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**ADVERTISING APPEALS AND CULTURAL VALUES IN SOCIAL MEDIA
BRAND POSTS: A COMPARISON BETWEEN FINLAND AND SPAIN**

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ABSTRACT

Social media offers companies new opportunities for marketing and investments in social media marketing are continuously growing. Brands are balancing between standardizing and adapting their traditional media marketing in different countries and often social media brand content is partially made by their global corporate headquarters, thus limiting the possibilities for adaptation of social media content.

The purpose of this study is to analyze social media brand posts and compare them in two countries: Finland and Spain. Albers-Miller and Gelb's framework that combines Pollay's advertising appeals framework and Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework is used to create the structure for this study.

Content analysis is used as a research method in this study. A mixed method design is applied, as the posts are first categorized into appeals and the differences in frequencies of used appeals is analyzed quantitatively. Then the posts are studied more in-depth qualitatively. Altogether, 480 posts from the most valuable brands in the world were gathered from their Finnish and Spanish Facebook brand pages.

The quantitative findings show that only six out of 30 appeals were used to a significantly different extent in Finland and Spain: affiliation, family, distinctive, popular, community and safety. Of those, only the two first were used accordingly with the proposed cultural dimensions. The results show also only some slight qualitative differences in the use of appeals. Some appeals, especially affiliation, were used to take advantage of the opportunities that social media offers as a platform. Thus, few differences in social media marketing of global top brands in Finland and Spain were found.

KEYWORDS: advertising appeals, social media, culture

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The importance of social media (SM) has been expressed in several ways. Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch (2016: 1) describe social media as “an integral part of the 21st century business”. Furthermore, Kim, Spiller & Hettche (2015: 20) note that social media has become “an important part of current marketing practices”. Social media has said to be “fundamentally changing the way we communicate, collaborate, consume, and create” (Aral, Dellarocas & Godes 2013: 3) and social media platforms are constantly increasing in popularity. In January 2018, there were over 4 billion internet users of which over 3 billion were also active social media users. The annual growth of active internet users was 7% and of social media users, it was 13% globally. Facebook is the most popular social media site by far, followed by YouTube, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram. (Kemp 2018.) Facebook is popular especially in short-term oriented cultures such as in Finland and Spain because Facebook stimulates self-enhancement which is important in those cultures (De Mooij 2014: 95; 250).

Nearly 90% of Facebook-users say that they have “liked” at least one brand on Facebook. “Liking” refers to the act of clicking the “like” button on a social media platform. However, 73% claim to have “unliked” a brand on Facebook, also. The most common reason for “unliking” a brand is that the brand page posts too frequently. (Purely Branded 2017.) The optimal posting frequency depends on the number of followers (people who like or follow a brand page) and advertising goals (e.g. whether a brand wants more likes per post or more clicks to their social media page) and ranges from a few posts per month to two posts per day. (Patel 2016.) Other reasons for “unliking” a brand page include starting to dislike the brand in real life and having a bad customer experience. (Purely Branded 2017.)

Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy & Skiera (2010) have introduced a “pinball” framework to describe the new marketing environment that social media offers. Marketing used to be more like a bowling alley where firms influence consumers by throwing the ball (marketing instruments) towards the pins (the consumers), but the consumers did not have similar opportunities to influence the firms.

However, the “pinball” framework describes the marketing environment as a pinball machine where the consumers are the different targets of the machine: the bumpers, kickers and slingshots. Hence, the consumers can bump, kick and sling messages back at the company. This shift has made companies lose some control over their marketing activities. (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker & Bloching 2013: 237 – 238.) Since consumers currently have similar access to produce and share information about companies as the companies themselves do, social media such as Wikipedia can contain information that is truthful but also harmful to a company (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 60).

For the last five decades, scholars have been debating over the issue of standardization versus adaptation of international advertising. Those in favor of standardizing argue for the cost-effectiveness of it, whereas those in favor of adaptation argue that advertising must take cultural differences into consideration. In practice, advertisers use standardized creative strategies, but adapt the executional elements for different target cultures. (Hatzithomas, Fotiadis & Coudounaris 2016.) This is where studying culture-specific appeals is needed. Okazaki and Mueller (2007) studied the emergence of topics in major marketing and business journals published between 1995 and 2006 and found that the most studied topics in the cross-cultural advertising research were cultural values and the standardization versus adaptation debate. However, a later literature review (Garrett 2013) shows a decrease in cultural values studies. Furthermore, the study shows that the standardization versus adaptation debate is still a controversial issue even though adaptation is the more favored approach. Simultaneously with the debate whether advertising should be adapted accordingly with the target culture, there is ongoing debate whether adapting advertisements affects the likeability and persuasiveness of an ad (Hoeken, Starren, Nickerson, Crijns & van den Brandt 2007; Hornikx & O’Keefe 2009).

1.2. Research Gap

To the knowledge of the author, there are no studies yet to study the full initial 1996 framework in the context of Facebook in any countries. Additionally, Finland and Spain have rarely been the target of the research done even in the traditional marketing platforms. Moreover, social media is a relatively new platform for marketing and the diversity of it allows for much more research since different social media are suitable for different purposes and offer different opportunities for marketers to be more creative.

1.3. Objectives and Limitations

As previously mentioned, considering culture in marketing and advertising could be beneficial. Thus, the content of advertisements should be analyzed and its effects evaluated. Different frameworks are used to compare advertising content and its components. From an academic point of view, the research of the combination of culture, advertising and social media is important, because it is a relatively new topic with scarce research done on it. From a managerial point of view, the research of the combination is important in order to understand how a company can raise awareness, improve its image and ultimately increase sales and/or profits. Thus, the research question is:

“Are there differences in social media brand posts between different cultures and if there are, what are they?”

