



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

# Think global, act local!

*A cross-cultural study of five Nutella websites on adaptation*

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the present research is to analyse commercial websites of the same global brand from a cultural perspective looking for the presence of cultural patterns which might reflect marketers' awareness for the need of cross-cultural adaptation.

Through a qualitative content analysis of main pages of in total five Nutella websites addressing Germany, Italy, Sweden, Canada and Australia, this paper targets to investigate how a global brand adapts to local cultures and more specifically which similarities/differences can be found on its websites and how these can be related to the culture of each country. In order to do so Hall's and Hofstede's taxonomies are used as the framework of analysis.

The findings of this paper show that in addition to several cultural characteristics that influence web design other factors such as law regulations, marketing strategies and the popularity of a product play a role when designing a website for a specific host-culture.

The diverse results make this study a contribution to the field of cross-cultural communication as well as of digital marketing. Finally, some possible limitations are recognized and suggestions for future research are also given.

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# 1. Introduction

Research shows that the use of digital marketing, which refers to Internet-based marketing activities as well as activities based on other digital technologies, has increased over the last ten years (Kotler, 2009). Together with the improvement of telecommunication and transportation systems as well as the spread of cable and satellite TV, the development of the Internet has been addressed by researchers as one of the factors contributing in making our world a smaller marketplace (Miller, 2012; Kotler et al., 2004, Theodosiou et al., 2002; Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2004). As a consequence this generates new opportunities for remote businesses to compete on a global market, but also the need for bridging cultural gaps in order to avoid misunderstandings. Therefore it poses the issue whether marketers should standardize or adapt to the target cultures. However a more recent perspective suggests a combination of both strategies which might result in a more appealing approach called “glocalization” (Singh et al., 2005, Kotler et al. 2009).

Departing from the assumption that individuals’ behaviour is affected by their culture, which is defined as the set of beliefs, values and social norms shared by a group of individuals, and considering that one of the main aims of marketing is to meet consumers’ needs and values, it is crucial for marketers to understand the consumers’ culture in order to develop a more effective marketing message. This means that, when moving across cultures, marketers should refer to the set of values shared by the new culture (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2004).

The way in which websites reflect adaptation to national cultures is a topic that interested many researchers in the last years. Based on the frameworks of Hall and Hofstede, which compare values and define differences between different cultures, cross-cultural studies<sup>1</sup> in the field of digital marketing have allowed comparing marketers’ communication behaviors across different cultures. However, limitations have also been pointed out that the present study aims to overcome while also taking into consideration previous researchers’ suggestion for future study. Thus the following study aims to describe and analyse five main pages of Nutella websites on their differences and similarities. The findings are put into context with frameworks of Hall and Hofstede, which deal with cultural dimensions. Through the comparison significant differences/similarities of the websites can reveal the possible cultural adaptation to the respective host-culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Cross-cultural communication: study of a particular idea or concept within many cultures. [...] cross-cultural

## 2. Research Question

Through a comparative study of five local websites of the same brand (*Nutella*), this study aims to answer the following research question:

1. *How are the (national) websites of a global brand adapted to local cultures?*

However, in order to be able to answer the research question other additional questions have to be asked beforehand, which are:

- a. *What are the similarities/differences on the websites?*
- b. *How are the similarities/differences related to the culture of the countries?*

## 3. Theoretical background

The following section provides an overview of the discussion of adaptation vs. standardization, as well as cultural frameworks that are relevant for this study. Furthermore, information on previous research in the field of cross-cultural communication, marketing and web design in context with cultural differences is presented. The previous research mentioned in the following is the basis for the methodology of this study.

### 3.1 Adaptation vs. standardization

Managing cultural differences brings companies to the dilemma of choosing between standardization and adaptation. The choice between standardization and adaptation has been object of debate among academics since the beginning of the 1980's (Singh et al., 2005; Theodosiou et al., 2002; Ryans et al. 2003).

A standardized approach relies on the assumption that the development of new technologies and new channels of communications (such as the Internet) have generated a certain convergence of consumers' lifestyles, needs, tastes and preferences (Levitt, 1983; Ohmae, 1985 in Theodosiou et al. 2002; Kotler et al., 2009). Thus a standardized approach consists in keeping the same marketing mix<sup>2</sup> in all markets (Kotler et al. 2005; Singh et al. 2005).

An approach based on adaptation supports the belief that even though our world is getting more and more connected; consumers' needs and preferences differ from country to country together with laws, regulations, and technological development. Thus through adaptation marketers aim to adjust marketing-mix elements to each national market (Kotler et al. 2005; Singh et al. 2005).

On one side, reasons such as lower (production, distribution, marketing and management) costs (Kotler et al. 2004) and the generation of a consistent brand image across countries (Theodosiou et al. 2002) support a standardized approach. However, adaptations' focus on increasing sales

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<sup>2</sup> Marketing mix: the set of controllable tactical marketing tools - product, price, place and promotion- that the firms blends to produce the response it wants in the target market (Kotler et al., 2005, p. 34)

rather than just reducing costs results in a long-term profitability (Singh et al., 2005; Kotler et al. 2005; Theodosiou et al., 2002).

A third perspective on the issue whether companies should take a standardized approach or an adapted one is given by the so called *glocal strategy*, “*think global, act local*” (Singh et al., 2005, Kotler et al. 2009). According to this perspective standardization and adaptation should be seen as the two extremes of the same continuum (Theodosiou et al., 2002). Combining standardized and adapted elements allows meeting consumers’ needs in a more effective way (Singh et al., 2005). Thus this kind of approach, as well as an adapted approach, requires marketers to have knowledge of the national culture they aim to target.

### 3.2 Cultural taxonomies

For several decades cultures have been studied and many researchers attempted to come up with different frameworks to define cultures, describe national cultures, and measure cultural differences. Two of those frameworks are the ones from Hall and Hofstede. Both frameworks include dimensions on which countries are categorized. When studying the dimensions it becomes clear that some of the dimensions from the different researchers seem to be the same or at least very similar to each other. The cultural frameworks are presented shortly.

The first framework is the one by Edward T. Hall. The anthropologist is best known for his work in intercultural relations and communication. In his studies he manifested concepts of *low vs. high context communication* as well as *monochronic vs. polychronic orientation to time*. Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall “specialize in identifying the nonverbal components of intercultural communication” (Hall & Hall, 1990, xvi).

The most common tool used in research for understanding cultural differences is Hofstede’s cultural dimensions model (Callahan 2006; Hermeking 2006; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). Hofstede published the book *Culture’s Consequences* in 1980 and defined culture as the *mental programming* of a society (Hofstede, 1980). Following a study started in 1965, Geert Hofstede developed a model for categorizing cultures according to four dimensions, namely *power distance*, *individualism/collectivism*, *masculinity/femininity* and *uncertainty avoidance* (Hofstede, 1980).

Hofstede’s research initially studied over 117.000 IBM employees in more than 40 cultures between 1967 and 1973. The methodology consisted of a questionnaire, which the IBM employees answered and on which basis cultures scored and were classified in the dimensions. On the basis of this research Hofstede first defined the four above mentioned dimensions (1980). Later, two more dimensions have been added to this model, *long-/short-term orientation* (in 1991), which has been changed to *pragmatic - normative* in 2010<sup>3</sup>, and *indulgence/restraint* (in 2010).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

### **3.2.1 Hall**

#### ***Low vs. high context communication***

The first dimension by Hall (1976) is called *low vs. high context communication*. In a high context (HC) culture most of the communication is implied in the message. That means that little information is given in a message and the message derives meaning from the context, the physical surroundings or the person that communicates. In a low context (LC) culture, however, much information is given in a message. People have the need for explanation and the messages to give detailed explicit information. Furthermore he states that in no culture does only one of the concepts exclusively exist, but either LC or HC communication predominates.

#### ***Monochronic vs. polychronic time***

The second dimension is the one referring to *monochronic vs. polychronic time*. In this dimension Hall describes that people carry out and pay attention to either one thing (monochronic) or several things at once (polychronic). In addition, monochronic people tend to be LC and have the need for information. Therefore, polychronic societies tend to be HC.

### **3.2.2 Hofstede**

#### ***Power Distance***

Hofstede's dimension called *Power distance (PD)* refers to the degree of acceptance and expectation of unequal power distribution by less powerful members of a society and deals with inequalities and with the distribution of power. High PD means that people accept a hierarchical order, whereas low PD is reflected by people trying to give equal power to everybody and inequalities in power distribution have to be justified.

#### ***Individualism vs. Collectivism***

Another dimension by Hofstede is *Individualism vs. Collectivism*. This dimension deals with "the relationship between the individual and the collective that prevails in a given society" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 209). Individualism is characterized by the individuals of a society taking care of themselves and immediate family. In collectivistic cultures, however, members of a society take care of each other, no matter if they are family or not. Another characteristic of this dimension is whether the members of a culture think in an "I" or "we" pattern.

Hofstede (1991) determines that Individualism is connected to LC communication, whereas Collectivism is connected to HC communication.

#### ***Masculinity vs. Femininity***

Hofstede's *Masculinity vs. femininity* dimension deals with the competitiveness of a culture and the "dominant gender role patterns" in societies (Hofstede, 2001, p. 284). A masculine society is more competitive than a feminine society. Rewards, achievement, assertiveness and heroism are

seen as important and play an important role in a masculine society. The opposite, the feminine society, is more about cooperation, looking out for each other, especially for the weak and overall trying to achieve a better quality of life. All in all, feminine cultures are more consensus-oriented.

### ***Uncertainty avoidance***

Hofstede's dimension called *Uncertainty avoidance (UA)* is about how society deals with the unknown future and the uncertainty and ambiguity it brings (Hofstede, 2001). People in high UA cultures have different rituals, values and rules in order to cope with the uncertainty, whereas people in low UA cultures have informal norms. Members of a society with high UA are more stressed, hectic and are used to express their emotions. On the opposite members of a low UA society are at ease, have less stress and anxiety and suppress their emotions.

### ***Pragmatic vs. Normative***

The fifth dimension of Hofstede called *pragmatic vs. normative* deals with the unexplainable things that happen around us every day. People from normative societies feel the desire to explain as much as possible, whereas people from pragmatic societies believe that not everything can be explained and therefore don't feel the need for explanation. Other than in normative societies it is not so much about finding the truth in life, but about living a virtuous life<sup>4</sup>.

### ***Indulgence vs. Restraint***

The sixth and last dimension of Hofstede, which is called *indulgence vs. restraint*, deals with the satisfaction of people's basic needs and natural desires in relation to enjoy life and have fun. In restrained societies gratification of needs are suppressed and regulated by social norms, whereas in an indulgent society people do the opposite, which is gratify basic and natural human needs that are in the context of enjoyment and fun.

## **3.2 Previous research of cultural dimensions in web design**

Based on the previously enlisted taxonomies, referred to as a method for measuring cultural differences, cross-cultural research in the area of online marketing has recently increased. These dimensions have been used by researchers (for example Okazaki and Alonso, 2003; Hermeking, 2006; Callahan, 2006; and Würtz, 2006) as a tool for identifying cultural patterns in web design, but also as a guide for developing appeal-strategies that could work in specific countries (De Mooij).

