to understand values and tiny cultural details for each country, so problems and mistakes are always closed to the borders. In any case, the positive thing about a local adaptation strategy is that there is less possibility to make cultural mistakes.

Of course, customers consideration is part of the local adaptation strategy since this strategy was born for giving more attention to customers' values and reaction to the advertising. However, considering the time spent to analyze countries and defining the advertising for each country, the speed of advertising execution is faster for standardization strategy, meaning that there is less time, cost and scope dispersed.

4.5. Summary

Marketing communication is of vital importance for companies that are working outside of the national borders. In order to inform customers of the existence of a good or service is essential to implement marketing communication strategies. International advertising indeed, is nowadays one of the major instrument used to promote a good or a service around the world. In order to do that, *managers must become proficient cross-cultural communicators if they wish to succeed in today's global environment* (Munter 1993).

As it is mentioned earlier, steps are used in advertising campaign planning (Davies, 1993; De Mooij, 1994; Parente, Bergh, Barban, & Marra, 1996; Peebles et al., 1978; P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson 2008) and a lot of authors are studying how to implement an advertising and which are the main steps to follow in order to not fail on executing the message.

Before deciding the international marketing strategy, it is of importance to analyze and understand the main possible factors that are influencing the international advertising process and, as a consequence, the strategy that can arise. Those main major factors affecting the management decision-making are meant to be globalization effect and the cultural differences among countries. The consideration and the importance given from the managers to those factors, creates the advertising strategy but it may happen that the decision is made considering other factors. The latter, may be discovered within the empirical research and may be added as other factors influencing decisions.

Finally, the main strategies that a manager may undertake are to standardize the advertising around the world or to adapted it considering differences among countries. The supporters of standardization believe that the world is really global and economies of scale and other synergetic benefits exist. While the critics of standardization believe that the differences among countries are large enough to require different types of

advertising. Media habits of people in various countries also may change, management has to take in consideration that standardizing the media may be not efficient in a country as well as in another.

As it is written above, the content of the advertising is the core part of this latter, if the message is not understood or it is not created in accordance with the cultural aspects of a country, company may waste their time, money and goals. The creation of the message needs more attention from the management and here below, it would be defined the step process of creating the advertisement message from the empirical findings.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is meant to explain the method used for this research. Research approach, the data collection techniques, the sample and the data analysis method are described. This section will detail how it is intended to go about achieving research question and research objectives. Finally, the research quality and the validity and reliability of the study is presented.

5.1. Research philosophy and Research Approach

Research philosophy is an over-arching term related to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009). As Saunders (2009) explained, research philosophy is very important since it contains all the assumptions about “the way in which the researcher view the world”. These selected assumptions for the research will support the strategy and the methods used as part of the strategy. Johnson and Clark (2006) argued that the important issue is not so much whether the research should be philosophically informed, but it is how well the researcher is able to reflect upon philosophical choices and defend them in relation to the alternatives that it could have been adopted (Saunders, 2009).

Following this logic, the three main alternatives that a research may follow are defined as ontology, methodology and epistemology. Since the heart of a research is the research question, every decision should be addressed in consideration of it. For this reason, since the research question of this study is related to the discovery of a “way in which the world works” and the assumptions are related to the research of the reality, the research philosophy to be followed is *ontology*. Indeed, with the research question is intended to discover how social actors, in this case managers, decide and produce social reality through decisions and interactions. The ontology research is intended be used while making conclusion on the international advertising process within the empirical

framework. Since it is already defined that managers are considering factors before implementing a strategy, the usage of an ontology research would help the researcher to understand how managers are effectively implementing the advertising process and why they undertake those decisions. Basically, the usage of this philosophy would help to define how managers are planning an international advertising campaign and how is the path used from them. Considering the research philosophies on management research made by Saunders (2009: 119), on ontology's field of research, the decision made for this study is to rely on an *interpretative philosophy*.

The motivation is well reasoned by Remenyi et al. (1998: 35) which stresses the necessity to study "the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them". This is often associated with the term *constructionism*, or *social constructionism* since the theory that it is meant to build is something constructed above researches and events (Saunders et al., 2009). Basically, the research question's answer should be a social construct, that may change or be multiple, and should create a knowledge on the managers' behavior perspective.

It is necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating the actions of social actors in order for the researcher to be able to understand these actions and create a general model describing that. Indeed, this study aimed to achieve a better understanding of management decision-making process of a specific phase related to the international advertisement. (Saunders et al., 2009: 120).

The use of theory in a research is an integral part of this last. The extent to which the author is clear about the theory at the beginning is of fundamental importance to achieve its results (Saunders et al. 2009: 124). There are three main approaches that are used and these should fit the research philosophy chosen. These three approaches are induction, deduction and abduction. Since the research philosophy that will be followed within this study is ontology, the logic choice would be the use of deduction approach. (Saunders et al., 2009: 124).

However, since Saunders et al. (2009: 124) wrote that such labelling is potentially misleading and of no real practical value, the research approach of this study will follow another strategy. The induction approach seems to fit this study better, in fact, the core idea of the research, is to create a new source of knowledge proceeding from empirical results to theoretical results, in order to create a new model related to the research topic. Pure induction nowadays is however rare and difficult, in fact a part of deduction approach and a use of theory to finding answers would be done.

Continuing to follow this logic, like Saunders et al. (2009: 126) supports on induction approach, it will help the author to think about those research strategies and choices that will work for the study and, crucially, those that will not. For instance, if the researcher, like in this case, is particularly interested in understanding “why” something is happening, rather than being able to describe what is happening, it may be more appropriate to undertake the research inductively rather than deductively. Indeed, a part of the research question was to understand “why” management undertake particular decisions and consequently create a new knowledge based on a model of strategic management decisions.

In a nutshell, the nature of this study fits mainly an inductive approach and relies on interpretative approach. The use of a inductive approach would help the author to start from empirical results and construct a model based on that. The interpretative strategy is meant to help in understanding why is happening a particular event or choice. However, like it is specify above, a use of deductive approach would be also used, in order to find relevant information about the international advertising process and develop more relevant knowledge on this field, moreover, to explore more information about the main factors that influence management decision-making, since it may result that not only culture and costs are influencing the management strategy.

5.2. Research Purpose and Research Strategy

In thinking about the research question, the author inevitably have begun to think about the purpose of the entire research. The classification of the research purpose most often used in the research methods' literature is the threefold one of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Saunders et. al., 2009: 138).

In order to decide which one would fit well, it is of interest to analyze the research question on which the purpose of the study is turning around. The scope of a research may take in consideration more that one purpose, in fact, in this particular case, the research purpose is both *exploratory* research and *explanatory* study. The motivation of this decision is that the research question till this moment wants to understand “what” is happening in a particular strategic phase of the international advertising campaign process and more, “why” the decision of certain solutions are undertaken by people concerned.

The research strategy for this study is though thinking about the type of research question. For this research will be use a qualitative method strategy. Qualitative method is used predominantly as a synonym for any data collection technique (such as an interview) or data analysis procedure (such as categorizing data) that generates or use non-numerical data. Qualitative therefore can refer to data other than words, such as pictures and video clips. (Saunders et al., 2009: 151).

Moreover, qualitative studies emphasize inductive, interpretive methods applied to everyday world which is seen as subjective and socially created (Anderson, 1997: 384; Jablin, Linda L. & Putnam, 2001: 162). Thus, since the research is meant to be studied with qualitative data analysis and any kind of quantitative datas should be included, it can be considered at qualitative mono-method research (Saunders et al., 2009: 151).

Multiple-case study was decided for this research. The method selected is particularly appropriate as the research question is made of “how” and “why” types of questions and the study focus on contemporary events (Yin, 2003: 5, P. Gabriellsson, M. Gabriellsson & H. Gabriellsson, 2008). The multiple-case study design allows for logical replication and the results altogether are expected to be more convincing. Six international corporations will be selected and analyzed and as Saunders (2009: 140) suggests in the case of using exploratory research, it will be useful an interview strategy to experts in the subject.

Here below the research onion of this study is presented.

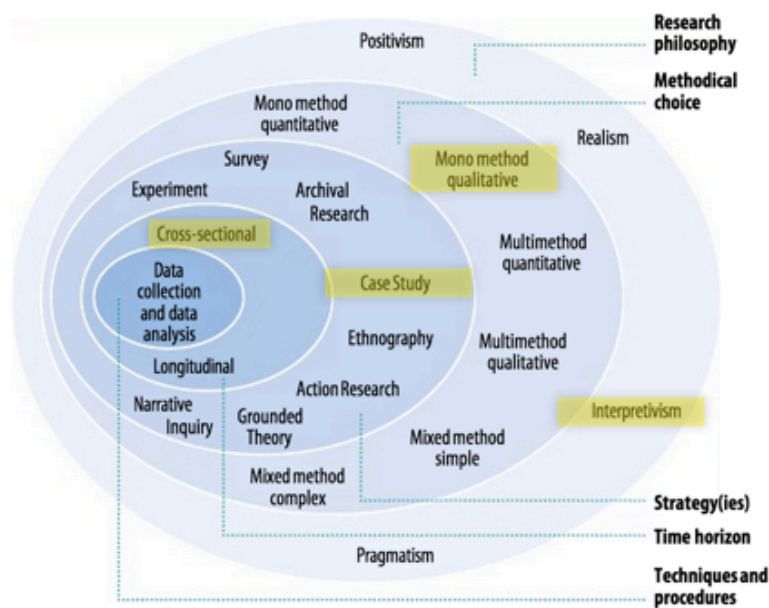


Figure 9. The Research Onion of this study (based on Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009).