In order to find an answer to the research question, four individually examined research objectives are presented:

- 1) Explore what marketing is in the social media context and cultural context
- 2) Examine and compare advertising appeals used in Finnish and Spanish social media brand content

The thesis studies advertising appeals in the context of social media, since it is a current topic and has limited research done on it from the perspective of advertising appeals. The topic is also limited to social media brand posts and does not include for example comments made by the companies on social media. Another distinct point of view of the thesis is that the countries studied are two European countries: Finland and Spain.

There are three main approaches from which the topic is being discussed: advertising appeals, culture and social media. Culture is mainly discussed via the framework of Hofstede (1984). The advertising appeals are discussed mainly by the frameworks of Pollay (1983) and Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996). The latter framework is a combination of the two previous frameworks and it examines the congruence between them. There seems to be little research done between culturally congruent advertising appeals and social media so social media is discussed as somewhat a separate subject, even though trying to link it with the other subjects of the thesis. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) provide

an important part in understanding social media and social media marketing, although they do distinguish it strongly from advertising. However, with the increase of social media marketing spending (Kemp 2018) and social media posts having to appeal to followers, the advertising appeal framework is considered as suitable perspective to study brand posts.

1.4. Definitions of key terms

1.4.1. Social media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 60) note that there is confusion among both managers and academic researchers on the definition of the term *social media* and on what should be included under it. They define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 61). This definition requires also the explanation of the terms *Web 2.0* and *User Generated Content* (UGC). *Web 2.0* refers to the ideological foundation and technical infrastructure that enable social media, whereas UGC is “the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social Media”. UGC is publicly available, shows creative effort and it is created non-professionally. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 60 – 61; Berthon, Pitt, Plangger & Shapiro 2012: 262 – 263.) The definition of social media by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) is a popular one for researchers to use (Jiao, Gao & Yang 2015). However, earlier research uses *social media* and *web 2.0* often interchangeably (Constantinides & Fountain 2008: 232).

Smith, Wollan and Zhou (2011: xii) define social media as follows: “social media enables the swift and easy development, creation, dissemination, and consumption of information and entertainment by both organizations and individuals”. Safko (2012: 3) defines social media in simpler terms: “social media is the media we use to be social”.

1.4.2. Social media marketing

Felix et al. (2016: 6) have defined social media marketing (SMM) as follows: “Social media marketing is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders.” Social media marketing can have different objectives and it offers different opportunities than traditional marketing (De Mooij 2014: 256 – 257; Felix et al. 2016: 2).

1.4.3. Advertising appeals

The following two definitions help us understand the term *advertising appeal*:

“An advertising appeal is defined as any message designed to motivate the consumer to purchase.” (Mueller 1987: 3.)

“An appeal is something that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting to the consumer... Appeals generally pin-point the anticipated response of the audience to the product and the message.” (Wells, Burnett & Moriarty 2000: 158.)

1.4.4. Culture

Throughout the years, culture has had a large variety of definitions that vary depending on what perspective it is being looked from. (Usunier & Lee 2005.) Among the most accepted ones currently is Kluckhohn’s (1951) definition for the term *culture*: “Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values” (Kluckhohn 1951: 86 as cited by Hofstede 2001: 9). Hofstede (2001: 9) has defined culture similarly but more shortly. According to his definition culture is “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. (Hofstede 2001: 9; Usunier & Lee 2005: 4.)

1.5. Previous Studies

Pollay (1983) composed a list of 42 common advertising appeals. The appeals were later categorized in relation to Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions by Albers-Miller & Gelb (1996). (Moon & Chan 2005.) The use of the culturally related appeals is studied in this thesis in the context of social media brand post content in Finnish and Spanish cultures. Thus, the frameworks by Hofstede (1984), Pollay (1983) and Albers-Miller & Gelb (1996) are creating the base of this paper. The Albers-Miller & Gelb study consisted of two parts: an inductive study, which resulted in 30 proposed correlations between an appeal defined by Pollay and a cultural dimension defined by Hofstede. This study uses the results of the inductive research to study brand posts similarly as Albers-Miller and Gelb studied advertisements in their deductive study.

1.6. Structure of the study

This thesis consists of seven chapters. After the introduction, there are three theoretical chapters. The first theoretical chapter discusses social media and marketing in the context of social media. The second theoretical chapter discusses culture, its dimensions and values and the third and last theoretical chapter discusses the common advertising appeals and their relation to culture, thus, the last theoretical chapter also presents the theoretical framework that is used in the empirical study of this thesis. The fifth chapter of the thesis explains the research methodology used in the study. The sixth chapter describes the empirical results and the seventh and final chapter includes the summary and conclusions about the study.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

This chapter will discuss social media and how the nature of social media has to be considered when marketing in those channels.

2.1. Social media

Social media includes a large variety of different kinds of word-of-mouth platforms that allow users and consumers to share information about products and brands freely. The platforms include different kinds of personal blogs, companies' websites, forums, chat rooms and social networking sites to name a few. (Mangold & Faulds 2009: 357 – 358.) The wide variety of social media adds its own difficulties in managing social media marketing (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2013: 237 – 238).

Due to the differing nature of different social media, it can be useful to categorize them. Categorization of SM is useful in the fast-paced social media landscape because the platforms used today might be gone and replaced tomorrow (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 64 – 65). Thus more general and universal guidelines, that still take the nature of the social media platform into consideration, are needed. They can be categorized by the help of two dimensions: self-presentation/self-disclosure (high or low) and social presence/media richness (low, medium and high). Table 1 shows a visualization of the dimensions and categories. Low media richness refers to mostly text-based exchange (e.g. Wikipedia). Medium media richness refers to sites that can include text, pictures and video (e.g. Facebook and YouTube). High media richness refers to applications that try to replicate real life face-to-face interactions (virtual worlds and games such as Second Life and World of Warcraft). Regarding the other dimension, self-presentation refers to the extent to which a person is required or tends to consciously or unconsciously reveal personal information. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 61 – 62.) This research paper will focus on the advertising appeals on social networking sites (namely Facebook) which have medium media richness and high self-presentation. Facebook was chosen as the platform to be studied because of its overwhelming popularity and establishedness as a marketing platform.