In 2003 Okazaki and Alonso conducted a cross cultural comparison of Japanese products-based websites in USA, Spain and Japan. Based on a literature review, focused on online marketing communication, they derived 12 marketing strategies that served their study as a tool of analysis.

Based on the judgements of six experts, these 12 strategies have then been classified into two main approaches, namely "Soft sell" and "Hard sell". The "Soft sell" approach includes: *celebrity*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html>



*endorsement, curiosity arousal, emotional/psychological appeals, entertainment and symbolic/visual metaphors*, while the “Hard sell” approach includes *brand repetition/familiarization, comparison, habit starting by trials/simulations, rational reasoning and special incentives*. However two strategies, namely *interactive communication and personalized choice/attention*, could not be assigned to any of the two approaches. The reason for this is that these two strategies seem to be a peculiarity of the online environment, rather than a matter of cultural tendency (Okazaki & Alonso, 2003).

Okazaki and Alonso’s (2003) research relies upon the assumption suggested by De Mooij (1998) that HC cultures tend more towards a “Soft sell” approach, while LC cultures tend more towards a “Hard sell” approach.

In order to prove their hypothesis and research questions, Okazaki and Alonso (2003) applied a quantitative content analysis. By measuring the frequency of their data they found out that there is a difference in the kind of approach prevailing in each culture. However, their findings did not completely support their main assumption.

Several factors have been identified as possible limitations to this study. Among these, the ambiguity resulted in defining the units of analysis and the limited sample size object of this study. For future research the authors suggest to focus either on a broader sample or on a single product category (Okazaki and Alonso, 2003).

Another example of cross-cultural research in web design is given by Hermeking. In 2006 Hermeking conducted a cross-cultural comparison of different international companies’ websites in several countries. Inspired by previous studies including Okazaki and Alonso’s (2003), Hermeking developed a new tool of analysis based on eight design criteria. The first criterion, “*content appeal*”, relies on Okazaki and Alonso distinction between “*soft sell*” and “*hard sell*” approaches. The criteria “*layout*”, “*length of pages*”, “*multimedia presentation*”, and “*interactivity*” are based on Ju-Pak’s cross cultural comparison of 310 websites from the United States, United Kingdom and South Korea in 1999. Finally, Hermeking added three more criteria, namely “*structure of content*”, “*total volume of website*” and “*degree of navigation support*”.

Hermeking’s categorization of his findings is based on Hall’s classification of cultures in HC and LC cultures. Thus LC cultures’ websites, which according to Hall and Hall (1990) are usually correlated to monochronic cultures, tend to be characterized by compartmentalized and detailed information. Moreover, as “time-saving” solutions, the user is provided with navigation tools and the layout is generally text-heavy in order to reduce download times. On the contrary, HC cultures’ websites generally present less voluminous web pages but characterized by more pictures, animated elements, coloured background, high level of multimodality and thus limited text. For what concerns the degree of navigation support, it is usually less intense in such websites; however this is compensated by the presence of many clickable items (Hermeking, 2006).

Hermeking conducted his research in a period of time of 5 years. As he himself points out, thanks to the dynamic nature of the online environment, web design is subject to continuous change over time. Thus his results might also have been affected by the fact that the websites that are object of his analysis might refer to different period of time and environmental conditions. Environmental conditions refer to those factors such as economics, politics, technical preconditions (among others) that are considered “uncontrollable” in relation to web design (Hermeking, 2006). Moreover Hermeking’s study doesn’t take into account possible culture-specific criteria other than design. Content criteria as colours preferences, presentation of people/products, slogan and use of pronouns have also been addressed as relevant criteria for identifying cultural tendencies in relation to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (Hermeking, 2006).

A new perspective on the issue of cross-cultural web design is formulated that same year by Callahan (2006), who conducted a cross-cultural study of university websites from Malaysia, Austria, the United States, Ecuador, Japan, Sweden, Greece and Denmark. Contrary to the previously mentioned researches (Okazaki & Alonso, 2003 and Hermeking, 2006) Callahan relates her findings to Hofstede’s taxonomy rather than Hall’s. She did this based on a literature review related to the use of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions as an instrument for interpreting cultural differences in web design (Marcus & Gould 2000, Ackerman 2002, Dormann and Chisalita 2002). As a limitation of her study, Callahan herself points out the fact that the study does not take into account linguistic elements but only graphical elements (Callahan 2006). Hall’s and Hofstede’s taxonomies have also been the basis for the analysis of Würtz’ cross cultural study of HC and LC cultures’ websites (2006). Once again written text is excluded from the analysis together with those elements that might be strictly related to the national culture such as emblems, colours and metaphors.

Besides the criteria listed in the previously mentioned studies, other criteria have been addressed by researchers as culture-related elements in websites, as for example *colours*. In 2001 Duncker et al. pointed out the misinterpretation of colours as one of the most common cross-cultural design failures. According to their study, different cultures manifest different patterns in the choice of colours. Among other things, their results showed that Scandinavians prefer dark colours and a low contrast, English prefer pastel colours, Jamaicans prefer strong and bright colours, Africans tend to choose black as background plus some brighter colours, Europeans and US-Americans seem to favour bright background, black text and few moderately colourful objects, while Asians did not manifest any particular pattern. Another study related to colour preferences is Barber and Badre’s (2001). Barber and Badre refer to the concepts of “Culturability” as the relationship between culture and usability and “user friendly” as an interface that allows its users to “feel at home”. According to their opinion, these concepts rely upon the assumption that there are elements in websites that are strictly related to culture. These elements are called “cultural markers”, colour is one of them. Their study showed that the colours employed in websites usually reflect the colours of the national flags. However this was not the case for Brazilian websites, which instead tend to be very colourful.

Another criterion that has been pointed out by many as a culture-related element in websites, but that at the same time has often been excluded from the analysis, is the *use of pronouns*. Language is an essential element of culture and it plays a major role in the transmission of culture itself and thus in its representation (Fiske 2002, in Twenge et al., 2012). The relationship between culture and language can be seen in two different ways (De Mooij, 2010). The first way corresponds to the “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis”, which claims that the structures of a language influence people’s perception and worldview, thus their culture (De Mooij, 2010; Twenge et al., 2012). Opposite to this viewpoint there is the suggestion that the relationship between culture and language moves towards the other way, thus culture influences the language. A more recent perspective instead defines the relationship between culture and language as more reciprocal in the sense that they influence and shape each other.

Departing from this last assumption, researchers have showed how language, in particular the use of pronouns, reflects cultural tendencies. Twenge et al. (2012) provide a list of authors (Kashima & Kashima, 1998; Gardner et al., 1999; Na & Choi, 2009) who showed how the use of pronoun is linked to cultural dimensions such as Individualism and Collectivism. In 1998 Kashima & Kashima pointed out that those languages, in which the use of subject pronouns is obligatory (e.g. English), tend to reflect a more individualistic culture than those languages which allow pronoun drop (e.g. Spanish). This could be related to the fact that the explicit use of pronouns determines the relationship between speaker and speech context in a way that the personal self represents the “focal point”, opposite to the “context” in collectivistic cultures (Kashima & Kashima, 1998). Marketing research has also recognized the importance of pronouns and their effect on people’s attitudes toward the brand (Sela et al., 2012). As indicated by Wechsler (2010 in Twenge, 2012), the first and second singular persons are indicators of “self-ascription”, thus Individualism. While pronouns such as “I/me/you/your” separate the actor and the other, pronouns such as “we” indicates closeness and shared identity (Brown & Gilman, 1960 in Sela et al., 2012).

This brief overview of the researches conducted in the field of cross-cultural communication applied to the online environment suggests the need for new research. First of all, as Hermeking (2006) pointed out, the online environment is in constant development and thus we might assume that research in this field needs to be constantly updated. Previous studies also show a lack of a qualitative research to the issue of cross-cultural adaptation. In most of the studies, the criteria indicators of each dimension were attributed hypothetically, “based on similar values representative of a specific dimension” (Callahan, 2006, p. 247). Therefore, a qualitative approach might provide a deeper and more exhaustive interpretation of such attribution. Finally, it seems like there is the need for the development of a (richer but less ambiguous) tool of analysis that might include both design and content criteria.

## 4. Methodology

The following section provides a description of the research process in three steps. First, the brand chosen as object of this study will be briefly introduced together with the reason why it has been chosen. Successively, the reader is provided with a detailed description of the data collection process followed by an explanation of the data analysis including what has been analysed and according to which criteria.

### 4.1 Nutella's History

The brand that was chosen for the analysis is *Nutella*. This choice was made because *Ferrero* with the brand *Nutella* is one example that shows the need for cross-cultural adaptation caused by globalization. Moreover, Hermeking (2006) suggests that global brands of non-durable products apply a higher degree of adaptation in their websites.

Already in 1964 the Italian company *Ferrero* had perceived the need for cross-cultural adaptation. Thus the decision to change the name of the hazelnut chocolate spread "Supercrema" into "Nutella", a combination of the English word "nut" and the Latin suffix "-ella", as an attempt to promote Nutella across the rest of Europe. Since then, *Nutella* has become an International brand with around 16.000 employees in 31 offices in the 5 continents.

In 2012 Ferrero reported that Nutella's performance has had an increase of 8.9% from the previous year, in different markets. As a consequence we can assume that its need for bridging cultural gaps has increased even more.

### 4.2 Data Collection

The method that was chosen to be applied in order to answer the research questions is content analysis.

As claimed by Elo and Kynga, content analysis is concerned with meanings, intentions, consequences and context in written, verbal and visual communication messages (Elo & Kynga, 2008). A content analysis of the chosen websites allows the identification and categorization of the meanings that the brand intends to communicate through its websites. Content analysis can be used as a method for both qualitative and quantitative studies. In this case content analysis was used as a qualitative method. Indeed this research aims to investigate not just the explicit messages of the websites, but also the hidden meanings. In order to do so, an interpretation of these meanings is required and as claimed by Hennink et al. (2011), qualitative research attempts "to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Hennink et al., 2011, p.9).

Three main steps characterize the conduct of a content analysis: the identification of relevant sources, the sampling selection and the identification of the coding units of analysis (Coolican, 1994).

As already mentioned the objects of this research were a few of the official websites of the Italian brand *Nutella*. The reason why websites have been chosen as the objects of this study is that Internet is considered as a new channel of communication that allows “intensive worldwide interactions of people and exchanges of goods, services, information, and capital [...]” (Hermeking, 2006, p.192). Thus it represents a main instrument for marketing communication such as advertising and public relations. *Ferrero’s* and *Nutella’s* official websites give access to the web pages of each country in which Nutella is distributed, thus solving the problem of the identification of relevant sources.