5.3. Data collection and Sample

As it is mentioned before, during these studies only qualitative data will be collected. The sample that should be taken into account is made by six multinational corporations. The sample is meant to be varied, every company is coming from a different industry (food industry, confectionary industry, automotive industry, cosmetic industry and thermo comfort industry) in order to have a general overview between different managerial systems in different work fields. The persons interviewed will be managers which are working on global advertising/marketing department, and the interviews are semi-structured interviews.

5.3.1. Data collection technique

During this study, only qualitative data are collected in order to obtain a rich and detailed set of information to understand the reasons why managers are undertaking some decisions while implementing an international advertising message (Saunders et al., 2007: 324). This study is empirically supported by primary qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with international managers. With semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview. The idea by the way is to cover the same topics from manager to manager in order to understand the main differences and similarities between the decision undertaken between different companies in different industries.

This type of interviews will help to avoid strict questions and too rigid conversations and give the possibility to the manager to talk, moreover, they are likely to give more detailed answers and explanation from interviews. This type of strategy is also supported by Cooper and Schindler (2008) which believe that where a researcher is undertaking an exploratory study, or a study that includes an exploratory element, it is likely that it is included a non-standardized (qualitative) research interviews in the

research. Indeed, the data collection technique made in this sense, it is more inclined to give rich data and a deeper understanding of the meanings that respondents allocate to various phenomena. Moreover, it would be easier to find if with the usage of words or ideas there are significance and relevant hidden data obtained in semi-structured interviews.

Furthermore, this kind of data collection technique can allow the conversation to enter in different fields of knowledge not previously considered but still important for understanding the research problems and objectives of a study. Finally, interviews also create an opportunity where the managers which are participating to the research are able to hear themselves “thinking out loud” about personal ideas they have never thought before, and for that, providing to a researcher very fresh opinions about the topic studied (Saunders et al., 2007: 324).

5.3.2. Sample

The sample was selected based on convenience combined with self-selection (Saunders et al., 2007). The sample is basically made by six international companies born in different countries and characterized by different goods, services sold and different industries. The possibility to take part in this research was mainly publicized by social media, via e-mail, through the customers service department of the companies or directly to managers who could help the research. After the creation of a network and the research of the companies that may be available for interviews, 78 potential companies were selected. Considering time, logistics, internal policies and financial implications, six interviews were finally arranged, since finding available and open corporation is not an easy process.

The sample is finally defined by 6 companies deriving different countries and different industries of work. However, the emphasis in the sampling procedure was focused upon ‘quality’ individuals who were willing to open up” to this research project (Malhotra &

Birks 2007: 63). Some of the interviewed worked in a team to answer questions since it happened that some companies are used to divide departments in “media department”, “advertising department” or “marketing department”. It happened that managers were not able to completely or deeply answer the questions without the help of other colleagues. However, this fortified the reliability of the answers given to the researcher. Some companies, given the delicacy of the topic, asked for privacy in order to avoid the sharing of information and of the strategies. Thus, all the companies are finally anonymous.

Here below, the table of the sample made is derived:

Table 2. Sample

Company	Industry	Headquarter	Department interviewed	Job position of the interviewed	Global presence
Company A	Cosmetic industry	Neuilly-sur-Seine, France	International marketing	International media manager	115 countries
Company B	Food industry	Laval (Mayenne), France	Global marketing	Global marketing manager	141 countries
Company C	Confectionery industry	Zurich, Switzerland	Marketing Department	Marketing director	Over 120 countries
Company D	Automotive industry	Pontedera, Italy	CEO	President and general director	Europe, Asia and Americas
Company E	Thermo comfort industry	Fabriano, Italy	CEO	Country Manager Vietnam Branch	over 150 countries
Company F	Luxury Industry	Hamburg, Germany	Marketing and communication Department	Marketing Director	Around 120 countries

5.4. Semi-structured interviews

In exploratory studies, unstructured interviews and qualitative research are very likely to be utilized, especially to understand the reasons behind behavior and attitudes of individuals. In addition, interviews like that, can be the most advantageous approach to obtain data when there are a large number of questions to be answered, which are either complex or open-ended (Saunders et al., 2007). Qualitative data is also characterized by its richness and wholeness as it helps the exploration of an argument as close as possible to what is the true reality of the facts (Robson, 2002).

This way, data was collected through a total of six interviews aiming to analyze managerial's behavior and decision-making on creating the advertising message within the international advertising process.

Considering the type of data collection technique used, the nature of the questions asked may change or vary during the interview, however, a preliminary structure of the questions was already made in order to create a support to the interview and provide a list of topics to be covered by all of the interviewed.

In order to give the possibility to the interviewees to provide as much details as possible and in order to extend the answers as much detailed as possible, the questions were open-ended (Saunders et al., 2007: 337). Taking into account the difficulty to reach the global department of each company and given the fact that companies are from different countries, the interviews were all made by Skype or other similar devices, like phone calls. The interviews were settled in Finland from March to April 2017.

The interviews were conducted for the majority of the cases in English since most of the companies interviewed have the global department abroad from the researcher's mother tongue. There were only two exception where the interviewed was in Italian and there was the possibility to speak the same language as them, however, the topic covered are

always the same. Although the interviews were not totally structured, the questions were based on the following structure and topics below.

Table 3. Main topics of the semi-structured interviews.

Topic	Information	Main theoretical references
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company's brand - Job position - Countries' presence 	-
Advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standardization strategy - Adaptation strategy - Motives - Main factors influencing those decisions - Main factors considered for the decisions 	P. Gabriellsson et al (2008); S. P. Douglas and C. S. Craig (2002); David M. Andrus and D. Wayne Norvell (2007); S. Marguin (2015); R. Krishnamurthy (2016); M. Theodosiou, et. al. (2002); Buzzell (1968); Brown et al., (2012)
Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Factors considered - Motivation 	Clow & Baack (2001); De Pelsmacker et al. (2013); Andersson et al. (2012); T. Tuten (2014); N. Chopra (2014); Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey (1988)
Media placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consideration of media - Importance for strategic decisions 	H. Katz (2008); Jerome McCarthy (1975)
Real events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Example of success or failure - Major reasons of success and failure 	-
Final Comments	Additional thoughts or suggestions	

5.5. Data analysis

The usage of qualitative data may bring the research to an impressionistic view and a difficulty of quantify in a meaningful way what interviewed really means. For that reason, the researcher should present the results in a way where all the data are *condensed* (summarised), *grouped* (categorised) or *restructured* as a narrative to support meaningful analysis. These type of data are defined as non-standardized and of a complex nature, for that reason data required to be classified into categories according to the objectives of the study and to the main topics discussed on the interviews as it is shown on table 5 (Saunders et al., 2007: 482).

The datas from the interview are the main source of information in the empirical part of the study. It happened that some of the information were not given personally from the interviews but were collected from secondary data like websites, fliers or annual reports of the companies. The data received from the interviews will be analyzed by linking them to the theoretical framework previously presented. No specific programs or tools will be used in the data analysis while the data will be analyzed by the author based on all the information gathered within the interviews and the framework created in the theoretical part.

The contents of the discussions will be carefully examined by prudently analyze the data, deciding how they can be meaningful for the purpose of the study. This requires detailed analysis of the data in order to find the meaning behind it. In practice this means the analysis of the content of the interviews, trying to pay attention on the real mean of the responses during the interviews. Some of the answers given through the interviews are quoted in order to better understand the results of the analysis. Following this type of procedure there is the possibility to arise the usefulness and the meaningfulness of the qualitative data analysis, according to Saunders et al. (2007: 480).

5.6. Reliability and Validity of the study

The reliability and validity of the research are of highest importance in order to define the quality of the entire research (Saunders et al, 2007). Given the research question and the objectives of the research, qualitative data with collection of primary data should enhance best results. Indeed, the quality of the research arises thanks to the possibility to obtain different point of view regarding the research topic, varying the source and, hence, providing a comparative context of analysis (Saunders et al. 2007).

In this study reliability and validity issues will be improved through several details. First, the theoretical framework of the study proves all the theories' sources in order to provide every possible data. Second, all the research process is explained in order to not leave the possibility to misunderstand something and to be as much transparent as possible. Reliability can be defined as the consistency of the overall data collected in the research and the extent to which these data may be reutilized for the same research purpose (Malhotra & Birks, 2007: 313). Robson (2002) stated that there are four possible threats to the reliability of a research: participant's error, participant's bias, observer's error and observer's bias.