Table 1. Classification of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Constantinides and Fountain (2008: 233), Fisher (2009: 191), and Mangold and Faulds (2009: 358) among other researchers also offer different ways of dividing and categorizing social media. However, the categorization by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) seems to be the most popular.

Motivation among consumers for the use of social networking sites differs across cultures. Brazilians main motivation is to communicate with friends and and experiencing entertainment, whereas the Chinese communicate with friends, watch videos and play games. Russians, on the other hand, share music and movies, and play online games. Thus, the popular social networking channels can differ by country and are based on the needs and preferences of that country. However, the main usage focuses on contacts with friends and family in all countries. (De Mooij 2014: 249 – 250.)

2.2. Social media marketing

Tuten and Salomon (2015: 54) list the basic marketing objectives of social media marketing: Increase brand awareness, improve brand or product reputation, increase web site traffic, amplify or augment public relations work, improve search engine rankings, improve perceived customer service quality, generate sales leads, reduce customer

acquisition and support costs and increase sales or sales revenue. Another possible objective is to create user interactivity by stimulating users to post and share content (Felix et al. 2016: 2) thus contributing to the sense of community (Mangold & Faulds 2009: 361).

“Getting involved in social media is a bit like getting a free puppy. It doesn't cost anything to start, and it looks like nothing but fun – until it chews up the carpet, eats the neighbor's plants, and costs thousands of dollars at the veterinarian. Welcome to the world of social media.”

(Smith et al. 2011: ix.)

The citation above gives a metaphorical glimpse of what social media can be in its best – as well as in its worst.

If a firm manages its social media correctly, it can offer great opportunities for launching new brands, strengthening customer relationships, and driving revenues from existing and new customers from both local and global markets. However, if a company ignores social media or fails in using it the consequences could be more damaging. United Airlines saw the effects of failed SMM management after their stock price fell 10 percent, 180 million dollars. The fall was mostly due to a few viral videos that showed the baggage handlers mistreat Dave Carroll's guitar on the tarmac before a flight. The videos reached 7 million viewers on social media. (Smith et al. 2011:11.) Due to the possibility that stories about the brand such as the one of United Airlines can spread even globally so fast and effectively, companies cannot afford to passively watch what consumers talk about their brand online. (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins & Wiertz 2013).

Social media marketing is a large concept. It includes both the messages towards the consumers and the responses from them. This difference can also be described as task-oriented content and interaction-oriented content. Task-oriented content aims to increase sales by utilizing promotional messages as is done in traditional media. Kim et al. (2015) studied the frequency and responses on three types of content: task-oriented, interaction-oriented and self-oriented content. Task-oriented content aims to “increase brand sales by utilizing promotional messages like traditional advertising”. Interaction-oriented content aims to “build consumer-brand relationships by engaging two-way interactions with consumers” and self-oriented content discusses “corporate news or miscellaneous facts about its brands, services, stores, events or people” Interaction-oriented content is the

most frequently posted content type on corporate social media pages. However, task-oriented content receives the most responses of the three options. This discrepancy may be due to the difference in motives of using social media. Companies use social media to foster relationships with consumers and thus post interactive posts in the hopes of creating conversations with them. Yet consumers tend to follow brands on social media in order to receive promotional deals and information about sales promotions, hence being more likely to respond to these kinds of (task-oriented) posts. (Kim et al. 2015.) The promotional deals that the consumers are after, include free samples, coupons, and free gift cards. However, consumers “pay” for them by giving access to their networks. (Tuten & Solomon 2015: 24 – 27.)

Social media is fundamentally different from traditional media as in the internet and on social media people are actively seeking for information and entertainment rather than just settling what is given to them. Thus, advertising should be relevant to what the consumer is looking for. In case it is not relevant, the consumer will go and see other content and ads. Social media marketing is also not bound by the one-way information sharing, but instead it has the potential to get consumers involved in the marketing process. KitKat has given an example of an easy way to get consumers to participate. They asked their customers to get involved by asking what their favorite KitKat flavor is. (De Mooij 2014: 256 – 257.)

According to Tuten and Salomon (2015: 25) there are three types of media that can be used to distribute brand messages: 1) paid media, 2) owned media, and 3) earned media. Paid media is closely related to traditional advertising. It includes purchasing space in order to deliver a message. In social media context, for example in Facebook, a company can pay Facebook to show their post on the beginning of people’s newsfeeds. Owned media are message channels the brand controls, for example corporate websites and corporate blogs. Earned media are the “free” type of media to the company in the sense that they do not cause direct costs to the company. They are also beyond the control of the company. (Tuten & Salomon 2015: 25.) Earned media could be for example a genuinely made YouTube video where someone tells about a very positive experience with a company without getting any compensation from it. However, Tuten and Salomon (2015) also point out that not all forms of social media marketing go under one of these categories. Facebook is an example of a media that does not fall under only one of these categories; A company is in control of their Facebook content. However, Facebook can dictate what kind of content a company can post. Additionally, Facebook favors paid

brand posts over non-paid ones. Furthermore, also consumers can post positive comments that are earned on a social media brand post or in the comments of its posts.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 65) suggest that social media marketing is “all about participation, sharing, and collaboration, rather than straightforward advertising and selling.” It is fundamentally different from traditional advertising that allows only for one-way interaction. Thus, classic message/ appeal frameworks might not always be fully applicable to social media advertising. However, also the task-oriented, traditional-like advertising is present in social media. (Kim et al. 2015: 9 – 10.) Despite the difference between traditional and social media marketing, both have to be appealing to create as positive a brand image as possible.