The sampling selection was based on a matter of convenience (Hennink et al., 2011). Therefore the websites that were analyzed in this research were those addressed to the following countries: Italy, Germany, Sweden, Canada, and Australia. The number of countries’ websites was chosen due to the time limit, the depth of the study and to the statement that “[...] for proper cross-cultural research preferably at least five countries must be compared.” (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p. 100). One of the main factors for choosing the websites was the language. The researchers prefer to analyze websites which language they have knowledge of, as this might be crucial to understand similarities or differences in the slogans and messages displayed on the websites. Furthermore, understanding the language might increase the possibility of recognizing cultural elements within the websites. The languages that the researchers have sufficient knowledge of include English, German, Italian and Swedish. Italy and Germany were also chosen due to the fact that the researchers are familiar to these two countries since they were born and grew up there. In addition, Sweden was chosen because it is of interest due the fact that both research currently live and study there and sufficient knowledge of the language is given. Furthermore, Canada and Australia were chosen randomly out of the websites that are available in English, which the researchers also speak fluently.

The websites were accessed through their official Nutella web address (URL). However, for Sweden no official Nutella website exists. When entering the URL [www.nutella.se](http://www.nutella.se) the user is redirected to the website of Ferrero Italy. Therefore, for the analysis, the Nutella website was accessed through the Ferrero Sweden homepage ([www.ferrero.se](http://www.ferrero.se)) and the Nutella link under the dropdown menu “Produkter”.

The URL’s that were used for the analysis are as followed:

Germany: [www.nutella.de](http://www.nutella.de)

Italy: <http://www.nutella.it/it/>

Sweden: <http://www.ferrero.se/nutella>

Canada: <http://www.nutella.ca/>

Australia: <http://www.nutella.com.au/>

The websites were accessed between February 21st and March 12th in 2014. For the analysis only the main page of the websites was taken into consideration. Screenshots of the websites are provided in the Appendix.

### 4.3 Data analysis

Content analysis can be conducted either in an inductive way or in a deductive way (Elo & Kynga, 2008). Both approaches have been applied to this research. The coding units of analysis have been developed in several stages.

First Hermeking's design criteria (2006) were integrated with Okazaki and Alonso's classification of "Soft sell" and "Hard sell" approach (2003). However, not all their criteria were included as codes of analysis. As already mentioned, it was impossible to classify *interactive communication* and *personalized choice/attention* in either "Soft sell" or "Hard sell" approach (Okazaki & Alonso 2003). For this reason these two criteria were not included in the matrix of codes. The same happened with the criterion *habit* (due to the non-durable nature of the Nutella products). The criterion *multimodal presentation* instead has been incorporated in *curiosity arousal*. Indeed both criteria refer to a HC culture, moreover the researchers agreed on the fact that *curiosity arousal* could be considered as one of the main function of a multimodal presentation.

These units were structured in an unconstrained matrix. This allowed the possibility of creating new categories within its bounds, thus leaving space to an inductive approach (Elo & Kynga, 2008). Indeed, as suggested by Treadwell (2011), a content analysis has to be systematic, thus all the elements (images, sounds, textual information) of each sample have to be analyzed. Through an inductive approach more criteria have been added to the tool of analysis while others have been removed. Thus *celebrity endorsement* (Okazaki & Alonso, 2003) has been removed, due to the absence of such criteria on the websites. Hermeking's *Total volume of the website* and *length of pages* have been referred to by Callahan as *amount of data* and *possibility of scrolling*. In order to avoid confusion, Callahan's denomination will be kept throughout this paper.

The matrix that has been used for the analysis was designed according to Hall's and Hofstede's taxonomies. Thus the following matrix of codes has been realized.

#### 1) HIGH CONTEXT (HC) vs. LOW CONTEXT (LC) (POLYCHRONIC vs. MONOCHRONIC)

- *Layout* (Ju-Pak, 1999; in Hermeking, 2006); whether the layout is more visual or text-heavy; communication in HC cultures is supposed to be more indirect than in LC cultures, thus websites addressing HC cultures are expected to be more visual than those addressing LC cultures; on the contrary those websites addressing LC cultures are expected to be text-heavy, this would also imply a larger *amount of data* and thus the *possibility of scrolling*.

- *Degree of navigation support* (Hermeking, 2006); refers to the presence of navigation tools such as sitemaps and search-boxes which allow users to accomplish tasks more quickly; being HC cultures polychronic, the presence of these tools should be lower on websites addressing HC cultures than on those addressing LC;

- *Interactivity* (Ju-Pak, 1999; in Hermeking, 2006); refers to the presence of hyperlinks; websites addressing to HC cultures are supposed to compensate the lack of *navigation support* by a higher presence of hyperlinks;

- *Structure of content* (Hermeking, 2006); whether the information is compartmentalized and detailed, as expected in LC cultures, or less structured and less detailed as expected in HC cultures;

- *Individuals with the product* (Würtz, 2006); whether the website depicts people using the product or not; picture of individuals with the product and pictures of individuals or the product by themselves can be found on websites of HC and LC cultures; however LC cultures would tend more to highlight the product's features by displaying the product by itself rather than together with individuals;

- *Soft- vs. hard-sell approach* (Okazaki and Alonso 2003); whether the website applies a more modest approach or a more persuasive one; a *soft-sell approach* aims to create a certain atmosphere, this is achieved through:

- *Curiosity arousal*; which includes elements such as pictures, animations, online-games, videos (i.e., 'eye-catchers');

- *Emotional/psychological appeal*; refers to the employment of emotions as an attempt to influence the user's decision making process; according to the researchers this could also be achieved through the use of *idioms*;

- *Entertainment*; which can be achieved through humour, parody, etc;

- *Symbolic/visual metaphor*, refer to symbols and images that might affect the users in a positive way.

On the contrary a *hard-sell approach* aims to persuade the user highlighting the product's features through;

- *Brand repetition/familiarization*; which can be achieved by repeating the brand's name or some other information throughout the website;

- *Comparison*; the brand is compared with other brands/products of the same category to highlight the product's features and superiority;

- *Rational reasoning*; the user is provided with logical and persuasive information as an instrument for affecting his/her decision making process;

- *Special incentives*; prizes and gifts are offered to the user as an encouragement for buying the product;

- *Colours*; whether the colours used on the website refer to the national flag (Barber & Badre, 2001) or to the brand's colours might be an indicator of either HC or LC.

## **2) POWER DISTANCE (PD)**

- *Images of both genders* (Callahan, 2006); which might represent the desire for equality in low PD cultures (Marcus & Gould, 2000);

- *National emblems* (Callahan, 2006); which in high PD cultures would symbolize the desire for social and moral order (Marcus & Gould, 2000);

## **3) COLLECTIVISM vs. INDIVIDUALISM**

- *Images of groups vs. images of individuals* (Callahan, 2006); collectivistic cultures' main focus on relationships is expected to be reflected by the usage of images representing groups; on the contrary, images of individuals are expected to be encountered on websites addressing individualistic cultures, in which the individual social-economic interests are placed over the group (Marcus & Gould, 2000);

- *Images of aged vs. images of young people* (Callahan, 2006); contrary to individualistic cultures, collectivistic cultures place great value on acquiring skills and gaining expertise, this is what images of aged would symbolize (Steenkamp & Geyskens, 2006);

- *Use of pronouns/determiners*; pronouns and determiners like “we” and “our” are expected to be employed by collectivistic cultures to express closeness; on the contrary, individualistic cultures would put more focus on the individual by using pronouns/determiners like “ I, me, you and yours” (Brown & Gilman, 1960 in Sela et al., 2012);

## **4) FEMININITY vs. MASCULINITY**

- *Frequent images of people* (Callahan, 2006); differently from masculine cultures, feminine cultures give priority to relationships rather than material achievements; this could be indicated by the frequent use of images of people but also by the following criterion;

- *Orientation towards relationships* (Callahan, 2006), which the researchers have identified in elements such as hyperlinks that allow the user to get in contact with the company, such as e-mails, social networks and other contact information;

- *Emphasis on traditions/traditional family* (Callahan, 2006); masculine cultures emphasize the traditional roles differentiation not just among family members, but also at a societal level (Marcus & Gould, 2000);



## 5) UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE (UA)

The degree to which a certain culture accepts uncertainty might be reflected by elements such as:

- *Choices,*
- *Amounts of data,*
- *Possibility of scrolling,*
- *Navigation support,* and
- *Hyperlinks.*

Thus high UA cultures, which see what is different as something dangerous, would prefer a clear, simple structure in which the consequences of their actions can be easily predicted. Thus the websites addressing such a culture would present few hyperlinks, limited choices and a limited amount of data; as a consequence this would reduce the length of the page and thus the possibility of scrolling (Callahan, 2006). Moreover the user would be assisted through navigation tools that would prevent him/her to get lost on the website (Marcus & Gould, 2000). The reverse situation can be encountered on websites addressing low UA cultures.

## 5. Results

Following, the results of the categories defined in the matrix are presented. The results refer to the analyzed websites, which are the main pages of the official Nutella websites of Germany, Italy, Canada and Australia as well as the Swedish website from Ferrero about Nutella.

### Curiosity arousal

The websites use different elements that serve curiosity arousal. The most frequently used element is a slideshow and pictures in general.

#### *Germany*

The German website provides a slideshow with four different slides, accompanied by text, as well as further images and moving elements. The moving elements are arrows, a clapperboard and a picture of e-cards that move when having the cursor on these elements. Furthermore, the labels at the bottom of the website “Werde Fan von Nutella Deutschland“(Become a fan of Nutella Germany) until “Kontakt” (Contact us) change the text from white to red when moving the cursor on them.

#### *Italy*

A slideshow on the Italian website with four slides with text and images as well as other images serve the curiosity arousal on this website. Furthermore, when the user moves the cursor on the pictures in the slideshow, a small textbox appears beside the cursor which contains a slogan or text that refers to the hyperlink the user would use. In addition, the Italian website provides a preview for social networks like Facebook and Twitter. The labels of the menu change colour when moving the cursor on them from black to red.

#### *Sweden*

The curiosity arousal on the Swedish website is limited to one picture, a hyperlink to the Ferrero web TV, as well as other pictures of the Nutella products.

#### *Canada*

Nutella Canada presents a slideshow on its website, too. The user has access to two slides that contain the same picture, but slightly different text (more under *Comparison*). In addition, the Canadian website offers plenty of pictures to arouse the curiosity of the user. At the bottom of the page, the user can encounter the slogan "Talk to us, work with us, or get to know us a bit better", which might encourage to click on one of the following labels “Company Info”, “Privacy Policy”, “Careers”, and “Contact Us”.

#### *Australia*

As well as Germany, Italy, and Canada, Australia has a slideshow on the official Nutella website. The user can see three different pictures. Furthermore, the grey labels of the menu on the Australian website change to black when moving the cursor on them.

### **Emotional/psychological appeal**

Emotions on the websites are expressed mainly through pictures of happy people, whereas slogans appeal to the psychology in general.

#### ***Germany***

On the German website joy is expressed through the slogan “So macht Nutella streichen Freude!” (This is how spreading nutella brings joy!) and a picture of happy people, which are screenshots of TV-spots.