This study selects only companies chosen basing on the department to be interviewed in order to reduce the participant error as much as possible. Indeed, only participants that were able to answer questions were included in the study in order to achieve the right information. The participant bias is reduced giving the possibility to the interviewed to remain anonymous. This helped to build trust between participants and the observer. Finally, in order to reduce the observer error, a structure of the questions to be made within the interview was developed to guide the interviews and make sure to have the desired answers.

Validity is defined by Saunders et al (2007: 157) as “how much” is possible that findings are really about what they appear to be about. Validity is conceptualized by

Malhotra and Birks (2007, 159) as *“the extent to which a measurement represents characteristics that exist in the phenomenon under investigation”*. Validity is conceptualized by Malhotra and Birks (2007, 159) as *“the extent to which a measurement represents characteristics that exist in the phenomenon under investigation”*.

Lastly, concerning the external validity or generalizability of the research, it should be consider the level go generalization of the research to others. This study is meant to be extended as much as possible considering in fact different companies deriving from different countries and working on different goods or services. The message process on international advertising is meant to be applicable to every type of company working outside of national borders. However, considered the small sample, the generalization of this research could not produce a theory that is certainly generalizable to all multinational corporations (Saunders et al., 2007).

6. EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents and discusses the empirical findings of the research. The goals of this chapter are mainly geared to answer the research question. The analysis of the data is made following the method explained on the “research methodology” chapter. The examination of the data and the creation of the message step of the international advertising campaign process is finally outlined.

6.1. The international advertising process

One of the main objective of this research was to review the existing international advertising process theories, to compare the advertising process of the companies’ analyzed and to create a new process based on the empirical findings. Since the entire process is of relevance to construct the message phase because is a part of it, it is of importance to understand how the companies are actually planning an international advertisement before focusing on the message creation phase. Indeed, the main empirical results related to the international campaign process are discussed next.

In the theoretical framework are being explained three of the possible international advertising processes that a company is (or may) follow as a strategy. This process are given by Gabrielsson et. al. (2008), Marguin (2005) and Craig (2002). It was possible to observe that all of the companies interviewed are following a step process like some authors highlighted saying that steps are needed in advertising campaign planning (Davies 1993; De Mooij 1994; Parente, Bergh, Barban, & Marra 1996; Peebles et al., 1978; P. Gabrielsson, M. Gabrielsson & H. Gabrielsson, 2008). This consideration of that, is also exemplified by the comment left by one interviewed from company E, deriving from the thermo comfort industry:

“Absolutely yes, steps are needed to do a message campaign because it takes in consideration brand manager, communication strategies, product manager, HQ and a series of department that are following specific steps of the process”

What can be however stated, it is that none of companies interviewed is precisely following one of the over mentioned theoretical processes, but just some of the stages or strategies. Therefore, a deep analysis of every step of the companies is done, in order to have at last their entire processes clearly comparable. Here following, the empirical data gathered from the companies are analyzed and compared. A pattern in the steps of the international campaign process could be found on the basis of cross-case analysis between the empirical results.

6.1.1. The starting phase on campaign process

It was observed that all of the companies analyzed are almost following different strategic steps. Starting from the first stage, it emerged that some companies interviewed are starting the advertising project with pre-testing the efficiency of the advertisement all over the world, in order to improve upon mistakes and saving costs stemming from issues. When it was asked to the managers if they were testing the advertising before the execution, have emerged different consideration of it, but it should be highlighted that some of the companies are considering pre-testing of relative importance.

This idea can be exemplified in the comments of the respondent number 1, deriving from the cosmetics company:

“We sometimes do some pre-test or some study to understand the media consumption in case the country is new for the company” (Company A)

The pre-testing strategy is highlighted to be important also by the interviewee coming from the confectionary industry and luxury industry, giving a different reason for the pre-testing decision:

“We are always testing the effectiveness of the message pre and post in order to understand the possible customer involvement with a marketing campaign or the possibility to improve it in case the message is not completely received. This is an important step to do for both national or international campaigns” (Company C)

“Since ads are standardized and they suppose to be long-lasting online they are tested and then left it till the ads needs to be changed” (Company F)

In some cases, on the contrary, it emerged that the pre-test is not necessary because it could be a waste of money, effort and time in the moment that the company knows the countries on which it is operating abroad and the target customer to persuade. In other cases, the pre-test is done only when the countries are really important in terms of revenue and the campaign has to adapted on the culture. In the automotive industry and in the food industry the respondents answered like that:

“No. we do not test the effectiveness of the campaign, since we already know how to “interact” with our customers. Usually we directly start from the message idea and the selection of the media steps” (Company D)

“Usually we do not test the campaign but we start as it is said before to understand the goals of the marketing campaign defining the strategy and the message to share with the customer. We may do sometimes some pre-test on the most important countries when we have to adapt the campaigns on the culture. In this case, the most important countries from a revenue point of view, are testing the advertise and all the adaptations may be born ex post of the test” (Company B)

While in the thermo comfort industry, the interviewed comments in this way:

“The effectiveness of the campaign is not pre-tested because we are locally implementing the campaign so it is already studied the market, but it has to be approved always by the HQ and it is tested the effectiveness ex-post”

When companies are not starting with pre-testing the campaign, it emerged that they are firstly considering the objectives to achieve with the message before anything else, giving the idea that they are the core parts of the campaign and they need to be defined above all. In this case, two companies out of six, coming from the food industry and automotive industry are particularly convinced of that. It can be exemplified in the comments that is made in merit of the first step of advertising planning choices:

“Before implementing the international advertising, starting from the positioning of the brand all over the world, we choose the goals of the advertising in term of business (awareness, equity, average purchases), the message that we want to give and the level of communication that we want to have”

“(...) As I said before we start to understand the goals of the marketing campaign defining the strategy and then the message to share with the customer” (Company B)

The definition of the goals as the first step of the advertising planning process is also supported from Gabrielsson et. al., (2008) on which the authors define the first step as *“Marketing communication strategy and objectives”* phase. The only distinction between the processes is that while the company B is also defining the message on the first step, in the Gabrielsson’s model the message, is defined on the third step of the process. With the usage of the theoretical framework, it is known that also Marguin (2015) is defining the objectives and goals of the company as the first step, without considering the pre-test of the advertising. Anyway, it emerged to be of importance to define the strategy and marketing’s goals in the starting phases of the process. This can be seen also from the automotive industry and thermo comfort industry where it arose the same strategy, motivating this latter in these ways:

“We are considering before the message that the company wants to share for the global customers which is our first thought, then we define the media” (Company D)

“The objectives and company’s values are the first things considered since the products are for family and this value must be followed for creating the message, so the company follows the objectives and than it created the message. (...) in order to catch the attention and the brand awareness from the consumers. (Company E)

In conclusion, the first step is starting for some companies with the pre-test of the effectiveness of the campaigns considering factors like the costs that are saved from possible errors or failure of the campaign, for understanding the most successful media to use around the world or to understand cultural divergences. Some respondents instead, are explaining that they start from the objectives of the campaign or the company’s values to create the right message for the company.

6.1.2. The media placement

The media placement plays an important role on the advertising process since, as it is said in the theoretical framework, “media is the way to transfer information about products and it is the place where goods and services of a company can be known from the potential buyer of that items”. Considering the empirical data, the media placement seems to influence the management decision-making on strategy while companies are projecting a new international campaign.

Certainly, the main reason is that the media usage changes from one country to another but in great detail, the reasons differ across companies. What appears to be in common between the companies analyzed, it is that the media placement is collocated from the companies or before the message creation phase or later. However, detailed reasons of the media placement from the firms can be observed in the following comments, given from the respondent 2 and 5 that are adapting media as a strategy before creating the marketing campaign:

“The media mix is adapted for every country since it depends on the level of usage of the media. So, the more used and recommended for our company are usually TV

and digital, that is becoming more important now. Usually we start with determine the usage of media all over the world than we are using them, depending on the best option, but only after having in mind the marketing strategy which is later implemented and adapted on the media.” (Company B)

“Media are different from one country to another. (...) Media need to be adapted, this depends to the knowledge that the consumers have on our products and the media usage from one country to another. Usually we define first the media because the message is coming out consequently.” (Company E)

For the company A working on the cosmetics industry, it seems that media selection is of relevance too. The reason explained is different and it is justified looking to the core value of the company: launching the same standardize message in all the countries served.

“All the media strategies (...) are considered before creating the campaign in order to launch the same message world wide”

“We sometimes do (...) some study to understand the media consumption in case the country is new for the company” (Company A)

Company D on the automotive industry is defining the media after the creation of the message. The manager exemplified the extreme importance of the media in their strategy. For instance, he mentioned the digital media as the most important in this century for their company. More over, the usage of digital media is “*monstrously*” different from one country to another, but in particular it is discovered to be really different their usage in the Asian territory, adding on the interview that every country has its “fine tuning”.

The study of media in their case resulted really different: in Vietnam Facebook is popular, so advertisement are often published there, while in Thailand Twitter seems to be used from the majority of the potential buyer, so the advertisement channel is

changing. Company E defines media before the creation of the message basing the choice on the different usage of media abroad. The respondent says:

“Surely the main media used from the company have different evolution in every country. Some country results to be more digital and other less. In some countries we use principally social network because they fit for our high target, in other countries the target is younger and the strategy is different. The usage of media is accurately define before in order to understand where to implement the standardize message, considered the company’s values.”