Firms are not yet fully comfortable in the new situation where consumers can share their experiences and opinions freely about companies and brands (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 59 – 61). Neither are they knowledgeable on how to do effective social media marketing, what kind of performance indicators they should use to measure its effectiveness or how to create a unified and integrated system of social media rather than treating each medium as a stand-alone element (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden 2011: 265). In addition to the lack of knowledge, companies often lack also the chance and sometimes even the right to influence what their customers write about them online for the whole world to see. This makes companies to be in a position where they might be able to only observe what is written about them. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 60.) Thus, the task of the managers is to influence and shape the discussions towards a way that is beneficial to the company (Mangold & Faulds 2009: 361).

Rokka, Karlsson & Tienari (2014) claim that companies have difficulties in managing social media since they have not established proper framework for managing responsibilities for those updating SM. Additionally, knowledge of traditional advertising does not help a company because traditional advertising frameworks might not be applicable on social media platforms in the way that they work on traditional media. Thus, companies are experimenting with new approaches and creating their own social media marketing strategies. (Cvijikj, Spiegler & Michahelles 2011.)

Social media is sometimes treated as the free alternative to traditional advertising. However, it should not be treated as such because first of all, it is not free. Managing

social media uses professionals' time and sponsoring might be needed to place your ad in a visible place. Sponsoring ads is becoming increasingly popular as organic reach and engagement are continuing to fall as paid content replaces it (Kemp 2018). Second of all, social media marketing should be a supplement, not an alternative that fully replaces all other marketing efforts. (Tuten and Solomon 2015: 55; 180.) However, social media marketing is a cost-effective, overall low cost and flexible (Gong 2009: 89; Kaplan & Haenlein 2010: 67).

Consumers and customers are not the only target of social media marketing. It can also be used to have open conversations with all stakeholders such as employees, suppliers and government agents. As such a versatile tool, a corporation's social media is too complex to be managed and executed by only one person or even department. Rather it works the best as a structure where all departments collaborate to some extent. (Felix et al. 2016: 3 – 5.)

Tuten and Solomon (2015) give examples of social media content: blog posts, microblog posts (e.g. Twitter), press releases, white papers, newsletters, videos, webinars, podcasts and photos. In addition to these options, content can appear in many other forms as well. Additionally, content can be multilayered. (Tuten & Salomon 2015: 167.) Photos are the most widely used format for a corporate Facebook post. They also receive more responses (likes, comments and shares) than text or video posts. Cvijikj and Michahelles (2011) agree that effectiveness of photos is high since they found that photos receive more likes than statuses and links and more comments than links. The results of Kim et al. (2015) could be explained by how video consumes more time and thus users skip them or because users are sometimes directed to an external site to watch the video but after watching they do not come back to the original source. Therefore, they do not have the chance to respond. (Kim et al. 2015: 20 – 21.) However, Cvijikj et al. (2011) conducted a study which showed that photos receive the least responses among the types of corporate Facebook posts.

When aiming for higher number of likes, vividness of a post is essential, so for example a video could be a way to receive more likes (Khan, Dongping & Wahab 2016: 708). A higher number of comments can be earned by posting a high interactive post such as a question. De Vries, Gensler and Leeftang (2012: 89) argue that both positive and negative comments have a positive influence in the number of likes and comments a post receives

because it creates general interest in the post and thus also leads to more interactions. They also found that providing information does not have a significant relation with the number of likes. Additionally, entertainment is only slightly significantly related to the number of likes, but negatively. In other words, entertainment does not receive more likes than any other post. (De Vries et al. 2012.)

However, Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) found in their study the opposite to be true. Their results showed that the content category “entertainment” positively and significantly related to the number of comments, likes and shares. Information-related post also had a significant and positive effect on the number of likes and comments but not on the number of shares. The research of Swani, Milne and Brown (2013) agrees that informative and entertaining content is more likely to go viral than sales promotions and deals. Swani et al. (2013: 286) explain that explicit commercialism such as sales promotions may affect trust and company image negatively. The results of Khan et al. (2016) agree with the positive results on entertainment. However, they also suggest that the results can vary between countries.

Global leading brands post three Facebook posts per week on average (Kim et al. 2015: 20). Cvijikj & Michahelles (2011) presented research that shows that posting day mostly does not matter in terms of responses a post gets. However, they found that posts receive more comments on Tuesdays than on Thursdays. Other statistically significant differences in terms of posting day were not found in the study. Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013) suggest that in order to receive higher engagement, Facebook posts should not be published during peak hours but rather on low hours because people prioritize and reserve peak time to engage with friends.

Felix et al. (2016) present a holistic framework for strategic social media management that has been lacking, whereas many studies have been conducted on individual issues in the context of social media marketing such as customer relationship management and brand management. In their framework, they distinguish the defender approach from the explorer approach. The explorer approach takes advantage of the interactive nature of social media by creating a collaborative platform whereas the defender approach uses social media mostly as a one-way communication channel, where the company barely answers stakeholders’ questions or creates conversations.

There is a discrepancy in the apparent consumer base as it might seem that consumers view companies in social media platforms either as unwanted guests or as a necessary part of conversations that happen in social media (Felix et al. 2016: 2).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have composed a list of ten pieces of advice for companies to use for social media marketing efforts. Companies have a wide variety of options for social media platforms to use, but they cannot participate in all of them. It is common to participate at least in the most popular social media e.g. Facebook, but a firm should also consider their target market and target audience when choosing social media platforms and consider participating in a more targeted medium. A company's social media strategy should be aligned between the different platforms as well as the traditional marketing platforms such as TV- and radio-advertising. Additionally, companies must also be active in the conversations, interesting, humble and honest. Contrary to traditional media, companies' social media input does not have to be so professional because users see it as a community where also companies are participators among everyone else. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010.)