#### ***Italy***

On the second image of the slideshow, the Italian website shows drawn smiling faces and text saying “Happy news” and “Fill il pieno di entusiasmo” (Fill up your enthusiasm). These elements can be interpreted to present and encourage happiness. On the following image the slogans “Grazie” (Thank you) and “Nutella ringrazia” (Nutella says thanks) are indicator of gratefulness. The Valentine's Day campaign on the website includes the slogan “I bicchieri del cuore” (The glasses of the heart), which could in general stand for love.

#### ***Sweden***

The slogan “Prova NUTELLA till frukost. Den läckra smaken passar till nästan alla sorters bröd.” (Try Nutella for your breakfast. The delicious taste fits to almost all sorts of bread.) appeals to the psychology of the reader by trying to convince him/her about the deliciousness of a product that everybody should try.

#### ***Canada***

The Canadian Nutella website shows a picture of smiling children, which to the user expresses happiness and joy. In addition, the slogan “Add some fun to your family breakfast with these delicious recipes.” appeals to the reader by directly indicating that Nutella recipes will “add [...] fun” to a family breakfast and therefore could make it more enjoyable for the whole family.

### **Idioms**

The most idioms can be found on the Italian website. The first one is: “*Il vasetto mezzo pieno*”, which, literally translated means “the half full jar” and stand as an idiom for “the half full glass”. The next idiom is “*Prendi la vita per il vasetto giusto*” which literally means “take your life from the right jar”. This is an expression for the idiom “look on the bright side of life”. Both idioms reflect a positive and optimistic point of view or attitude.

The Australian website incorporates the idiom “Rise and shine” which means to “wake up and get out of bed promptly”<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the word “shine” can be interpreted as being something positive, for example a smile or a good mood in general.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/rise?q=rise>

## **Entertainment**

Only on the German website appears an attempt of a joke. One of the e-cards that are pictured contains the text “Ich habe fertig!”. The sentence “Ich habe fertig!” is actually wrong. It expresses the meaning of “I am done!” or “I have finished!” The correct way in German would be to use the verb bin (am) instead of “habe” (have). However, the expression is known and meant as a joke. In a press conference in 1998 the Italian coach of the Bavarian soccer team Giovanni Trapattoni said this sentence and it has been known and used like this ever since.

## **Symbolic/visual metaphors**

The symbolic/visual metaphors that are found on all of the websites are natural ingredients. These are for example bread, hazelnuts, fruit, juice, and milk. One or several of these ingredients can be found on pictures on all of the five websites. The natural ingredients can be interpreted as standing for the genuineness of the brand and the products of Nutella.

In addition to the natural ingredients, the Australian website shows upside-down triangles around a Nutella jar, which means that the Nutella jar can be seen as the sun around which are the sunbeams.



## **Brand repetition/ familiarization**

The brand name of Nutella is repeated several times on every single one of the websites. Italy has the most frequent repetitions (20 times), followed by Sweden (9 times), Canada (8 times), Germany (7 times) and finally Australia (4 times).

Furthermore, all websites, except for the Swedish, repeat hyperlinks on the page. On the German website for example, the same hyperlinks appear in the menu and on pictures and the Italian website repeats its campaign throughout the whole page through text and pictures. In addition, the Italian website as well as the Canadian and the Australian repeat hyperlinks on their pages.

## **Special Incentives**

On the Italian website the user can take part in a contest (Loudspeaker contest), of which the prize are loudspeakers.

The Canadian website provides a “Contest & Promo” label in the menu, which assumingly offers competitions and different offers for the purpose of promoting Nutella.

## **Comparison**

The only website that uses comparison is the Canadian one. On the Canadian website, the user can find a slideshow with two slides with pictures of the product and slightly different text. One text compares the content of sodium in Nutella with sodium in cream cheese, whereas the other text compares it with the sodium contained in peanut butter.

### **Rational reasoning**

The only two websites that use rational reasoning on their pages are the Swedish and the Canadian one. Sweden for one presents the ingredients, nutritional information and uses the sentence "Free from preservatives & artificial colours", which is characteristic for Nutella, whereas the Canadian website presents health facts by comparing the contained sodium in Nutella with the sodium contained in cream cheese and peanut butter (see *Comparison*), which presents benefits to the consumer.

### **Layout**

The layout of all the five websites is mainly visual, which mean that in relation to each other there are more pictures than text.

### **Amount of Data**

The amount of data refers to the quantity of information that can be found on the websites. The Italian website has with the most pictures and text the highest amount of data, followed by the German, the Canadian, and the Australian website. The Swedish website, which has only little text and few pictures, is the website with the lowest amount of data in comparison to the other websites.

### **Scrolling**

All the websites offer the possibility of scrolling. The Italian website is the longest, followed by the Swedish, the Canadian, the German, and the Australian. This shows that the amount of data is not proportional to the length of the page.

### **Interactivity**

In order to measure the interactivity of the websites the hyperlink and drop-down menus were counted. The results are as followed:

	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Hyperlinks</b>	23	56	1	14	23
<b>Drop-down menu</b>	3	2	/	/	/

The results indicate that Italy has the most, and Sweden the least interactive website.

### **Structure**

The information on the five websites is compartmentalized, which mean that there are sections that divide the content. The information on the Swedish and the Canadian website is more detailed than the information on the other three websites.

## Navigation Support

When it comes to the navigation support, the first element that is to be mentioned is the menu, which all of the websites provide. However, the menu on the German and the Italian website is a drop-down menu which is not the case on the Swedish, the Canadian and the Australian website. In addition to the menu, most of the websites include a certain number of hyperlinks (see numbers under *Interactivity*), which help navigating through the websites. On both the Italian and the Australian website the labels in the menu change, depending on the page the user is visiting. The Italian website provides with an additional *Search box*, a *Sitemap*, and text-boxes, which give additional information about the hyperlink the user is about to click, the most navigation support.

## Emphasis on tradition

Regarding the emphasis on the tradition on the German website a picture of a traditional family (father, mother, and children) can be seen, and the Italian website provides a hyperlink to read the history of Nutella. The other websites don't provide elements that emphasize tradition.

## Presence of people

Only on the German and the Canadian websites people are present. On the German website the user encounters screenshots from a TV-spot. On one a family (father, mother, daughter, and son) is pictured, sitting at a table. On the other two screenshots young people (both genders) are shown. However, in none of these screenshots displays the products. The image of the product is placed beside the screenshots as a collage.

The Canadian website has two images that show people. On one of the pictures a toddler eating a bread with Nutella, on the second picture four children are shown smiling. On the second picture the product is not displayed.



Screenshot 2: Presence of people on the German website



Screenshot 3: Presence of people on the Canadian website

## Orientation towards relationship

Concerning the orientation towards relationship, several elements were identified. The German and the Italian websites provide a link to contact the *Customer service*, whereas the Canadian and Australian website have a *Contact us* -link. These four websites furthermore provide hyperlinks to social networks, of which Facebook appears on all of the websites. The Italian website offers

hyperlinks to the most social networks, including Twitter, Pinterest, Google +, Tumblr, Delicious, YouTube, and Instagram.

Furthermore, the German website has a *Question and Answer* section, in which questions and information about the product are given. This section is very similar to the *FAQS (Frequently asked questions)* on the Australian website. The Australian website also provides a *Mail to* - button, which opens the e-mail provider of the user to contact Nutella Australia.

The slogan "*Talk to us, work with us, or get to know us a bit better*" on the Canadian site is highly oriented towards relationship. It invites the user to contact Nutella Canada and one feels that a barrier between the user of the website and the company or the people working at the company is lowered. In addition, the user is provided with a link to the *Career*-page of Nutella Canada.

### Pronouns

Pronouns were found on all websites except for the Swedish one. The pronouns are listed in the table below, according to the appearance of the sentence they appear in.

Country	Original Text	Translation	Pronoun
<b>Germany</b>	"Wann <i>du</i> willst, wo <i>du</i> willst"	"When <i>you</i> want, where <i>you</i> want."	singular
	"Verschicke eine persönliche Nachricht an <i>deine</i> Freunde"	"Send an individual message to <i>your</i> friends"	singular possessive determine
<b>Italy</b>	"Nutella sei <i>tu</i> "	"Nutella it's <i>you</i> "	singular
	"Nutella ringrazia chi rende unico il <i>tuo</i> buongiorno"	"Nutella says thanks to those who make <i>your</i> good morning unique"	singular possessive determine
<b>Canada</b>	"It's a good thing <i>we</i> have options"		singular
	"Add some fun to <i>your</i> family breakfast with these delicious recipes"		plural possessive determiner
	"Talk to <i>us</i> , work with <i>us</i> , or get to know <i>us</i> a bit better"		plural
<b>Australia</b>	"Check out <i>our</i> delicious recipes"		plural possessive determiner

### Dominant colours

The colours that dominate the websites are black, white and red. This colour-combination can be found on the German and the Italian website as the only dominant colours. The Canadian website has, in addition to these three colours orange and blue as further dominant colours, and the Australian website is dominated by black, white, and red plus orange and grey. The colours that dominate the Swedish website are white, grey, and orange.

<b>Colour\Country</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Black</b>	X	X		X	X
<b>White</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Red</b>	X	X		X	X
<b>Orange</b>			X	X	X
<b>Grey</b>			X		X
<b>Blue</b>				X	

### National emblems

National emblems can only rarely be found on the websites. The Italian Nutella website however shows the Italian flag. The Canadian website has the maple leaf on one of the pictures. The red maple leaf is part of the Canadian flag.



## 6. Analysis

The analysis was carried out according to the matrix (see 4.3 Data analysis). The results (see 5 Results) were analyzed from a cultural dimensions perspective. This allowed identifying the approach taken by marketers in order to overcome the dilemma deriving from cross-cultural adaptation. The analysis shows that the results of previous research can only be confirmed to a certain extent. Agreement and disagreement with the previous research are examined further in the following sub-sections.

The analysis was structured along the dimensions presented in the theoretical background. The first dimension was defined by Hall (1976). However, only the dimensions of High context (HC) vs. Low context (LC) cultures was used for the analysis, since Monochronic vs. Polychronic time orientation is connected to these two, which made a separate analysis in that dimension redundant.

The other framework that was used is the one defined by Hofstede (2001; see: 3 Theoretical background). Four of the six dimensions were used in order to analyze the codes derived from the content analysis. These four dimensions are: *Power distance*, *Individualism vs. Collectivism*, *Masculinity vs. Femininity*, and *Uncertainty avoidance*. Detailed information of each country that was to be analyzed on these dimensions could only be found online, however, not in print. Since this detailed information was published on Geert Hofstede's website about the dimensions, it will be taken into consideration. The dimensions were chosen since earlier research has shown that they are useful to define differences from a cultural perspective in web design (see 3.2 Previous research of cultural dimensions in web design). Furthermore, the information for the other two dimensions *Pragmatic vs. Normative* and *Indulgence vs. Restraint* in context with web design is not saturated to non-existence and was therefore not taken into account.