Every country has different usage of media and based on the sample, companies are defining them in order to achieve all the marketing goals. Without defining the media, all the marketing effort may be wasted and the consumer may not received the information. Media seems to depend on their development in every country, on their usage from customers and on the level of knowledge of the product from the customer. Considering its position on the process, it emerged that the majority of the cases is considering media before creating the message.

6.1.3. The advertising message and the achievement of the goals

Regarding the advertising message, it emerged from the interviews that most of the companies are defining that after the media selection step. Others on the contrary, are defining the message before selecting the media. The reasons are different but they strictly depends on the strategy that the company wants to follow. The advertising message was abstractly conceptualized from Mueller (2011) as “*what it is said*” in the advertising campaign.

As it is defined in the theoretical part, the message is the core part of the entire advertising campaign since it is the part where companies can share information and persuade the potential customers around the world. Within the advertising message, the

goals of the advertising plan are sets and implemented, meaning that the strategy to persuade the customers is linked with the message itself.

Hereafter, the advertising message is discussed in merit of its role on the advertising planning process, in order to define its position on this latter. Afterward, the content of the message would be exemplified by the respondents' answers in order to construct its stage. There are companies that are defining the message and objectives to achieve before anything else. This can be exemplified by the company B on the food industry:

“Before implementing the international advertising, starting from the positioning of the brand all over the world, we choose the goals of the advertising in term of business (awareness, equity, average purchases) and the level of communication that we want in the message: if in a rational level or more emotional. This indeed, it depends on the country, on its importance and relevance.”

“(...) Usually we start with determine the usage of media all over the world than we are using them depending on the best option, but only after having in mind the marketing strategy and idea which is later implemented on the media.”

Following this strategy the message becomes the most important step to define. The idea is to understand which are the goals and only after the implementation of the possible channel to use, the decision on the budget and the plan. Bearing in mind the process defined by Craig (2002), it can be seen that the strategy is defined in the same way also from the author, considering the message creation as the core part of the entire process, deserving to be the first part to create.

Company D emphasizes the same choice mentioning that the first step to define is the message. The idea can be exemplified in the comments of the respondent from the company:

“In general we at first consider the message that we want to share (...)”

“Usually we directly start from the message idea and the selection of the media (...)”

Anyway, four companies out of six resulted to define firstly the media and then the message because it is easily adaptable to the media if you know before where they will be send it. However, every company gives importance to the message creation step because it is the core part, where the marketing effort are all implemented and the customers is aware of the good or service, but the majority considers media before.

6.2. A new international campaign process

The main empirical results discussed before on international advertising process given the idea that the process of internationalize a campaign is an important marketing strategy, since none of the companies is following a pre-set model of doing but on the contrary, they are implementing their own process in order to strategically have the best marketing output. Since it emerged that the companies are doing on their own way the advertising planning process, it is indicated to create another campaign process that is following the empirical studies.

This model is intended to be done following a cross-case analysis in order to follow the companies’s strategies and define a process comparing all the data. In order to do that, a comparison of the strategies and the steps implemented by the companies would be useful to clearly define the main differences and similarities and to build a model defined by the results. Here below, a comparison table of the advertising campaign processes is made.

Table 4. Comparison between the advertising planning processes

International advertising campaign process					
	1st phase	2nd phase	3rd phase	4th phase	5th phase
Company A	Pre-test	Defining the expectations of the target	Media Selection	Message Creation	Implementation and evaluation
Company B	Pre-test on new countries	Definition of the goals and strategies	Message creation	Media Selection	Implementation and evaluation
Company C	Pre-test	Defining strategy and goals	Media Selection	Message Creation	Implementation and evaluation
Company D	No pre-test	Message creation	Media selection	Implementation	-
Company E	No pre-test	Definition of the goals and strategies	Media Selection	Message Creation	Implementation and evaluation
Company F	Pre-test	Definition of the goals and strategies	Media Selection	Message Creation	Execution

As it can be seen from table 4, four companies out of six are using the pre-test before implementing the advertisement. The reasons resulted to be different: Company A is using the pre-test when it is *entering a new market* in order to understand the media consumption and the *expectancy of the customers' target* in communication. Based on that, every company's country was (or will be) pre-tested before marketing penetration.

Company B is pre-testing the advertisement basing on the *differences among cultures*, moreover, if the country is of importance in terms of revenue the pre-test is in this way more justified. In those cases, the pre-test is useful because of the cultural and market factors that influence the demand and constitute a strong deterrent.

In fact, as already stated, the members belonging to different cultural groups do not always respond the same way to a particular message and a pre-test of the effectiveness of the marketing effort become a strategic action. Moving forward, the company C and company F justify the pre-test usage for understanding the possible *customer involvement* with a marketing campaign or the possibility to improve it in the case the message is not completely received from the customers.

The last two interviewed (D, E), on the contrary, stated that the pre-test is not necessary and the advertisement is launched considering only the message to share. The motivation given from the interviewed were based on the fact that they already know *how to "interact"* with their foreign customers and till now there is no need to pre-test them. However, given the sample studied, the majority of the interviewed gave a good motivation for pre-testing, carrying on this research to finalize that "pre-test phase" could be an important phase to consider on the international advertising planning process.

After the pre-test, the companies are starting their process in different modes. As it can be seen by the table 4, five companies out of six are defining the objectives and the strategies of the marketing plan before implementing anything else. When it was asked

to the companies what it is considered before creating the campaign the participants answered in these ways:

“Before creating the message, the consumer insight and the unmet need are the key words used to define the marketing strategy and the goals to gain. Then, we implement an advertise that is able to persuade the customer with their unmet needs” (Company C)

“We choose the goals of the advertising in term of business (awareness, equity, average purchases) and the level of communication that we want” (Company B)

“We consider what are the expectancy of some target of customers in communication, than since the media and the message is as much as possible the same we can start to process the message” (Company A)

“The company’s HQ first of all is giving some objectives and goals to achieve within the advertising campaigns so we are always starting from this point for every activity, then, we try to show these values on the campaign. For example, we show the made in Italy and quality brand with the presence of Asian people in our brand in order to involve the consumers.” (Comapny E)

“For a brand that is bringing itself with the same imagine on a global level, it is coherent to bring the same values all over the world. The goals of the campaigns are always made to follow the brand image and company’s values. For this reason we consider this before creating the ads” (Company F)

While some companies are defining strategies, objectives, needs and targets, the interviewed from company D explained that the message is considered at first, then it may be adjusted in case the culture asks for that. This decision can be exemplified from this answer:

“In general we at first consider the message that we want to share. Then, for example, for Asia case we consider the culture as the first factor to pay more

attention and we adapt in these countries, while in America and Europe it is the same message and the same film, anyway we consider the message”

Based on the replies from the interviews, most of them are considering the goals and objectives to achieve on the second phase, while only one company is starting directly to create the message. Later, four companies (A, B, E, F) are defining the media to use in every country before creating the message while the other two companies (C, D) are creating the message first and then defining the media to use.

For the companies that are defining the media first, the reason is explained by the fact that with the consideration of the objectives and goals before, it is of importance to define “how” these goals can arrive to the customers. The decisions are exemplified by these answers:

“All media strategies are made locally by local media agency with local media insights and are considered before creating the campaign in order to launch the same message WW” (Company A)

“Usually we start with determine the usage of media all over the world than we are using them depending on the best option (...)” (Company B)

While companies that are defining the message first and media selection later gave other motivations. Company C (deriving from confectionary industry) seems to give less importance to the selection of channels because they are all almost standardized and of routine, but this depends on the goods and its importance abroad. Company D and company C answered in another way:

“Lately we are using always more digital media than others but yes, we are considering it. Before the message that the we wants to share for the global customers is created, than we define the media” (Company D)

“(..) In the local area we use all the media channel while outdoor advertisings depend on which good is promoted” (Company C)

What it emerged is that the minority of the sample is defining first the message and the media later and the other companies of the sample are doing the contrary. In conclusion, considered the strategies that would be explained later, it seems that the process varies in consideration of the strategy chosen. Indeed, the companies seem to tend to define firstly the media when they are following a standardization strategy. On the contrary, it emerged that when a company is following an adaptation strategy they tend to define the message since it is the one that needs more time and attention. These differences may bring the process to change in consideration of the strategy followed, and later, conclusion in merit of that would be made. Lastly, every company is ready to implement and launch the advertising around the world and monitoring the success in order to understand for how much the advertise has to be maintained on the media chosen. Based on the cross-study of the companies' processes on international advertising plan, a new international advertising campaign process can be represented by the following five steps: (1) Pre-test, (2) Definition of the goals and main strategies, (3) Media selection, (4) Message creation, (5) implementation and evaluation.