Managers should consider that the type of the company (whether the company is a B2B or B2C company and whether it offers products or services), should be considered in social media marketing (Swani et al. 2013).

The relationships people have on social media can be categorized into strong and weak tied relationships and both of their existence is important for companies. Strong ties are considered influential because they have the knowledge to provide relevant brand recommendations and an active recommendation to join a brand page is more influential when it comes from a strong rather than a weak tie. Weak ties also play an important role in spreading information and awareness of a brand because weak ties are followed passively on the news feed where brand posts they have liked can be seen. (Wilson, Gosling & Graham 2012; Palazon, Sicilia, Lopez, Palazón & López 2015.) That is, weak ties are better for spreading brand awareness and strong ties are better for making a consumer act e.g. signing up for a new service (Gensler et al. 2013).

2.3. Statistics of Facebook brands

The top 10 most “liked” brands globally on Facebook are: RedBull, Samsung Mobile, Oreo, Nike Football, Microsoft Lumia, Starbucks, Walmart, Nike, Amazon.com and Monster Energy (Socialbakers 2017a). The most “liked” Facebook pages in Finland include mostly bands (Socialbakers 2017b; 2017c) whereas the most “liked” Spanish Facebook pages include mostly soccer teams and players. (Socialbakers 2017d; 2017e). Liked brands can be shown on the Facebook feeds of people who have not “liked” the page if their friends have liked the page. Therefore, the networks consumers have online benefit companies who are active in their SMM activities. (Tuten & Salomon 2015: 148.)

The Finnish and the Spanish have different way of interacting to Facebook content. The following statistics is collected of the top 20 brands in Finland. Of all interaction (likes, comments and shares) both Finland and Spain have relatively same number of likes, 75 % and 78 %, respectively. However, the Finns like to comment on content (23% vs 9% of interactions) whereas the Spanish like to share (of all interaction 13% is sharing in Spain vs 2% in Finland.) Regarding Facebook post types, Finnish top 20 brands prefer photos (37%), then links (31%), then videos (26%) and finally statuses (6%). The Spanish top 20 brands prefer photos (50%), then links (31%), then video (19%) and finally statuses (0%). The difference could be related to the nature of the top brands (i.e. bands/music vs soccer teams and players).

2.4. Summary

This section of the thesis introduces social media as a marketing platform. Social media is a fundamentally different platform of traditional marketing platforms because it allows for more interaction between companies and consumers than ever before. Thus, it can offer unique opportunities for consumers to strengthen a brand themselves. Although, companies have to try to coordinate and stay alert on what the consumers are discussing about the brand in order to stay in control. Social media should be integrated into all the other marketing efforts and should not be treated as a free alternative to other marketing and advertising. Moreover, all social media should not be considered the same because they all have different features, and often also different target audiences and thus, they offer different marketing possibilities.

3. CULTURE

The second chapter of this thesis discusses culture. First, the definition and different aspects to culture is discussed. Then, important cultural frameworks including the frameworks of Schwartz, Hofstede and the GLOBE project are briefly discussed. This chapter discusses the Hofstede model more in detail than the others, because it forms an important part of the coding scheme later in the empirical part.

3.1. Culture and its aspects

The term “culture” has referred to several concepts over time. The term derives from the production or development of something, e.g. “the culture of barley” and “the culture of the arts”. The same logic is applied to “a cultured person” which refers to “an educated person”. (Jahoda 2012.)

Culture is an abstract term which can be perceived from several perspectives for example from the perspectives of economic system, religion, government or social control among many others. It plays an important part in consumer behavior and thus, affects the marketing efforts of companies. Moreover, culture affects social media usage. (Gong, Stump & Li 2014: 40.) Culture rises to an especially important position in the cross-cultural marketing context. De Mooij (2014: 61) explains the difficulty of cross-cultural advertising in an insightful way: “we are prisoners of our own culture”. It reflects the fact that understanding what other people in the same prison want is relatively easy but increases in complexity when trying to understand people in other prisons. (De Mooij 2014: 61)

According to Hofstede (2010: 6), culture is at least partly shared with people living in the same social environment and thus it is a collective phenomenon. Culture is not passed on in genes, but rather it is learned. It “consists of unwritten rules of the social game” (Hofstede 2010: 6). Age groups, professions, organizations and social classes can have their separate cultures also. Cultural levels can be visualized as a pyramid as shown in figure 1. The widest (bottom-most level) cultural group includes all humans whose common factor is the ability to speak. The second level of culture is continental. People

in the same continent share some values that are distinct from the values of other continents. The next level is the national culture, which is the level that this paper focuses on. (Hofstede 2010: 6; 344.) However, not all nations have shared values within the nation. This might be the case in countries that have semi-recently been constructed by foreign powers e.g. in Africa where new national borders crossed regional or tribal borders. In these cases, the regional culture level replaces the national culture level. (De Mooij 2014: 58 – 59.)