### 6.1 Low vs. High Context Communication

#### High context vs. low context

Lower-context culture: Australia, English Canada, Germany, Sweden

Higher-context culture: French Canada, Italy

(De Mooij, 2010; Krizan et al., 2007)

According to the literature, Australia, English Canada, Germany and Sweden are relatively LC countries (De Mooij, 2010). As already seen, this implies that these countries also have a monochronic approach to time. Thus in these websites it is expected to find that the information will be mainly textual, it will be presented in a compartmentalized and detailed way and accompanied by navigation tools in order to allow the user easy access to the information and reduce download time. On the French Canadian and Italian websites, which are described as HC and thus polychronic, the lack of these elements is expected to be compensated by a higher number of hyperlinks. Moreover, Würtz found out that HC cultures have a higher tendency than LC cultures to represent individuals together with the product (Würtz, 2006).

Starting with the *layout* of the websites, all of them have a mainly visual layout, which the literature considers as typical for HC cultures. These findings contradict partially the previously mentioned expectations.

According to Hermeking, because of their mainly visual layout, all the websites should not present a large amount of data and thus the possibility of scrolling. The websites present a different amount of data, with the Italian website presenting the largest amount of data, followed by Sweden, Germany, Canada, and Australia, however, all of them offer the *possibility of scrolling* (though at a different degree).

Concerning the *structure of the website*, those presenting more detailed information are the Canadian and the Swedish ones; on the contrary the Australian website is the one with less detailed information. In all the websites the information is compartmentalized in different blocks.

Even though Italy is defined as having a HC culture, the Italian website is the one with the highest number of *navigation tools*, such as search box, sitemaps, menus, text-boxes describing certain hyperlinks and labels changing colour, indicating the user the section he/she is visiting. This last element is also present on the Australian website.

On the other hand, according to the literature, *hyperlinks* should compensate the lack of navigation support, however once again the Italian website is the one with the highest number of hyperlinks, followed by Germany, Australia, Canada and Sweden, this one presenting just one hyperlink. Navigation tools and hyperlinks might also be indicators of UA, thus this element will be further discussed in the dedicated section.

Concerning the *representation of individuals together with the product*, the Canadian website is the only one where is possible to find such an element, showing a toddler on a picture eating a bread with Nutella. This, according to Würtz (2006), might reflect a HC profile.

As already seen in the section dedicated to the theoretical background, HC cultures tend towards a more “soft-sell” approach. Thus elements such as *curiosity arousal, emotional/psychological appeal, entertainment and symbolic/visual metaphors* are expected to be found on the Italian and Canadian websites. On the contrary, the German, Swedish and Australian websites are expected to make use of *brand repetition/familiarization, comparison, rational reasoning and special incentives*, thus of an “hard-sell” approach. However the results of this analysis do not support these assumptions.

Starting with the *soft-sell approach*, all the five websites present *curiosity arousal* though of different kinds and with a different intensity. Indeed, while the Italian and German websites seem to be the two with the highest intensity of *curiosity arousal* distributed all over their web pages, the curiosity arousal of the Australian website is contained its main and most voluminous element, the slideshow.

Regarding *emotional/psychological appeal*, all but the Swedish and Australian websites seem to exploit emotions as a strategy for approaching their customers. Most of the time they try to recall emotions such as joy and happiness by displaying pictures of happy people, like the German and Canadian websites, or by directly referring to emotions through words such as “Freude” (Joy), “happy”, and “entusiasmo” (enthusiasm). Therefore the findings are in discordance with Okazaki and Alonso’s suggestion that the employment of emotions, thus of a soft-sell approach is typical of HC cultures. On the contrary, considering the assumption that HC cultures tend to be more collectivistic than LC cultures, the findings confirm the tendency discovered by psychologists that individualistic cultures tend to provide a more direct feedback, thus they manifest emotions more than collectivistic cultures do (Steenkamp & Geyskens, 2006).

*Entertainment* has only been identified in the use of humour on the German website. Germany being classified as a LC culture would not be expected to display entertainment on its website.

*Symbolic/visual metaphors* have been identified in the representation of natural ingredients such as hazelnuts, juice, milk and fruits. The representation of these elements could be either interpreted as a metaphor referring to the genuineness of the product or simply display products that are related to the consumption of Nutella. Considering it as a metaphor, it might help the seller to develop a trust-based relationship with its customers. Together with the natural products, the third image of the Australian website’s slideshow displays a Nutella jar with upside down triangles around its cup. The triangles seem to represent sunbeams, each of them containing a letter from the word “shine”, thus the Nutella representing the sun. This visual metaphor is accompanied by the slogan “rise and shine”, which is an idiom that stands for “Wake up and get out of bed promptly”<sup>6</sup>.

*Idioms* can also be found on the Italian website, however in this case idioms such as “to see the glass half full” and “to look on the bright side” are used as the basis for wordplays referring to the Nutella jar, thus the words “glass” and “side” are substituted with “jar”. Both these idioms refer to an optimistic outlook, thus they could be interpreted as an attempt from the marketers to affect the user from an emotional perspective.

*Colours* instead are used differently among the websites. Sometimes the use of colour might be interpreted as an hard-sell approach. This would be the case of the German, Italian and Swedish websites, the first two having black, red and white as the dominant colours, while white, grey and orange are the dominants colours in the Swedish one. The use of these colours might consist in a strategy of familiarization, black, white and red being the colours of the Nutella logo and orange the colour of the Ferrero logo, as Sweden doesn’t have a Nutella official website. However, when analysing the other websites, it is possible to notice that more colours are co-present with the official ones. For example the Canadian website presents a light blue background. The choice of this colour might be reconducted to Barber and Badre’s research (2001), thus the blue might be a way to incorporate the blue from Quebec’s flag, while the Canadian colours are already included

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/rise?q=rise>

in the Nutella logo. Moreover blue can be found in the flags of all the Canadian provinces but one<sup>7</sup>. This could be considered as belonging to a soft-sell approach where the marketers try to appeal the users emotionally by making him/her “feel at home” (Barber and Badre, 2001). On the Australian websites instead, colours such as grey, white, red and orange are predominating. In this case colours might have been used with the purpose of bringing the main and more colourful element (the slideshow) to the foreground and leaving the grey area in the background, giving the user a sense of priority (Kalbach, 2007).

When moving to the *hard-sell approach*, the website making more use of *brand repetition* is the Italian one, where the word Nutella is repeated 20 times, while it is repeated only four to nine times on the other websites. This is in discordance with the literature, which suggest more repetitions on websites addressing LC cultures rather than HC cultures. Furthermore, on the Italian websites, more than on the others, the user is provided with information and links regarding the same campaigns several times. This could be considered as an attempt by marketers to reach *familiarization*, which again, according to the literature, is not typical for HC cultures but would, in comparison, be expected to a higher extent on websites of LC cultures. *Comparison* can be encountered only on the Canadian website, where Nutella is compared with other products, namely cream cheese and peanut butter. Sweden and Canada are the only two countries making use of *rational reasoning* as a strategy for appealing their users by providing ingredients, nutritional information and health facts. Finally, only the Italian and Canadian websites present *special incentives*.

To sum up, all the countries but Sweden and Canada seem to apply, through their websites, a more HC approach. Sweden is the only country whose results seem to be in accordance with Hall’s assumption. Canada instead seems to be divided between the two approaches employing both HC and LC elements.

Whether marketers are trying to address children or not may be one of the reasons why both *hard-* and *soft-sell approach* have been applied in all the five websites. For example the use of curiosity arousals is higher in Germany, Italy and Canada than in Sweden and Australia. As we will see in the discussion section, Germany, Italy and Canada are the only countries (out of the five) that allow advertising to children (under certain regulations). Thus one could believe that the decision of making use of more curiosity arousals elements may derive from the marketers’ intention to address children.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provinces\\_and\\_territories\\_of\\_Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provinces_and_territories_of_Canada)

## 6.2 Power Distance (PD)

	Germany	Italy	Sweden	Canada	Australia
PDI	35	50	31	39	36

Source: Hofstede (2001) p. 87

As already mentioned, PD relates to the degree to which people in a society accept and expect inequalities. According to Hofstede<sup>8</sup>, Germany is one of the countries with the lowest scores on PD, which means that there is a certain tendency towards power decentralization and direct participative communication style. Moreover leadership has to be based on expertise and it can be challenged. Italy scores higher than Germany on PD, being on the intermediate level of the scale. Indeed, with respect to PD, the country seems to be divided between north and south, with the north preferring a low PD opposite to the south<sup>9</sup>. Among the countries chosen for this research, Sweden is the one with the lowest scores in PD. Sweden is described as a society striving for independence and equality<sup>10</sup>. Even Canada scores low on this dimension, this means that its society is not differentiated in classes, on the contrary there is a certain tendency towards interdependence among its inhabitants<sup>11</sup>. Finally, Australia also scores low on PD and as such it reflects the same characteristics as the previous described countries<sup>12</sup>.

According to the existing literature, web sites might reflect the tendency of a country in relation to PD through two elements namely *image of both genders* and *presence of national symbols* (Callahan, 2006). As we can see from the results table only two web sites, the German and Australian one, contain *images of both genders*. According to Callahan (2006), the presence of both genders is an indicator of low PD, thus this is in accordance with Hofstede's scores. Indeed as already shown by Marcus and Gould (2000) the use of images of both genders represents the consumers as having equal power.

In regards to the *presence of national emblems*, Callahan (2006) suggests that it is related to high PD. Even though all the countries analysed are defined by Hofstede as characterized by a rather low PD profile, two of them present national emblems in their websites. More specifically they present their own flags. These two countries are Italy and Canada. Italy scores on an intermediate level of PD, which allows to expect elements typical for both high and low PD cultures. For what concerns Canada instead, as Hofstede himself points out, it is important to bear in mind that, even though the scores refer to the Canadian culture overall, it is possible to notice some cultural differences between Anglophone Canadians and Francophone Canadians. Indeed the province of Quebec (Francophone) scores 54 on PD, meaning that its cultural profile is characterized by

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<sup>8</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/germany.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/italy.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/sweden.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/canada.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/australia.html>

higher PD than the Anglophone counterpart. However, it has to be considered that the attribution of the *presence of national emblems* to high PD is based on assumptions which neither Marcus and Gould (2000) nor Callahan (2006) have been able to prove. Moreover, national flags also serve a recognition function, so that the user can immediately identify the origin of the web site (Barber & Badre, 2001). This relates to the “feel at home” concept (Barber & Badre, 2001) or “country of origin” concept (Knight & Calantone, 2000; Usunier, 1991 in Hermeking, 2006) which enhances trust from the consumer/user towards the website.

### 6.3 Individualism vs. Collectivism

	Germany	Italy	Sweden	Canada	Australia
IDV	67	76	71	80	90

Source: Hofstede (2001) p. 215

This dimension relates to the relationship between individuals and the collective in a given society, more specifically whether individuals look after themselves and their immediate family only or if they take care of the group. All the five countries score a certain level of Individualism, Germany being the one with the lowest score and Australia the one with the highest. Germany is described as a society whose small families focus on the parent-children relationship and which aims to self-actualization<sup>13</sup>. Once again, Hofstede points out the differences in Italy between North and South, the former scoring higher individualism than the latter. In Southern Italy the family networks tend to be larger and family rituals are considered particularly important<sup>14</sup>. Sweden is described as preferring a “loosely-knit social framework”<sup>15</sup> as well as Canada<sup>16</sup> and Australia<sup>17</sup>.