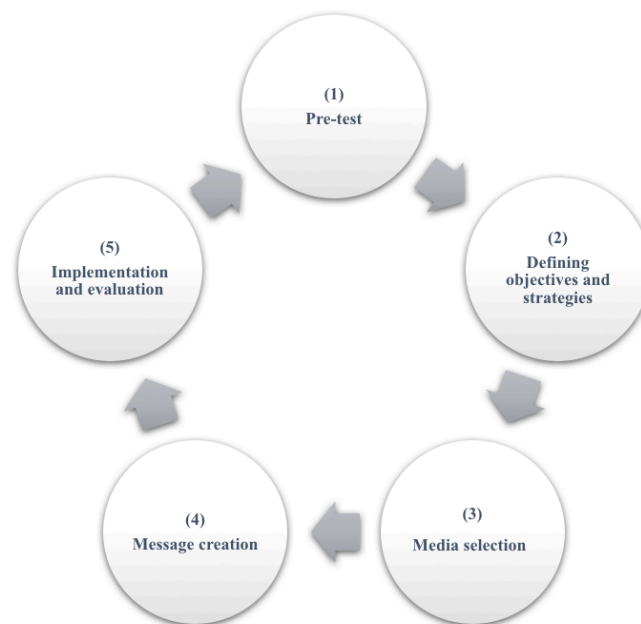


Figure 10. Framework for the new international advertising campaign process

6.3. Internationalization strategy in advertising

In order to define the message decision-making phase on standardize or adapt the international advertising, the two strategies made by the companies are here under analyzed and discussed. Previously, all the entire process and the main steps are been compared and discussed. It seems that the entire process of implementing an international advertise is affected by the type of strategy chosen by the company. In consideration of that, it has been defined on the theoretical framework that the types of strategies that a company may follow are: standardization strategy and local adaptation strategy. As it is stated in the theoretical framework, companies decide to follow a strategy when they want to pursue some goals and objectives, given influential factors that are affecting the decision-making. The strategies are here showed:

Table 5. The international advertising strategies used by the companies

International advertising strategy		
	Standardization strategy	Local adaptation strategy
Company A	X	
Company B	X	X
Company C	X	X
Company D		X
Company E		X
Company F	X	

Considering the sample, four companies out of six are trying to standardize as much as possible. Of course, as it is discussed in the theoretical framework, the total standardization is very difficult to implement since countries differ and the total

standardization may cause the failure of the advertising plan and the waste of time, money and value. Only two companies use local adaptation strategy to internationalize marketing effort while two companies are using local adaptation strategy within the national borders and they internationalize advertising using a standardization strategy. Hereunder, a comparison of the main factors affecting those decisions is made, in order to define the main reasons and the consequent decision made by the managers.

6.3.1. Main factors affecting the management decision-making

The management decision-making on international strategy is affected by endless factors that bring the managers to undertake some decision balancing all of them. It is stated on the theoretical framework that usually, the two strategies are laid down on two main influencing factors: culture and globalization. Observing the previous chapter, four companies tend to follow the standardization strategy abroad. Standardization has been conceptualized in different ways on the research. For instance, it can mean that the *same marketing strategy is applied in all markets* (Samiee and Roth 1992), or it can mean that the *domestic marketing strategy is applied to a foreign market* (Cavusgil et al., 1993; Zou, David M. Andrus & Norvell, 1997). It will be show that sometimes standardization is the same marketing strategies applied only in foreign market, without following the domestic strategy.

As it is said in the theoretical framework, the globalization effect is the main factor that brings companies to become multinational corporation and it is the main event that brings companies to standardize as much as possible every department of the company in order to reduce costs and raise up economies of scale, considering the alignment of the global customer tastes and needs.

Nowadays, most of the companies are selling their goods or services all over the world and they are using international marketing communication strategies as a force to raise the brand awareness and sales abroad. It is now of importance to see the factors that are

affecting the decision-making on standardization and adaptation in order to understand what there is behind every decision made by global managers, in particular the reasons explained by the respondents during the interviews.

As it is shown on the table 5 above, company A is using a standardization strategy as a way to communicate with the customers outside of the national borders. The factors that are affecting this decision are detailed by this comment:

“The standardization strategy is based on the decision to firstly align the brand equity world wide. The adaptation is a strategy defined in case of extreme necessity where culture is against our values but usually we tend to search countries that are more aligned to the brand equity”

Company A is standardizing on the purpose to follow the same product strategy around the world. In order to align the brand equity from inside to outside the national country, standardization strategy allows the company to align their values and their effort all over the place. The respondent continued to say that, in case the standardization strategy is not followed, a local adaptation strategy is justify by the *cultural divergence* that the company may meet becoming global. Company B is also tending to standardize as much as possible. Detailed reasons can be observed in the following comments:

“Except for Italy, the brand positioning is equal all over the world, so we are always trying to standardize. This bring that the same creative idea may be implemented in every part of the world. Depending on the development of the brand and on the market (if the culture is distant) we are doing adaptation to the International advertising (...) For the company the customer is in Italy and out of Italy. In Italy, the brand born and the communication is direct to a customer that it is completely aware of the brand and the product, which is different from one country to another (...)”

The respondent from the company C is adapting in the local areas while is standardizing on the other countries. The reason behind these decisions can be exemplified by this comment:

“Food taste is local so we are adapting the goods to the local tastes and we do the same for the marketing actions while, for the international marketing strategies, usually we tend to standardize the advertisement considering the costs and the difficulty to understand the outside customer taste and needs. Culture apart the standardization strategy outside becomes easiest because we use the promotion of the pack shot trying to reduce the cultural distortion and arising the brand awareness, we are trying to not going against cultural problems”

Respondents from company D and E explained that their decisions are to adapt given cultural differences and the different marketing strategies among countries. However, in the last few years strategy from company D is to be always more standardize, but till now this approach can not be implemented already because the brand it is still different from one place to another. Their decisions is commented like that:

“The marketing strategy basically is different, in Asia the idea is to position the goods as “life style, fashionable and surely more luxury” so the concept is more “pushed”. In Europe the strategy is different. Goods are not pushed like in Asia (at least is less) so we started with more a local approach, slow (but it an Italian evolution the European one). Now we are in a transaction phase by the way because now the strategies are really different while the idea is to align everything bringing the products to the same level since also the European business is changing and our products are becoming luxury. The positioning is changing since 10 years ago because is becoming premium. In Asia instead was always premium since for them the prices are already high and the goods were really desired. Than we are considering that Indonesia is muslim and Malaysia also so some marketing strategies that can perfectly fits in Europe we cannot use it here so we are forced to limit certain things. Here in Vietnam and Europe we use a lot for example female model that are provocative riding our motor bikes while in other countries of course

we can not so we adapt in the case culture is against our first idea of marketing. We have to be more conservative in other countries if we want to take customers on our side.” (Company D)

While company F explained that the main factor that is influencing the international advertising choices is the brand equity around the world. Hereunder, a comparison between the results is made.

6.3.2. Comparison between the results

It is now more clear which are the main factors that companies are considering before creating the advertising message. On choosing the standardization strategy, managers of the companies (A, B, D, F) are considering the alignment of the brand all over the world and its positioning on every countries. The brand position seems to influence the strategy on the creation of the marketing message. *When the positioning of the brand is aligned between countries, the same creative idea on the message is easily standardizable.* These can be seen from the food industry, cosmetic industry, luxury industry and in the future, from the automotive industry sample. The brand positioning of the company seems to be influenced from the goods and services served.

In consideration of that, if the goods or services are different from one country to another, the marketing strategy could change. One company (B) is considering the costs before the creation of the creative idea, since different marketing strategies and messages can cost a lot of time and money.

Moreover, the culture is the hardest part to evaluate, argued the interviewed, therefore, in order to not bump into cultural issues, the strategy is to show the product and the pack shot as it is. This message strategy permits to the company to avoid the local adaptation and cultural divergence, while, on the local area, the knowledge is exploit. Hereunder a comparison between the results is made:

Table 6. Reason behind management decision-making process on choosing strategy

Motivation Behind Decision-Making	Standardization	Local Adaptation
Company A (Cosmetic industry)	<i>Brand equity</i> has to be align all over the world	<i>Culture</i> is influencing marketing strategies and sometimes it has to be followed
Company B (Food Industry)	<i>Globalization</i> . Standardization is only done outside of the local area because the positioning of the brand can be the same all over the world so the message can be standardized.	The customer is known and the communication can be direct and more efficient in the local area. <i>Taste and communication is local</i>
Company C (Confectionary industry)	It is done abroad because the <i>costs</i> can be reduce and it is <i>hard to understand the culture and needs</i>	<i>Taste is local</i> . The product is known better by the local consumers so the communication is direct
Company D (Automotive Industry)	Standardization would be done in the future because the <i>positioning of the brand will be more aligned</i> , till now it is impossible since in east the product is luxury and in west is still mass consumption	<i>Culture</i> and differences on <i>marketing strategies</i> are the main reason of the necessity to adapt
Company E (Thermo Comfort Industry)	Logo and some common parts are standardized just <i>to follow company's values and guidelines</i> .	Adaptation must be made for <i>culture, positioning of the brand</i> and different usage of the products around the world.
Company F (Luxury Industry)	<i>Brand value must be the same</i> . The best option to be sure that the brand is with the same value everywhere is to standardize and to use a testimonial that is with an excellent reputation all over the world.	It is not adopted because if the company considers culture and different values, the brand would be different and damaged.