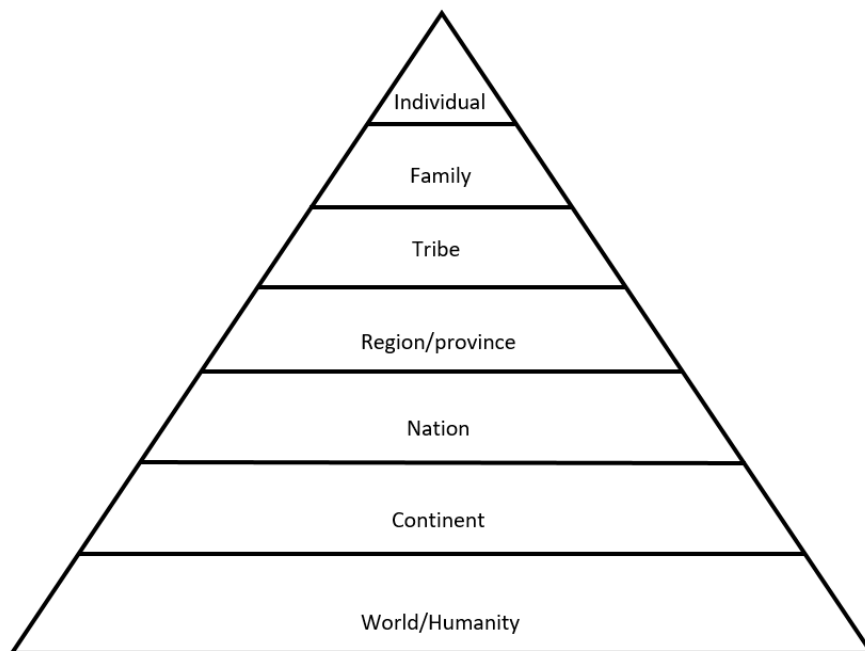


Figure 1. Levels of Culture. (De Mooij 2014: 59.)

Culture can be seen as an “onion” (see figure 2). The values create the core of the onion (i.e. the core of culture). Symbols, heroes and rituals are visual manifestations of the culture. They can be seen due to practices that show them. Values are strongly engrained in the culture, so they do not change easily. When moving outwards to the outmost layer of the “Onion Diagram”, there are symbols. They can be for example words, gestures or

pictures that carry a meaning that can be understood only by people in that culture. New symbols appear, and old ones disappear at a relatively fast pace. Moving back towards the inner layers of the “onion”: heroes are real or imaginary persons, who have values that are highly prized in the culture and thus they are models for behavior. They can be replaced relatively quickly. Rituals are collective activities that take a lot of time to be replaced. (Hofstede 2001:10.)

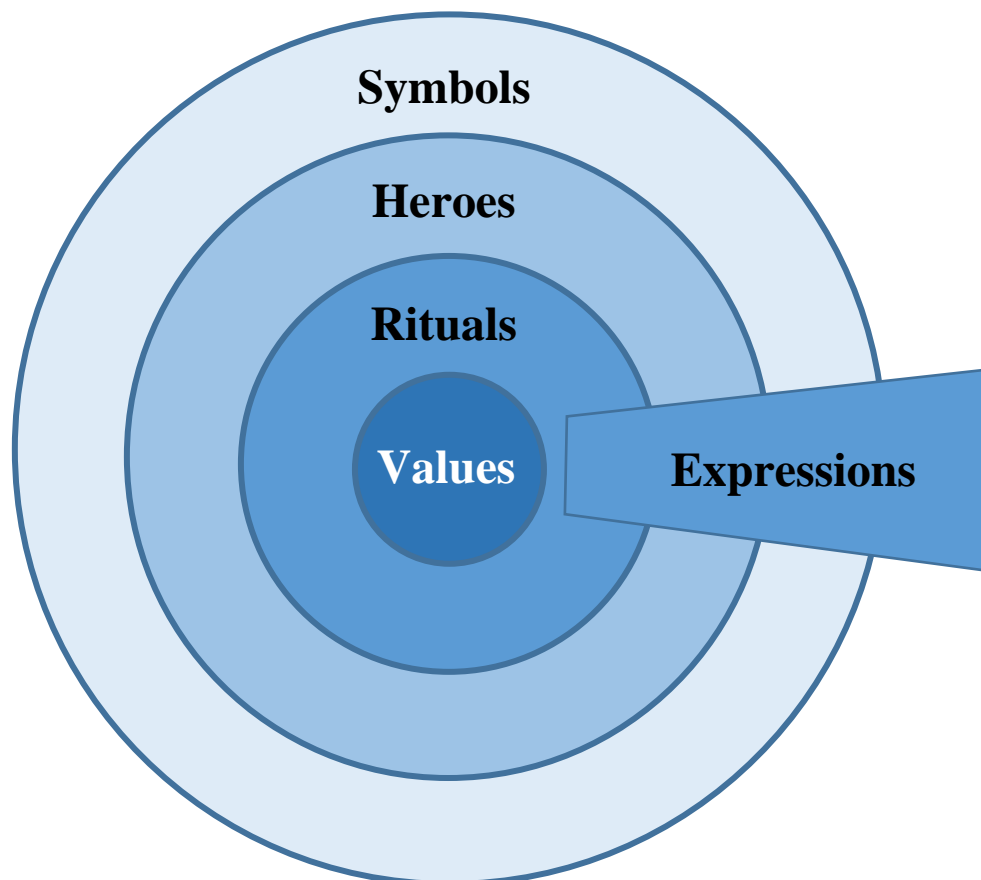


Figure 2. The Cultural Onion. (Hofstede 2001: 10; De Mooij 2014: 63).

Usunier & Lee (2005) mention four essential elements of culture: language, institutions, material productions, and symbolic productions. Language can be seen in two ways in relation to culture: language influences culture or language is an expression of culture. Regardless of the perspective, language has usually a significant role in ads. With a highly

standardized strategy, a company might publish ads in a globally spoken language (i.e. in English). However, even though many understand English, there are people who do not. Sometimes words are culturally based, so even if a viewer of an ad understands the language or even the message, the language might give a subtle message only understood by members of a certain culture. (De Mooij 2014: 69 – 73.) Another important element of culture for advertisers to notice is symbolic productions. Symbolism can be seen in advertising through color, shape, label and brand name, among countless other ways of conveying it. It can sometimes be strongly culturally bound. (Usunier & Lee 2005.)

Culture is also used to describe high art such as classical music and theater. In advertising, culture refers to the way culture is expressed. Culture is the rules and instructions people behave by. It includes shared beliefs, attitudes, roles, and values shared by people speaking the same language, living in the same region, approximately at the same time. People are dependent of culture to guide their behavior. (De Mooij 2014: 56 – 58.)