The existing literature suggests that elements such as *images of individuals* and *images of young* in websites are an indicator of individualistic cultures while *images of groups* and *aged* reflect collectivist cultures. Both the German and Canadian websites contain images of individuals and of young people. However, in the German website, two of these pictures refer to a sequence of three screenshots from a Nutella TV commercial, the first screenshot displaying a girl and a boy and the third one displaying just a boy. Thus it results difficult to refer to Individualism rather than Collectivism. However the people represented in the screenshot sequence are all young, which is in accordance with the Individualistic profile. Moreover, the German website also contains the image of (assumably) a family (father, mother and two kids), which on one side could be interpreted as an indicator of Individualism as in individualistic societies people tend to look after their immediate family. On the other side, some of the literature would consider this

<sup>13</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/germany.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/italy.html>

<sup>15</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/sweden.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/canada.html>

<sup>17</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/australia.html>

family as a representation of a *group*, which according to Marcus and Gould (2000; in Callahan, 2006) is an indicator of Collectivism. This disagreement in the literature makes it complicated to distinguish certainly if the picture of an immediate family can be considered as being individualistic or collectivistic.

A similar dilemma is encountered in the Canadian website, which also contains two images of people, one representing just an individual and the other one representing a group. However, both images represent young people, tending more towards an individualistic profile. As already mentioned, marketers are aware of the power children have in influencing family decision making. Data shows that “millions of kids under the age of 17 are online” (Kotler et al., 2009 p. 230). This, together with the fact that teenagers are getting more and more involved in family decision-making and that they have at their disposal income from allowances or jobs, generates a great opportunity for marketers (Tinson & Nancarrow, 2007).

The use of certain *pronouns* is another element that researchers have attributed to either collectivistic or individualistic cultures. Both Germany and Italy employ second singular pronouns/determiners in their slogans, this kind of pronouns being indicator of Individualism as in accordance with the cultural profile of the two countries; Italy also employs the first singular pronoun “me”. The determiner “our” on the Australian website, does not address the user but it refers to the company itself, thus it will not be object of this analysis, as well as the pronoun “us” on the Canadian website. Canada instead employs both the collectivistic pronoun “we” and the individualistic determiner “your”. Therefore, once again, no conclusion can be inferred concerning the cultural tendency of the Canadian culture to either Individualism or Collectivism in relation to the use of pronouns.

#### 6.4 Masculinity vs. Femininity

	Germany	Italy	Sweden	Canada	Australia
MAS	66	70	5	52	61

Source: Hofstede (2001) p. 286

As mentioned before in the theoretical background, the *Masculinity vs. Femininity* dimension deals with the competitiveness of a culture and with the role of men and women in a society. Following Hofstede’s framework (2005), Germany is defined as being a masculine society, in which high value is put on performance, which is also reflected in the school system in which children are being separated into different types of schools at the early age of ten<sup>18</sup>. This is a factor that shows how important it is to do well in school and have good grades in order to achieve a higher education. Italy scores slightly higher on this dimension and is therefore also considered a masculine society, which is highly driven by success and in which status symbols

<sup>18</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/germany.html>

play an important role<sup>19</sup>. Sweden scores the lowest of all countries on the Masculinity index (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), which means that it is a highly feminine society. Compromises, negotiations towards consensus and the equality of everybody stand in the centre of this society<sup>20</sup>. Canada, compared to other cultures and according to the score, is considered as a moderately masculine society. This means that striving for success in work and leisure as well as enjoying time with family and life play an important role according to Hofstede<sup>21</sup>. Australia scores higher than Germany, but lower than Canada on the Masculinity index, which is reflected in the general attitude that one wants to win, which is shown at school, work, leisure and during solving of conflicts<sup>22</sup>.

As stated in existing literature, the dimension of *Masculinity vs. Femininity* can be identified on websites through different elements. Previous research points out that *Masculinity* is expressed through a higher *emphasis on tradition*, whereas *Femininity* puts a higher focus on the *orientation towards relationship* and includes frequent images of people (Callahan, 2006).

The analysis shows that even though countries are considered as masculine, the Nutella websites of masculine countries according to Hofstede (2005) include elements that indicate femininity. For example on the German and the Italian website a link to the customer service can be found. In addition to that the German website provides a question and answer section. Furthermore, all countries that are according to Hofstede (2005) masculine countries, (Germany, Italy, Canada, and Australia) provide links to either one or several social networks.

The German website includes frequent images of people, which also indicates femininity (Callahan, 2006). Callahan (2006) argues that there is a negative correlation between images of people and the masculinity index, meaning that pictures of people are expected to be shown on websites of low masculine countries. This is in discordance with Hofstede's score of Germany on the masculinity index. Canada, as a moderately masculine society, has a website that offers many elements that focus towards relationships. In addition to the Facebook link, it includes a link to a Career page, a link that says Contact us, as well as the slogan "Talk to us, work with us, or get to know us better", which all are elements that highly focus on the relationship towards the user of the page.

According to Marcus and Gould (2000) a *traditional family* and people on pictures with an *age distinction* as seen on one of the pictures on the German website (father, mother, two children), is an indicator of masculinity. The website of Nutella Italy includes other elements which focus on tradition, namely the two hyperlinks to the history of Nutella.

Sweden as a feminine society on the other side has a website that includes neither elements, that are oriented towards relationships nor elements that emphasize tradition.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/italy.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/sweden.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/canada.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/australia.html>



Overall the findings on the websites of masculine societies seem not to be in correlation with the previous research of Callahan (2006) and Marcus and Gould (2000), as all websites of the countries that are characterized by Hofstede as being masculine actually contain elements that would be expected on websites of feminine societies. Furthermore, the feminine elements dominate the website, even when the websites include both masculine and feminine elements.

## 6.5 Uncertainty Avoidance

	Germany	Italy	Sweden	Canada	Australia
UAI	65	75	29	48	51

Source: Hofstede (2001) p. 151

The dimension *Uncertainty avoidance* by Hofstede (2001) refers to how people in different societies deal with the uncertainty and ambiguity brought by the unknown future. The country scores of Germany, Italy, Sweden, Canada, and Australia are spread from the low end to the high end. Sweden scores the lowest and reflects therefore a country which society believes that there should be only the rules that are necessary and in which people have a more relaxed attitude and a flexible schedule<sup>23</sup>. Italy scores the highest on this dimension, which results in very detailed planning and a very inflexible planning process towards the changes in the environment<sup>24</sup>. With a score of 65, Germany scores the second highest and reflects therefore a society which pays, like Italy, attention to details in order to make sure that a process has been well thought through<sup>25</sup>, but in which a slight flexibility to changes can be found. The scores of Canada and Australia are intermediate ones, with Canada scoring slightly lower than Australia and being considered as a more “uncertainty accepting” culture<sup>26</sup>.

UA is, according to the literature, reflected in the *choices*, and *layout*, which includes the *amounts of data* and the *possibility of scrolling* (Ju-Pak, 1999; Marcus & Gould., 2000). Italy’s Nutella website offers, comparing to the other websites, a large amount of data. The information given on the website gives the user many choices to change to other pages and even to other websites just like Facebook or Twitter. Germany, which scores high on the dimension, also provides a rather large amount of data and many different hyperlinks on the Nutella Germany website. Canada’s and Australia’s scores are close to each other. However, their websites differ in the amount of data, of which Nutella Canada presents more on its website.

When looking at the Swedish website in contrast, very little amount of data is presented and the user has almost no choices with regard to hyperlinks and link to other websites.

<sup>23</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/sweden.html>

<sup>24</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/italy.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/germany.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/canada.html>

All of the five websites offer the possibility of scrolling. Due to the different length of the websites the user can scroll to a different degree for each website. The Italian website is the longest, whereas the Australian one is the shortest, giving the user the most and least possibility of scrolling. Since scrolling is possible on all websites, the connection between scrolling and the level of UA cannot be made for the chosen websites of Nutella. The literature suggests that high UA would indicate a website without the possibility of scrolling. Since Italy is a high UA culture it should in accordance with the literature not offer the possibility of scrolling. Canada as being on the intermediate level of UA offers the possibility of scrolling. However, from the literature there is no clear indication about intermediate scores and whether this feature is to be found on the websites of those cultures or not. The findings for the above mentioned characteristics of the websites are therefore in discordance with the literature, which suggests, that the higher the level of UA, the simpler the website (Marcus & Gould, 2000). Quite the contrary: the higher the level of UA, the more complex the websites appear, with Italy having the highest level of UA and the most complex website of those analyzed.

Another factor related to UA is *navigation support* (Marcus & Gould, 2000), which includes navigation schemes, that are designed in order to help the user not to get lost. The literature suggests that websites with high UA are simpler than websites of countries with low UA score. When putting this into context with hyperlinks, this means that high uncertainty cultures would have few hyperlinks on their website, in order for the user not to get lost. Furthermore, it can mean that high UA cultures would have several options of navigating through a website, such as a navigation scheme, menu and hyperlinks. When the user has several options of navigating through a website she/he can choose a way that suits her/him best, which reduces the chance of getting lost.

Italy has the highest score on the UA index. The Italian Nutella website contains in comparison with the other four websites most navigation tools providing not only the drop-down menus with hyperlinks, but also a sitemap, text-boxes that open and indicate where a hyperlink redirects the user as well as labels in the menu that change the colour if the user visit that page. Germany, with the second-highest UA score, provides mainly the menu and several hyperlinks as navigation support. Overall the German website provides less navigation support than the Italian website, but more than the Canadian and Australian websites. Canada and Australia, having intermediate scores on the UA index, both provide a certain amount of hyperlinks for the user to navigate through the website. In addition, the Australian website, like the Italian one, has labels in the menu that change the colour according to the webpage the user is on. Sweden with the lowest UA score provides the least navigation support.

These findings relating to the navigation tools and the degree of UA are in accordance with the literature suggesting that a high UA score indicates a large degree of navigation support.

## 7. Discussion

The main aim of this study is to find out how a global brand adapts its websites to local cultures by comparing five websites of Nutella on their differences and similarities related to the cultural frameworks of Hall and Hofstede. The analysis shows that there are similarities as well as differences when comparing the Nutella websites of Germany, Italy, Sweden, Canada and Australia. This could be interpreted as supporting the idea that marketers adopt a glocalized approach, meaning that they combine both a standardized and an adapted approach.

A standardized approach can be deduced by the similarities encountered on the websites. Similarities can be found mainly in the layout and the presentation of the product along with the repetition of its logo. Furthermore, the appearances of certain elements like for example *hyperlinks*, *curiosity arousal*, and *orientation towards relationships* seems to be similar; differs however, when looking more closely at the websites.