Local adaptation strategy is undertaken by the company D and E, considering culture and brand positioning as the main reasons to change the message across countries. Companies B and C are adapting the message in the local areas, exploiting their knowledge about the consumers and the culture. Therefore, the role of the culture in the local adaptation strategy is taking another prospect/point of view compared to the theory reviewed in the previous chapters. Company A instead, is taking in consideration the culture as the main “obstacle” to the complete standardization of the message from the national countries to the international ones.

6.4. The message creation phase

The message creation phase is the stage where the company defines the creative idea of the advertising and gets the way to share information with the customers in order to catch their attention on the product or service advertised. It is already known that there are two ways that the company may use to create that: the company can standardize the message for all the customers on the world-wide level, or it can adapt the message considering factors like the culture or the local taste of the customer. The message creation phase is of importance since all the information and communication strategies are inside of the message itself.

On the previous chapter, an international advertising campaign process based on the empirical data is drawn up. Within the process, as it is previously discussed, the message creation step is defined on the fourth stage. In this phase, companies are using different strategies. Most of companies as it is argued, are deciding the media to use before and then the message to implement later. The decisions seem to be based on the strategy chosen, thereupon, the entire process is influenced by this decision. The motivation behind that are previously reviewed and compared. Presently, the message creation step is delineated in order to understand how managers are creating the message and how this latter is delivered to the customers.

On the basis of the theoretical review, it is reported that this stage derives from “the creative idea of the company but takes into account the media channel and its part of a wider integrated communications process” (Clow & Baack, 2001, p. 298). This process is already known and previously defined, but the “message creation phase” and the management decision-making on it, are following analyzed.

When it was asked during the interviews what the management is considering before creating the message idea to execute world wide, the answers were:

“To understand the media consumption (...) and the expectancy of some target of customers in communication” (Company A)

“The reason of the communication (...) the goals of the advertising in term of business (awareness, equity, average purchases), the level of communication (...) the information to share with the customer” (Company B)

“Before creating the message the consumer insight and the unmet needs (...) to define the marketing strategy and the goals to gain. (...) define how to persuade the customer with their unmet needs.” (Company C)

“The marketing strategy basically is different, in Asia the idea is to position the goods as “life style, fashionable and surely more luxury” so the concept is more “pushed”. In Europe the strategy is different. (...) We have to be more conservative in some countries if we want to take customers on our side.” (Company D)

“The message needs to be adapted to the concept of family of the country considered in order to catch the attention and the brand awareness from the consumers. And for us it is extremely important to do that since the 90% of sales is coming outside from Italian borders.” (Company E)

“(...) We decide to use this strategy because the risk to use local testimonials everywhere is to influence the chose of the customer with the local taste and the culture which vary from one place to another. If we do something like that the brand

image may be damage and the company's value is not coherent anymore" (Company F)

Substantially, companies are taking in consideration a series of factors that are shaping *what* it should follow the core message to communicate within the advertisement. As it can be seen by the answers, before the creation of the message there are a lot of *input factors* that should be evaluated.

For instance, company D is *defining the countries* because the goods are positioned in different level from one place to another, meaning that the same message can not be implemented all over the world when the positioning of the brand is different. Then, since the possible customers may be the one to watch the advertise, the *target* has to be defined. The respondent from company A stated that also the *level of expectation* by the customers have to be defined in order to shape the message in the right way and catch the attention of the possible buyers.

Continuing to consider the customer, the respondent from company B mentioned the *consumer insight and the unmet needs* of the consumer. Finally, the commercial objectives and goals of the entire message creation process should be established and specified. According to the empirical studies previously made, the international advertising planning process seems to be influenced by the marketing strategy chosen by the management on standardization and local adaptation. Following this logic, before the creation of the message, another step to follow could be to pick out the strategy to be followed.

If companies are deciding to standardize the message and the entire advertising planning process, the message created would be different from companies that are deciding to adapt the message for local areas. Insofar, a companies is deciding firstly the *strategy to follow*, then it can organize and create the *content of the advertising message*. To accomplish this, as it is previously argued, companies are following a

strategy taking in consideration some factors that are influencing those decisions. When this phase is concluded, the content of the message is ready to be defined. When a company is following a standardization strategy, the content will be the same for every countries and this phase will cost less time and money. On the contrary, in case the company is adapting from one place to another, the company has to consider all the *alternatives* to do.

The interviewed from company B argued that if the content of the message is the right one, the advertising will stay on air for a lot of time. The idea can be exemplified by this comment:

“One example of success is the last international advertising campaign, which it is having a roll out in more than 20 countries, and it is standardized. In Italy instead the campaign is on air for more than 5 years and is continuing to have excellent results, so since an advertise works, it will not be changed”

The respondent from company C regarding the content of the advertise argued that their strategy is almost the same one and the content differ just for the type of good showed but the film is always following the same concept and goals. This can be seen by the comment left in consideration of the message content:

“The success of our campaign is gained because almost all the advertisements are made showing the pack shot of the product and the quality of the products, we tend to avoid cultural aspects and give more attention to the product, then it can be recognize by the buyer. While I can't say which are the international campaigns that are unsuccessful”

Company D considering the content of the message is defining the alternatives when adapting and the mode to capture customers' attention, failing sometimes in cultural diversity event, that results in a restriction of the campaign:

“Well, about failure cases with international advertising, we went really far away. The govern in Asian case prohibit to us certain things so basically we had already some information of what to do and what not. For example the govern said that the female models have to be covered from the pubes at least 25cm of open legs. When we started to make marketing in these countries we were really stricted but than when we were watching our competitors we noticed that actually that were only formality in certain cases. So there was one special case that I can mention to you where we did a campaign called “nothing to wear” were there was a couple that was wearing bikini on a Vespa and this campaign was censured. Some campaign were censured especially in Asia. In this case with “nothing to wear” they censured from the television channel but it was working on internet and in our shops because no one was considering that there and was going still good, that is why in some case is the govern but it is not a shock for the customers so we are trying to balance that. While in Europe the advertising is more close to the customers and their lifestyle so there I can think only about successful campaigns”

Another example can be defined by the response made by company E:

“The message needs to be adapted to the family stereotype of the country considered in order to catch the attention. (...) The tv campaign and every advertise is made in the local are. So, to decide how to create the message and how to catch the attention of the consumers since the culture is perceived only staying in the local area, the HQ does not know the culture like us so we are describing the strategy, giving the advertise to them and then we wait the approval from them but it is 100% adapt it. For example usually here in Vietnam if the advertise is for Asia we can not put in the message an European family since one of the company’s value is to be “part of the family” and to be a comfort brand for everyone. If we put an European family in the advertising message of course they would feel themselves excluded. So firstly the objectives should be followed everywhere with the guidelines but then every country has is particular adjustment of the message in consideration of the needs, culture and consumers. By the way an example of advertising that went good was on the contrary including on the message an Italian family because before the integration of the brand with the country, the consumer would perceived the quality of the “made in Italy” and more, the fact that the Asia in most of the countries is a country that is still growing, people that would have this goods would feel themselves as part of Europe, which is really ambitious for them. So we used at the first time the

European standard and lifestyle but now since it is the moment of integration it is different.”

Given the replies, the creation of the content of the message, it is the step where managers are putting all the creative ideas and are planning the marketing message to share. As it is described by the interviewed, within this phase the managers have to consider the alternatives in case this must be done, the information to share to the potential customers and the mode to catch the attention of clients. Moving forward to the last steps, when the message is created, following the same advertising planned process that was aforementioned, it is moment for the managers to include the message on the media. The media, following the advertising campaign planning process, are selected before the creation of the message. Therefore, the message is influenced by the media selected before. In conclusion, the advertising has to be monitored in order to establish its life-cycle on air. Here under the message creation phase model is designed:

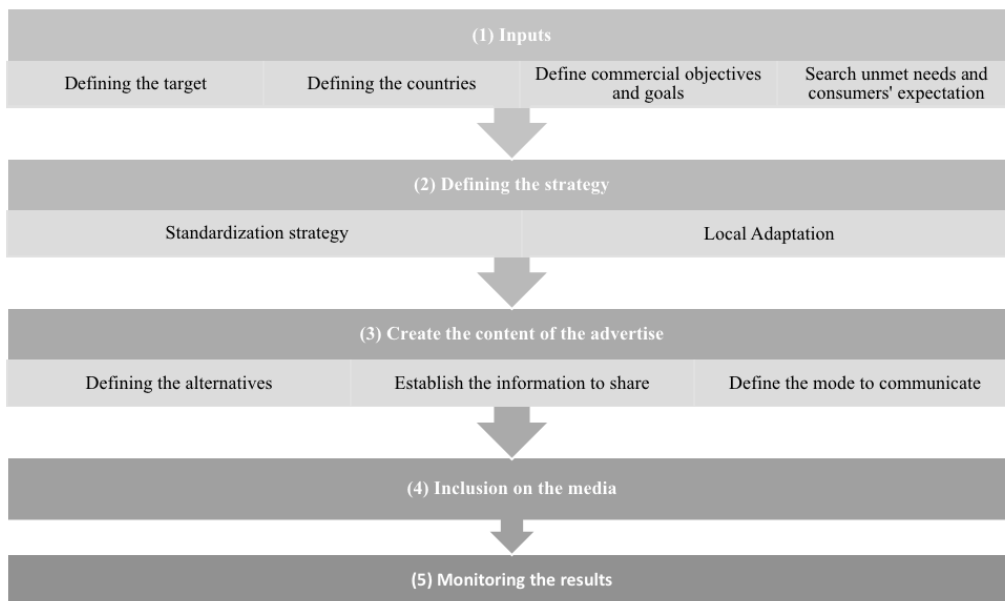


Figure 11. The message creation phase process

Companies may start to define firstly some *inputs*. Defining the target is of importance since the customers' target can vary from one place to another and the message to implement can not be the same everywhere. Then, countries should be defined in order to understand in which of them the message needs to be adapted and in which the message could be the same one. In the first phase companies can also define the commercial objectives and goals in order to avoid the creation of a message that is out of the company's objectives, bringing the company to a waste of marketing efforts. Searching unmet needs and consumers' expectation could be another part to consider before creating the message since the final scope of an advertising should be to catch the customers' attention.

Within the second step of the process, companies can start to define their strategy since they have already selected countries and customers' target. When the strategy is also defined, the third step is to create the content of the message. This stage is influenced by the strategy chosen. If the company is deciding to use a local adaptation strategy, all the alternatives messages should be created while is not necessary when following a standardization strategy. In the third phase is important to define all the information to share within the advertising campaign and the type of communication to use in order to catch customers' attention.

Later, the message can be implemented on the media previously selected and the campaign may be ready to be launched. As it is said before, the media can be selected previously and the message is defined in the type of media used. Monitoring the success of the message is of importance. Some companies indeed are using the same message for years when it is successful.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The objectives and goals of this study were to create a new knowledge in international marketing advertising field and to understand the management decision making on it, focusing especially on the message creation step. The last chapter of the study goes through the whole study by presenting a summary and making conclusions based on both theoretical and empirical parts of the study. Managerial implications, limitations and suggestions for future studies are also presented in order to understand other different aspects of the topic that were not taken into account.

7.1. Summary and key findings

This study aimed to provide a better understanding of the international advertising planning process, focusing on the message creation phase and the management decision making process behind these decisions. Involving in the research six multinational corporations derived from six different industries, this research focused on understanding how managers plan to create a successful international advertising message taking in consideration the two main strategies that can be undertaken in planning an international advertisement campaign. Specifically, the research question to be answered in the research was: How management on MNCs decides to implement an international advertising campaign message and why they make these decisions?

The initial patterns defined in the theoretical framework representing some international advertising planning processes resulted in divergence with the data analysis presented in the previous chapter. Comparing the theoretical advertising planning processes to the data derived from the interviews, it has been found that most of the companies are planning an international advertising in steps, without following a pre existed model, but the closer to their own strategic process and goals. However, some common aspects

permitted to create a new international advertising campaign model based on the empirical data, in order to define lastly, the message creation phase on it.

Moreover, a theoretical framework was developed to describe all the main factors that are affecting the international advertising campaign process. These chapters resulted to have been thoroughly explored and in line with some of the factors cited during the interviews by managers, namely culture and globalization. The two strategies in the theoretical framework were finally explained and compared in order to understand if, one of the strategy resulted to be better than the other. This comparison was important in case one strategy resulted to be more used in the empirical research, but none of them appeared to be a winning strategy and the model was constructed without giving more importance to any of the strategies.

In addition, the long debate done on understanding which is the best strategy between standardization and local adaptation can be considered a waste of effort, since it seems from the results that a strategy is influenced by a series of characteristics representing the company, the industry and the objectives of the firm. Indeed, it emerged from the study that the long debate on understanding which is the best strategy could be stopped, while more effort should be placed on defining which are the cases where one strategy is better then the other. In a sum up, considering table 1. constructed in the theoretical framework, with pro and cons of the strategies defined using theories already done can be implemented given all the information gathered in this research, the strategies could better exploit their performance also in these cases:

Table 7. Performance of the strategies

Performance of the two strategies	Standardization Strategy	Local Adaptation Strategy
Alignment of the brand value	Higher	Lower
Consideration of the cultural differences	Lower	Higher
Differences in the position of the brand all over the world	Lower	Higher
Costs and time spending	Lower	Higher
Consideration of the taste and international customers' needs	Lower	Higher

It resulted that culture and globalization are surely two key aspects that affect the decision making on standardization and adaptation within the creation of the message, but other aspects are also considered within the decision-making process that in the long debate arose in the last century are usually not considered. Indeed, the conducted interviews revealed various factors associated to the process that resulted to be the decisive factors for the management decision-making. For instance, companies may change the message creation considering the brand position in the world, the goals to achieve in the campaign or the research of customer expectations and customer needs in order to persuade.

Overall, it was possible to observe that the message of an advertising is influenced firstly from the strategy to follow since the message would change in consideration of the strategy, secondly to the media selected, because the channel emerged to be relevant in every country and thirdly, to the objectives and marketing goals predisposed, since they can change across countries and between goods to advertise. In conclusion, none of the two strategies is resulting to be most efficient in planning an international advertising, while it can be concluded that both of the strategies are winning strategies. This however depends on the industry, on the brand positioning around the world, the company's values, on the culture and the type of efficiency to achieve within the marketing idea and other series of factors and events.

Finally, the two strategies can be defined to be efficient in the same level considering the objectives and goals of the marketing plan defined by managers. The strategies are defined on the second step of the message creation stage, since none of these decisions should be considered as wrong, their choice is taken considering the company's goals. For instance, if a company has goals to be present in every country without achieving particular goals on foreign customer, a standardization strategy is efficient. Instead, if a company wants to catch the attention of a foreign customer, in order to be accepted and distinguished from other companies, local adaptation strategy would be more indicated. In conclusion, it emerged that every strategy is efficient depending on the goals of the company, one may be more efficient than the other.

Most of the companies tend however to standardize as much as possible since it permits to reduce effort to put on the process, to reduce the errors deriving from incline the advertise on customers that are not really known and to reduce the overall costs. This strategy resulted especially in companies that want to align the brand value all over the world, or they have a luxury brand. Most of the companies indeed, seemed to try to standardize the message as much as they can. Only two companies resulted to adapt as a first strategy to follow.

7.2. Managerial implications

The research findings discussed in this research present several important managerial implications that can represent significant contributions to current international business practice. First and foremost, while it has been suggested that the international advertising process is a process made by steps, it has to be added that it should also be considered as a real strategy that managers create in order to succeed on doing advertising abroad. Therefore, steps are needed but they depend on several factors inside and outside of the company's borders.

Managers should consider advertising strategies as the drivers of the entire process, since none of the strategy can be defined as most successful or unsuccessful given the results and reasons behind every decision. It can be interpreted from the empirical findings that all the two strategies can fit an international campaign without incurring in problems. It is the management behind this process to conclude which is the strategy that could fit better considering all the factors that are influencing these decisions. In a sum up, there is no write or wrong, better or worst, but there is an important process on deciding how to balance all the affecting factors in order to decide the best solution for the company. Subsequently, managers should find which are the objectives and goals of the marketing message and then understand the best strategy in consideration of them in order to exploit the right message.

The study's aim is not to generalize, but instead to provide a rich and contextualized depiction of how management is deciding to internationalize their marketing effort in advertising around the world, to customers that are far away from taste, culture and life-style. To address other particular contexts, further research should be conducted since other factors could be considered from managers in order to make marketing decisions.

The possibility to obtain only few cases to study may be seen as a limitation of the research. However, a thorough analysis of the cases in this study will provide a deep

understanding of international advertising campaigns and the factors affecting the development. This will allow “naturalistic generalization” (Stake 2000, Gabrielsson et. al. 2008), meaning that other potential managers reading these results and conclusion and understanding the similarities and differences of the case companies compared to their own companies can take the advantages and the basis of the research that may suit with their company also.

7.3. Limitations

Limitations may be present on a research. In the case of this study, several limitations can be mentioned and they should be taken into consideration upon further analyzing the study’s findings and contributions to current research. In terms of the sample, the size of such can not and it is not aimed at being representative for all the industries and multinational corporations. It merely offers a specific analysis that provide a new point of view of a marketing process and the study of a stage of the last. The possibility to have different industries to study and corporation born in different parts of the world is a good start, but it is often difficult to generalize the case to all the industries.

Considering the companies, a limitation in the study is the consideration of only multinational corporation while also small and medium enterprises could be taken in to account, creating an other point of view of the process since this latter could change in consideration of the size of the company and its global presence across countries. Moreover, the usage of only B2C companies can be considered as a limitation of the study because none of the cases are deriving from B2B and companies from this business can not be defined by this model.