Hall and Hall (1990) says that the world of communication can be divided into three parts: words, material things and behavior. Studying these three parts helps us in understanding of culture since it is beyond out conscious awareness. Hall and Hall (1990) explain that culture is a part of the “silent language” of humans. Hall (1981) distinguishes between high-context cultures, which present information indirectly and implicitly and low-context cultures, which present information directly and explicitly (De Mooij 2014: 85).

As mentioned earlier, values create the core of culture. Hofstede (1984: 18) define value as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others”. Values are non-rational even though we feel that our values are perfectly rational. The values we hold can also be contradictory such as “freedom” and “equality”. Values are said to have two elements measuring it: intensity and direction. Intensity refers to how relevant the value is, and direction refers to how good or bad we consider it. For example, having money is often considered as a relevant value. However, a person of Christian belief could consider having money as greedy, thus more bad than good, whereas someone else could consider having money a relevant issue yet, a good thing. (Hofstede 1984: 18 – 19.)

An important terminological difference has been made between the *desirable* and the *desired* values. It differentiates between what people think ought to be desired and what people actually desire for themselves. The desirable is all about words and ideology,

whereas the desired is all about deeds and pragmatism. The desirable also includes the aspect of what is right for people in general, whereas the desired is attractive and preferred “for me and for you”. House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004: 16) created a roughly parallel conceptualization of culture as “what is” (i.e. practices) and “what should be” (i.e. values) (Jung, Polyorat & Kellaris 2009: 604). The paradox can emerge for example in a masculine country of low power distance where the low power distance advocates for equality but masculinity advocates for large wage differences. (De Mooij 2014: 55 – 56; 273.) This value paradox can explain why advertisements sometimes exhibit values that are incongruent with the cultural dimensions (Nguyen 2014: 2412 – 2413).

The discussion about cultures usually includes a lot of generalizations and stereotypes and is sometimes talked about in a humorous or ridiculing way for example punctual cultures teasing the Spanish of their concept of time. One should remember that these stereotypes are formed from each individual’s own perspective that is strongly affected by his or her own culture. This should be remembered especially in the planning of international advertising. (De Mooij 2014: 62.)

There are three major cultural models: the Schwartz model (Schwartz & Bilsky 1987), the Hofstede model (Hofstede 1984) and the project GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program) (House et al. 2004), each of which caters to a different research purpose. The Schwartz model is optimal for studying both individual-level values and culture-level values. The Hofstede model is optimal for the need of predicting behavior and lastly, the GLOBE model is useful in studying intergroup and international relations. The GLOBE model is the most recent and large-scale model of the culture models. (De Mooij 2014: 88; 183.) Next, the Hofstede model is discussed further in detail because it is used as an important framework in the empirical part of this paper.

3.2. The Dimensions of Hofstede model

Hofstede (1984) has developed one of the most groundbreaking frameworks of cultural studies, even though it has also received a lot of criticism (Rhodes & Emery 2003). It handles cultural differences through four dimensions: individualism versus. collectivism

(INV), power distance (PDI), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and masculinity versus femininity (MAS). The original study, published in 1981, contained just these four dimensions. The long- versus short-term orientation was added in the new edition published in 2001. Later, a sixth dimension, indulgence versus restraint was added (Hofstede 2010: 280 – 298). However, due to the combination of the frameworks of cultural dimensions and the one of advertising appeals, only the first four dimensions are considered in this paper: individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity. Table 2 presents Hofstede’s (2001) definitions of the dimensions.

Table 2. Definitions of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede: 2001).

Individualism versus collectivism	“Individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: Everyone is expected to look after him/herself and her/his immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.”
Power distance	“The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”
Uncertainty avoidance	“The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations.”
Masculinity versus femininity	“Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.”

Originally, Hofstede produced 116,000 questionnaires on two separate years; 1968 and 1972. All the participants were IBM employees from 72 different countries. Later, additional data has been collected from other populations that were not related to IBM, but the data still matched the original data. (Hofstede 2001: xix.) However, the cultural dimensions have also received a lot of theoretically, meta-analytically and empirically based criticism (e.g. Baskerville 2003; Schmitz & Weber 2014; McSweeney 2016).

3.2.1. Individualism versus collectivism

Individualism is one of the most notorious ways to understand and explain cultural differences. It is one of the most relevant cultural dimensions in developing advertising messages. Individualism is emphasized in advertising and individualistic values in advertising are becoming more popular even in some collectivistic cultures. (Pineda, Hernández-Santaolalla & Del Mar Rubio-Hernández 2015: 437 – 438.) This could be explained by American brands spreading throughout the world because highly individualistic countries (such as the USA) believe that others can and should share and take in those individualistic values. The INV dimension also explains that people in collectivistic countries tend to be more interested in concrete product features. People in individualistic countries are more interested in abstract brands as they see them as unique human personalities. (De Mooij 2014: 90 – 91.) The dimension is also relevant in the online context for example web design and online shopping (Cummins, Peltier, Schibrowsky & Nill 2014: 182).

Most people are a part of a collectivist society. These people learn to think of themselves as a part of “we”- group whereas people in individualistic cultures think of themselves as “I” from very early on. In collectivist cultures, people live closely to each other with their parents and siblings, but also with their grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. In individualistic cultures people live only with their closest family, parents with their child or children and responsibility of taking care of others extends only to him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Typical for individualistic societies is the lack of both horizontal and vertical integration. Children tend to leave their parents’ home early and not keep in constant contact with them after that. Since the parents have also moved to their own houses when they were young, grandparents usually live separately and live their own lives, separately of their children. In collectivist cultures people are extremely loyal to his or her in-group and are expected to take care and be loyal to the extended family which can also be seen in the living arrangements. (Hofstede 2001: 225 – 228.)