The differences found across the websites can instead be interpreted as reflecting adaptation to the local cultures. The differences that came up after analyzing the website according to the matrix are diverse. They appeared in most of the dimensions regarding several elements, including among others *expression of emotions*, *navigation tools*, *curiosity arousal*, *amount of data*, *presence of people* and choice of *colours*. However, these differences cannot always be explained with cultural characteristics in general. The following discussion attempts to explain the differences from another point of view than the reasoning of cultural characteristics being the only cause for the differences. In addition, the possible discordances to previous studies and conflicting factors that arise from the cultural dimensions are subject of the discussion.

One aspect to keep in mind is that Hofstede's dimensions and classification of countries on the dimensions is an overgeneralization. Even Hofstede states that "a typology describes a set of ideal types, each of them easy to imagine" (2005, p. 24). From this it is understandable that cultures cannot easily be defined and Hofstede was aware of this fact. Furthermore, he adds that "the most real cases are somewhere in between the extremes" (2005, p. 25). Despite these statements of Hofstede in the introduction of his book, his dimensions have been used as a tool to identify and define cultures in different fields.

Furthermore, on the subject of discussing Hofstede's framework, it has to be mentioned that it, originally, was not designed to define national cultures, but corporate cultures, namely that of IBM (Hofstede, 1980). Previous research, however, has shown that to a certain extend the scores on Hofstede's dimensions can be valid for national cultures and confirmed the accuracy of Hofstede's four dimensions (Søndergaard, 1994). Therefore using the dimensions as a tool to analyze for example websites on their cultural differences is reasonable, should however not be used as a "taken-for-granted assumption" (Søndergaard, 1994, p. 453). As Hofstede states:

"I never claim that culture is the only thing we should pay attention to. In many practical cases it is redundant, and economic, political or institutional factors provide better explanations. But sometimes they don't, and then we need the construct of culture."

(Hofstede, 2002, p. 1359)

Hermeking (2006) suggests that cultural values are not the only factors influencing internet usage. Beside cultural values, also referred to as “soft factors”, there are “hard factors”. Hard factors such as technical infrastructure, income per capita and politics influence the distribution and usage of the Internet especially in less developed countries.

As a further matter, the internet makes the competition increase even more on the digital marketplace. Therefore it can be expected that other factors beside cultural adaptation, influence marketers’ decision concerning the development of a commercial website. The present research suggests advertising policy and other marketing strategies like *eWOM*, use of colours for facilitating the interaction, trust-building elements and *information processing/emotional perspective* as further influencing factors.

The advertising policy in force in each country might have affected marketers’ decision concerning the possibility of addressing children. In Australia, for example, marketers are bound to the Responsible Children’s Marketing Initiative (RCMI). Developed in 2008 by the Australian Food and Grocery Council, the RCMI sets some norms concerning “the level of advertising of foods high in energy, fat, sugar and salt to children (HFSS)”<sup>27</sup>. In accordance to the RCMI, Ferrero Australia explicitly claims its intention to avoid directing its advertising to children<sup>28</sup>. In Sweden advertising to children is against the law<sup>29</sup>, as well as in the province of Quebec<sup>30</sup>. However, it is allowed by the rest of Canada, though restricted by some regulations. The same situation can be encountered in Italy (Studio Legale Jacobacci & Associati, 2007) and Germany<sup>31</sup>. It is for this reason that it could be assumed that, since Germany, Italy and Canada had the largest amount of curiosity arousal. This might depend on an attempt from marketers to address children rather than simply addressing a HC culture. The same could be said about the presence of pictures representing young people (symbol of low PD) on the German and Canadian websites.

The term *eWOM* (electronic word of mouth) refers to the phenomenon of consumers influencing each others’ opinions about the product, not just on a national level but also on an international one. The lack of commercial interests behind this kind of communication makes the *eWOM* highly credible, thus it can be more effective than marketing, though both in a positive and negative way (Kotler et al., 2009). Thus the presence of hyperlinks giving the user access to the company’s social media pages might be related to other reasons than just the willingness to address a feminine culture, rather than a masculine one. Furthermore, tools like emails and social media make the communication between supplier and customers more flexible and less expensive.

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<sup>27</sup> Australian Food and Grocery Council (2010) *Responsible Children’s Marketing Initiative*. Compliance report, available at: <https://ifballiance.org/sites/default/files/rcmi%20compliance%20report%202010.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.nutella.com.au/company/>

<sup>29</sup> *Children and marketing – the commercial pressure is rising*, Swedish Consumers’ Association, 1/2001; available at: <http://www.humanics-es.com/kids-ads.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.adstandards.com/en/standards/canCodeOfAdStandards.aspx#advertising>

<sup>31</sup> [www.werberat.de](http://www.werberat.de) (accessed: 2014/05/08)

Other elements such as the choice of the colours and the presence of national emblems such as flags might also reflect marketing strategies that might not being related to the culture being HC rather than LC. Indeed as indicated by previous research, the choice of colours might rely on an attempt for giving a sense of priority (Kalbach, 2007), while the presence of flags should increase the trust from the user towards the website (Barber & Badre, 2001; Knight & Calantone, 2000; Usunier, 1991 in Hermeking, 2006).

Further reasons behind the fact that the findings derived by the present research do not support those from previous research might depend on the difficulty in attributing a meaning to certain elements, especially when present in a limited amount.

Thus, the findings show the presence of both extremes of the same dimension on several websites, starting with the Canadian one, where elements of both HC and LC appeared in the same amount. The same happened as regards Individualism/Collectivism. Indeed on the Canadian website both images of individuals and groups can be found again in the same amount, as well as pronouns and determiners that previous research have related to either Individualism or Collectivism. A similar situation has been encountered on the German website, where it was difficult to relate the family picture as either an individualistic trait (as in Individualistic cultures people care about their immediate family) or a collectivistic one (being the subject of the picture more people).

On the other hand, with regard to the Canadian website, these events may be related to the fact that Canada is fractured on a cultural level between Anglophone and Francophone. Thus the ambiguity derived from the presence of elements related to opposite cultures shows some kind of conciliation of different values, in a way to reflect the heterogeneous culture of the country.

Ambiguity also resulted when analysing the presence of navigation tools and hyperlinks on the websites and when interpreting the use of emotions.

In regard to the presence of navigation tools and hyperlinks, the literature suggests that the higher the score on UA, the lower will be the presence of hyperlinks and that this would be compensated by the presence of more navigation tools. However, hyperlinks could also be considered as navigation tools. In fact, when considering the Italian website, with Italy scoring high on this dimension, it still presents the highest number of hyperlinks while offering the largest range of navigation tools.

When referring to emotions instead, Hofstede suggests that individualistic cultures are more LC, while collectivistic cultures are more HC. The fact that individualistic cultures prefer direct feedback and thus tend to display emotions more than collectivistic cultures is in contrast with Okazaki and Alonso's assumption that the use of emotions, as an element belonging to a soft-sell approach, should be more predominant in HC cultures than in LC cultures.

However the results did not completely support any of the two assumptions. Indeed what has been found is that all but the Swedish and Australian websites employ emotions as a way for approaching their users.

As we could see, there is a tendency in marketing research in making a distinction between emotional and rational appeal (Okazaki and Alonso, 2003; Hermeking, 2006; Ju-Pak, 1999). Marketers indeed are divided between *information processing perspective* and *emotional perspective* (Kotler et al., 2009). The information processing perspective claims that consumers cognitively process marketing information in decision making processes, developing beliefs and attitudes about the product. According to the emotional perspective, instead, the consumers' emotional response to the product also affects the decision-making process. Ju-Pak (1999) suggests that, when analysing online marketing, visual and verbal components should be analysed separately. Indeed it seems like different appeal strategies are employed for these two components. This would mean that it is necessary to make a distinction between what is delivered and how it is delivered. However, as pointed out by De Mooij (2010b), what the consumer sees is the whole picture. As indicated by behavioural economics research, our choices and judgments are controlled by two different systems, intuition and reasoning. Intuition, which responds more to emotions, tends to dominate over reasoning (Thorgeirsson & Kawachi, 2013). Thus no inference can be made regarding the user being affected on a cognitive level rather than on an emotional level. On the contrary the findings seem to reflect certain awareness by marketers about the fact that both intuition and reasoning affect the user's decision making process independently from the culture to which he/she belongs to.

Finally, one more finding deserves to be paid attention to, namely the fact that the Swedish website is not an official Nutella website, which is why the URL of the Swedish website referred to Ferrero and not Nutella like the other four websites. The reasons for why Nutella does not have an official website for Sweden are unclear. It can be assumed that it is connected to for example the consumption of Nutella in Sweden. Since data about the consumption of Nutella was not available this cannot be stated with any certainty. It is, however, to assume that the sales numbers and the popularity of a product in a country is reflected in the online appearance of the website for this respective country.

## 8. Conclusion

The development of new technologies, especially the use of internet, has influenced marketing strategies for companies over the past few years rapidly. Companies that market global brands or products face the decision of how to design their website; whether to adapt it to local cultures or to standardize in order to reach out to a global target audience.

Through a qualitative approach, namely a content analysis, this paper outlines the relation between culture and web design. Furthermore, it presents how an understanding of different cultures can have an influence on web design, made visible by differences found on the analyzed websites, which suggest an approach of adaptation. However, since both similarities and differences were encountered, a mix of adaptation and standardization can be identified, which therefore can be considered as an approach of glocalization.

The present study allowed reaching several conclusions regarding the matter of how a global brand adapts its website to local cultures.

First of all, the websites are developed and adapted in a way that reflects Hall's and Hofstede's cultural profile for each country but only until a certain degree. Several factors seem to be cooperating in the realization of cultural specific websites, some of these factors seem to have not been taken into account by previous research, thus the hereby study presents findings that are only partially in accordance with those research. As showed in the discussion section, among the factors that play a key role in the development and adaptation of commercial websites there are:

- Regulations by law (especially in regard to advertising to children);
- Marketing strategies (*eWOM*, use of colours for facilitating the interaction, trust-building elements, *information processing/emotional perspective*);
- The impossibility of generalizing one national culture (as in the case of Canada);
- And probably the popularity and consumption of the product.

Moreover this research demonstrated how difficult it can be to claim the relation between web design elements and cultures. After all, the literature itself does not always agree on the way in which web design elements should be interpreted, on the contrary, the literature has been found contradicting in many occasions. This of course makes the identification of cultural patterns on websites even more complicated.

## 9. Limitations and further research

This study is a contribution to the field of intercultural communication, or to be more specific to marketing and advertising. Its attempt was to fill the gap of understanding in how far culture plays a role when it comes to designing a website.

However, limitations to this study should be kept in mind. One for example is subjectivity. The method of this study was a content analysis, which is a qualitative and not a quantitative approach. A qualitative content analysis is mainly focused on the interpretation of hidden meanings behind a certain phenomena (Elo & Kynga 2008). Therefore it is important to keep in mind the biased perspective of the researchers. However, when the interpretation of those meanings is shared across more coders, it is likely that the reader as well will interpret those meanings in the same way (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). This is defined as intercoder reliability and it increases the validity of a content analysis. Even though this is not always shared in scientific research, researchers may also serve as coders (Lombard et al., 2002). Considering the fact that the present research has been conducted by two researchers, it can be said that a certain degree of intercoder reliability has also been reached.