Due to the geographical constraints, the interviews were conducted using instrument like Skype calls or normal phone calls. These type of interviews are very quickly and

can be defined as one of the primary methods used to obtain information from respondents international business research (Neelankavil, 2007: 214).

It can be argued that the absence of face-to-face contact could not allow the researcher to study other sources of information such as facial reactions and body language, but the telephone interviews sometimes result to provide to the interviewed a more comfortable space that encouraged them to share valuable information and personal experiences without feeling the face-to-face interview pressure and insecurity. As such, not being able to conclude face-to-face meeting may not be considered as a considerable limitation of the research. In addition, some researches suggest that telephone interviews are often defined as advantageous since the respondents are more willing to answer confidential and more complex questions (Neelankavil, 2007: 215).

When conducting interviews, some were made in Italian and others in English. The possibility to have Italian interviews helped the researcher to catch all the information and the respondent could easily explain some concepts and definition. On the contrary, the translation of the same in english may present some misunderstanding and lost of details, but with a fluent english knowledge this factors may be not relevant. Considering the english interviews instead, none of the respondent's native language was english, it was maybe difficult for them to define concepts and be fluent on the speech, giving the possibility to restrict the conversation and forget information.

7.4. Future Research Suggestions

In order to address the aforementioned limitations and enhance existing knowledge concerning the international advertising field, further researches should be conducted taking in consideration a bigger sample. Exploring how the international advertising process changes if the studies are enhanced only in a particular industry and how other undiscovered factors are influencing the management decision-making. This would

provide more ample insight, resulting in further support and/or additional findings of how the process takes place in different situations and countries. Another interesting point of view could be to understand also the media selection phase in deepest, since every step of the process deserve to be analyzed and defined.

Moreover, the possibility to use on the research small and medium enterprises or start-ups that are global would create an interesting point of view in order to understand how the process may change when considering enterprises that are not globalized like the multinational corporation taken into account in this study. The customer perspective also can be a new fresh point to understand how the final customers are viewing the message created when it is implemented on the media, in order to understand if the process is using the right strategy and evaluating and considering the right factors.

In addition, since in the study only business to costumers (B2C) are considered, a future research may consider also companies that are characterized by a business to business type of corporations, exploring how the advertising process and the definition of the message is changing considering customers or of business as the possible international buyers.

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APPENDIX 1 - Suggested questions for the interviews

- 1) Your working position on the company
- 2) In which countries the company is operating now?
- 3) In which countries are you standardizing the advertisement?
- 4) In which are you adapting the advertisements?
- 5) Why those decisions?
- 6) What do you consider before deciding these strategies?
- 7) What do you consider before creating the marketing message?
- 8) Do you test the effectiveness (pre or post) of the message within the countries?
- 9) Are you considering the different usage of media abroad?
- 10) Are important media in the definition of the advertising strategy around the world?
- 11) Do you have some example of fail and success of marketing campaign?
- 12) If yes, what were the problems encountered after?

APPENDIX 2. Information company's interviewed 1

Company: Company A

Country of Origin: France

Year of Establishment: 1954

Number of Employees: 10,000

Revenue: €178.9 million (2010)

Global Presence: Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Business Line: Cosmetic and personal care product

Company's description: Company A is a cosmetic and personal care product manufacturing company based in France. The company is involved in the production and marketing of perfumes, skincare, hair care and make-up products. Its product portfolio includes cleansers, moisturizers, anti-aging serums, exfoliators, compacts, concealers, mascaras, lipsticks and glosses. The company also offers personal care products for men such as shaving products, after shave soothers, revitalizing gels. The company along with its subsidiaries operates in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It is headquartered in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France.

(Sources: MarketLine - Company's Profile)

APPENDIX 3. Information company's interviewed 2

Company: Company B

Country of Origin: France

Year of Establishment: 1977

Number of Employees: 61,000

Global Presence: African, Asian, Balkans- Mediterranean, French Overseas Departments and Territories; Oceania, and the Middle East countries.

Business Line: Food

Company's description: Company B International is a consumer goods company that offers dairy products. The company offers cheese, cream, milk, butter, desserts, yogurts, infant cereals, daily nutrition, and infant and adult nutrition products. It markets its products under 12 brands. Company B also provides food services to clients. The company markets its products in African, Asian, Balkans- Mediterranean, French Overseas Departments and Territories; Oceania, and the Middle East countries. The company's International is headquartered in Paris, France.

(Sources: MarketLine - Company's Profile)

APPENDIX 4. Information company's interviewed 3

Company: Company C

Country of Origin: Switzerland

Year of Establishment: 1845

Number of Employees: 13,539

Group Sales: 3.901 billion (2017)

Global Presence: Distribution and Sales in more than 120 countries

Business Line: Confectionary, on the specific: Dark Chocolate, Milk Chocolate, White Chocolate, Cocoa Products, Confectionery Products.

Company's description: The company is recognized as a leader in the market for premium quality chocolate, offering a large selection of products in more than 120 countries around the world. During 170 years of Company's existence, it has become known as one of the most innovative and creative companies making premium chocolate. Company C is a manufacturer and distributor of confectionery products. The company offers confectionery products including chocolates, dark chocolate, white chocolate, milk chocolate, and others. Its products include gums and candies, and other confectionery products. The company also offers chocolates packaged in gift boxes and tins, and gift certificates. The company operates through production sites located in Europe and the US and distribution and sales companies worldwide. It is headquartered now in Paris, France.

(Sources: MarketLine - Company's Profile)

APPENDIX 5. Information company's interviewed 4

Company: Company D

Country of Origin: Italy

Year of Establishment: 1845

Number of Employees: 7,197

Net Sales: 1,313.1 million EUR (2016)

Global Presence: Europe, Asia and North America

Business Line: Automotive

Description: Company D is a European manufacturer of two-wheel motor vehicles. The group offers a range of products that include scooters, mopeds and motorcycles from 50 to 1,400 cc marketed under 8 important and famous brands. It also operates in the three- and four-wheel light transport sector with its ranges of commercial vehicles. It has production plants in Pontedera (Pisa), which manufactures P two-wheelers, light transport vehicles for the European market and engines for scooters and motorcycles; Noale (Venice) and Scorze (Venice), which manufactures 3 two wheelers brands, and Wi-Bikes; in Mandello del Lario (Lecco), which manufactures auto vehicles and engines; in Baramati, Maharashtra, manufactures three- and four-wheeler light transport vehicles for the Indian market and exports, the; in Vinh Phuc, Vietnam, manufactures scooters and engines for the local market and Asian market. The group also operates in China with a joint venture in which it holds a 45% stake.

(Sources: MarketLine - Company's Profile and website)

APPENDIX 6. Information company's interviewed 5

Company: Company E

Country of Origin: Italy

Year of Establishment: 1960

Number of Employees: 6,900

Sales: 1,43 Billion (2014) 89% of sales is generated outside Italy

Global Presence: 150 Countries

Business Line: Thermo Comfort

Description: Company E is a manufacturer of thermic comfort products, components and burners. The company offers products such as heat pumps, air conditioners, boilers, water heaters, burners, solar thermals and thermostats and it offers post sales services such as repair and maintenance. Its products include condensing wall-hung boilers, conventional wall-hung boilers, high-power wall-hung condensing boilers, solar water heating, cylinders and thermoregulation modulating controls, among others. The company also offers thermoregulation ON/OFF controls, air-sourced water heaters, solar water heaters, electric water heaters, gas instantaneous water heaters and gas storage water heaters. It offers products to industrial, domestic and commercial sectors. The company's production activities are carried out in 22 sites in 12 countries. It has 17 research and development centers in Europe and Asia. The company has five representative offices in 32 countries and distribution in over 150 countries. The company also plans to realize an innovative electronic platform called *Ostis* to design and develop control boards for interoperation of electric and thermal household appliances.

(Sources: MarketLine - Company's Profile and website)

APPENDIX 7. Information company's interviewed 6**Company:** Company F**Country of Origin:** Germany**Year of Establishment:** 1906**Number of Employees:** 1,300**Global Presence:** 120 Countries, Branches in 25 countries and a total of 150 boutiques WW of which the half of ownership and the other are franchising**Business Line:** Manufacturing Luxury writing instruments, watches, jewelry and leather goods**Description:** The company has been known for generations as a maker of sophisticated, high quality writing instruments. In the past few years, the product range has been expanded to include exquisite writing accessories, luxury leather goods and belts, jewelry, eyewear and watches. The company has thus become a purveyor of exclusive products which reflect the exacting demands made today for quality design, tradition and master craftsmanship. The company manufactures one of the world's leading brands of luxury writing instruments. Its pens have been sold around the world since the early 20th century. It specializes in very expensive pens and controls an estimated half the global market for pens that cost more than \$100. The company also makes other luxury goods such as men's and women's jewelry, desk accessories, leather goods, watches, and perfume. Company's products are widely distributed through retail establishments around the world, and also sold through boutiques. Sales from its boutiques account for about a third of the company's total volume.

(Sources: ReferencesForBusiness - Company's Profile and website)