This study was delimited to only five websites from one company. The results are valid for this study, but should not be generalized. In addition, the present research has mainly been based on previous literature that suggests the existence of a relation between Hofstede's and Hall's cultural dimensions and interface design. However, as already mentioned, the way in which such relation has been built, is based on hypotheses (Callahan, 2006). As a consequence, there is no guarantee that such relation really exists, or that it really moves in the direction suggested by previous research.

Furthermore, the application of Hofstede's model has been criticised for several reasons. Firstly, many researchers consider the data obsolete. However, Hofstede points out that more than 200 replications of his study have shown that the data collected in the 70's are still valid (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). Moreover these dimensions are the result of cultural roots centuries old, thus it would be difficult for them to disappear in such a short period of time (Hofstede, 2001). Another main criticism comes from Søndergaard, who refers to the fact that Hofstede conducted his research among the employees of the IBM Company. He maintains that it would be incorrect to extend the results to national cultures (Søndergaard, 1994). McSweeney adds that national cultures are not uniform, as Hofstede assumes (McSweeney, 2002). Even though Hofstede's study is amply criticised it still offers the possibility to refer to a large number of countries, making it an appealing tool to many researchers (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

In addition to this, Hall's dimensions are used often in research. However, his methods are hardly described so that from Hall's comments in his works merely assumptions can be made (Cardon, 2008)

Another aspect is that both Hall's and Hofstede's research was not aimed at marketing and therefore lack the context to it (Holden, 2004). Though according to Hermeking (2006) the



interdisciplinarity of marketing allows to combine relevant theories, no matter how diverse they might be.

Due to the limitations, some changes, additions and adaptations can be made for further research, which are presented in the following.

First, this study can be extended. This means that more websites of Nutella can be analyzed, in order to make the results more significant and to determine stronger connections between the cultural characteristics and web design. In addition to this, this study can be repeated after a certain period of time, which will make the results richer allowing observing and identifying changes and possible tendencies to make the results more significant.

Secondly, other methods could be used in addition to the qualitative content analysis, for example a survey or interviews with the consumers or users of the website. This will allow an insight into the preferences of the user from certain cultures, which in turn can be compared with the findings of this study. By doing this it can be analyzed in how far the customer's perspective, her/his focus and purpose of visiting the website is in accordance with the actual web design.

Another method can be to conduct interviews with the people responsible for the web design of the respective websites, in order to get a better understanding of what factors play an important role in decision-making when it comes to web design. Furthermore, this method could disclose in how far the web designers are aware of the cultural background of the users and in how far this influences the decision-making

Finally, adding more cultural frameworks (Trompenaars, Schwartz, GLOBE, and others) might improve the research. However, according to the findings of this paper, even more diverse results could be expected and deeper research of other explanations than the cultural should be carried out. Therefore, it is rather to suggest to extend this study by including an insight of marketing strategies in general and in specific of the countries whose website were analyzed. This will allow an even clearer picture of factors that influence web design.

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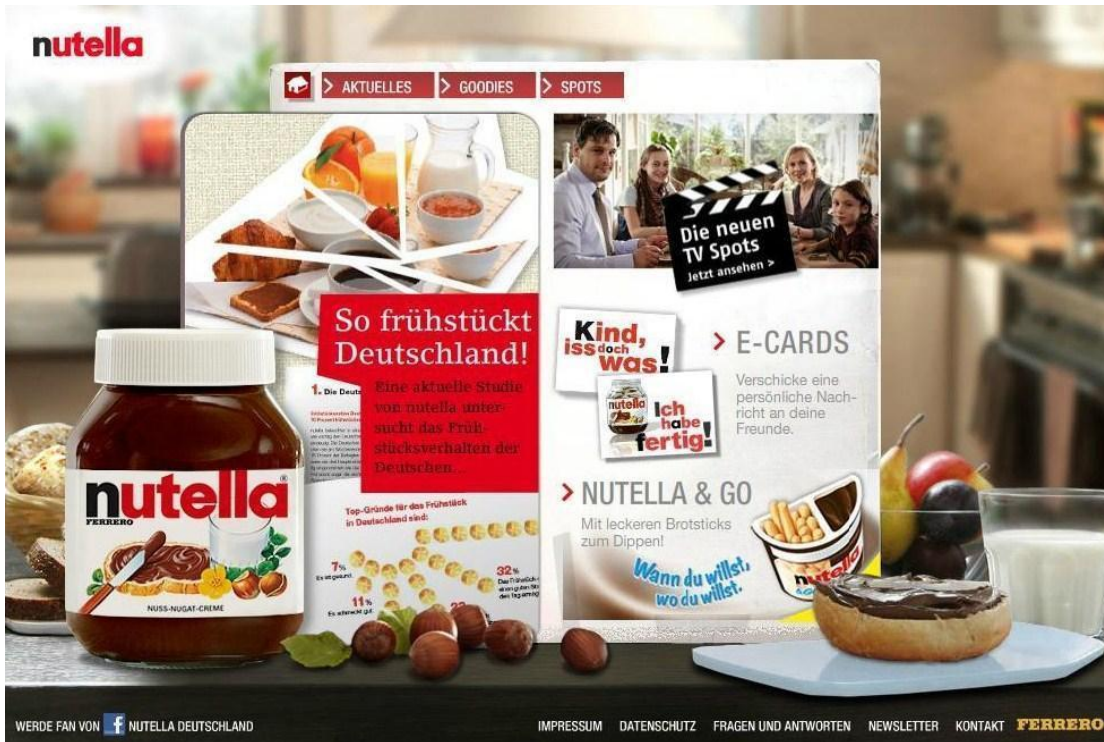
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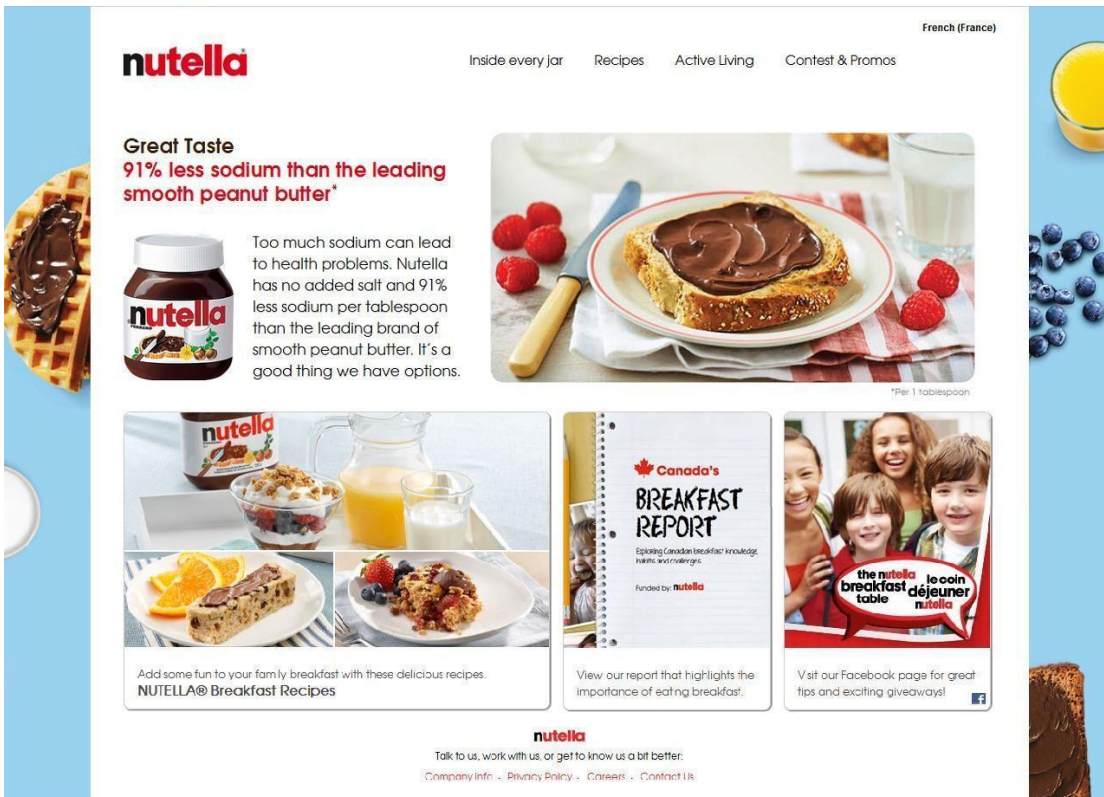
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# 11. Appendix



Screenshot 4: Official website of Nutella Germany



Screenshot 5: Website of Nutella for Canada



Tweet 56 Mi piace Condividi Piace a 2.003 persone. Iscriviti per vedere cosa piace ai tuoi amici

**PRODOTTI**

**IL MAGAZINE DELL'ENTUSIASMO**

**CONCORSO**



Scopri la collezione  
I bicchieri del cuore

Scegli il tuo preferito



Prendi la vita per il  
vasetto giusto!

Scegli il magazine!



Vinci subito  
l'altoparlante Nutella®!

Partecipa al concorso

**NUTELLA® SU FACEBOOK**



**NUTELLA® SU TWITTER**



SEGUI NUTELLA®

LINK VELOCI  
Storia NUTELLA&BABBO NUTELLA SEI TU!

Screenshot 6: Italy's official Nutella website

**nutella**



**NUTELLA**

NUTELLA är ett hassehötopplägg med kakao. NUTELLA innehåller inga konserveringsmedel eller konstgjorda färgämnen.

Prova NUTELLA till frukost. Den lädva smaken passar till nästan alla sorters bröd.

**Ingredienser**

Ingredienser: Socker, vegetabiliskt fett, hassehötter (13%), fettreducerad kakao(7,4%), skummjölkpulver (5,6%), västlepulver, emulgeringsmedel: lecitiner (soja), vanillin.

**Näringsinnehåll**

Näringsinnehåll	per 100g	Per portion (100g)	%RDA*	
ENERGI	kJ/kcal	2275/544	398/93	4
PROTEIN	g	6	0.9	2
KOLHYDRAT	g	57.3	8.6	9
Närav sockerarter	g	56.7	8.5	9
FETT	g	36.8	4.7	7
Varav mättade fettsyror	g	23.9	3.5	6
KOSTFIBER	g	3.4	0.5	2
NATRIUM	g	0.045	0.007	0

\* RDA = rekommenderad daglig intäkt för en vuxen person baserat på en daglig kost 2000 kcal. Individuella näringsbehov varierar beroende på kön, ålder och fysisk aktivitet. Se andra faktorer.

**Sortiment**



15g



400g



750g

Screenshot 7: Ferrero website with the Nutella page for Sweden





[TOP](#)

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North Sydney NSW 2060  
A.B.N. 29 001 249 261

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**Screenshot 8:** Official Nutella website for Australia