People in individualistic societies rely more on media and less on social networks when searching and receiving information. They also see TV advertising as a useful source of product information. (Hofstede 2001: 241 – 242.)

3.2.2. Power distance

Power distance index is an important dimension for this study because of the big difference in the values of Finnish and Spanish in regard to this dimension. It is an important dimension in the social media context, too, because it affects the information exchange behavior between consumers in social media (Khan et al. 2016: 700).

There is a broad correlation of the power distance index and individualism versus collectivism dimension. Individualistic countries tend to also have low power distance. According to the results of Hofstede (2001) there are no highly individualistic countries that would also have very high power distance. (Hofstede 2001: 216 – 217.) Power distance affects income and wealth equality. Countries that value high power distance greater income and wealth inequality is more common. (Usunier & Lee 2005: 175).

National elites in high PDI countries hold quite authoritarian values whereas national elites in low PDI countries hold less authoritarian values. In low PDI countries, the little authority there is, is based on secular-rational arguments, whereas in high PDI countries it is based on tradition. In high PDI countries (more unequal countries) equality is seen as more important than freedom, and vice versa in low PDI countries i.e. more equal countries see freedom as more important than equality. In high PDI countries high status and well-kept appearance are appreciated, whereas in low PDI countries they do not hold such high value. (Hofstede 2001: 93 – 96.) The importance of appearance and status should be seen in advertising as well. In countries of high PDI, it is difficult for a newcomer brand to gain the “number one” position in the market because the current number one brand is highly appraised and has high status. Furthermore, in low PDI countries a brand should not imagine them to be safe in the top position because challengers to these brands are favored. (De Mooij 2014: 93.)

3.2.3. Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance describes how willing and comfortable people in a certain culture are to take risks and not know about the future. High UAI countries treat uncertainty as a threat and have higher stress and anxiety levels. In these countries only known risks are taken and everything that is different is feared. Expressing emotions is more common in high UAI than in low UAI. Low UAI countries have lower stress level and they take each day as it comes. They are more open to change and tolerate diversity better. (Hofstede 2001: 159 – 161.)

3.2.4. Masculinity versus femininity

The final dimension discussed in this paper is the masculinity vs femininity dimension. In highly masculine countries, recognition, advancement and earnings are important in a job and job-related stress is higher. Materialistic values are important. Men and women have very different values, emotions and social roles. In highly feminine countries relationships and quality of life is generally valued above earnings, job advancement and material. In these countries men and women have similar values, emotions and social roles. (Hofstede 2001: 298 – 299.) The importance of understanding the masculinity dimension can be seen for example in the way household shopping is done: in high MAS countries women do most of the household shopping. Since, women and men also have different values and emotions in these countries, the knowledge of the cultural dimension can be taken advantage of in marketing. The ignorance of differences in the masculine could lead to failed advertising as it did in Poland: Danone showed an ad in France that showed a grandfather taking his grandson to school. The ad was also used in Poland, but it failed because Poland is a masculine country. There, it is the grandmother's role to take the child to school. (De Mooij 2014: 99.)

Table 3 shows the differences in cultural dimensions of the two cultures chosen for this study. Finland scores quite high on the INV dimension. Spain scores a bit lower, but the difference is only 12 points. Finland values a very low power distance whereas Spain scores quite high on the dimension, 24 points higher than Finland. Both Finland and Spain are uncertainty avoidant; however, Spain is remarkably more so by 27 points. Finland scores very low on the masculinity values. Spain is also considered leaning more on the

feminine side of the dimension; however, Spain is 16 points “more masculine” than Finland.

Table 3. Cultural dimension scores of Finland and Spain (Hofstede 2001: 500).

	Individualism	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Masculinity
Finland	63	33	59	26
Spain	51	57	86	42
Difference	12	24	27	16

3.2.5. Criticism of the Hofstede model

Baskerville (2003: 1) raises three major points of criticism of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions: “(i) the assumption of equating nation with culture (ii) the difficulties of, and limitations on, a quantification of culture represented by cultural dimensions and matrices; and (iii) the status of the observer outside the culture”. The first point has already been briefly discussed earlier regarding the cultural levels (figure 1) – from humanity level to individual level. A nation cannot (or should not) be generalized into one cultural group when one single nation can have several distinct cultures within and crossing it. This is a noteworthy point for this study because both Finland (Peltonen 1998) and Spain (Ros, Azurmendi, Bourhis & García 1999) have linguistically and regionally separated cultures within their national culture. Secondly, Baskerville (2003) questions the validity of measuring culture quantitatively via dimensions and matrices. Thirdly she questions the ability of an outsider to measure culture properly. She also raises the question of the relevance of the results over time. However, research conducted by (Beugelsdijk, Maseland & van Hoorn 2015) supports Hofstede in the claim that culture remains relatively stable over time as they replicated Hofstede’s study and showed significant correlation with the results of the original dimensions. However, they do not address the issue of whether Hofstede’s dimensions are valid representations of national cultures.

Additionally, the Hofstede model is criticized for its insufficient number of dimensions. It is said that four to six dimensions are not enough to properly discuss cultural differences. The original model also does not include many important countries and cultures; No countries from the communist block (Rhodes & Emery 2003: 92), no Arab countries, and no African countries, except for South Africa were included in the original study. (Okazaki & Mueller 2007.) The Hofstede model has also been criticized in the context of advertising appeals. Rhodes and Emery (2003) claim that the cultural dimensions cannot be used as the sole predictor of the use of advertising appeals. Albers-Miller & Gelb (1996) add that creating the framework empirically rather than theoretically could be a limitation to the Hofstede model.

Despite these criticisms, Hofstede's cultural dimensions remain an important framework for cross-cultural studies because of its simplicity. The dimensions have been closely studied and provide a basis for a popular framework in the cross-cultural advertising appeal research. (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996; Dimitrov 2014: 34.)

3.3. Summary

This section of the thesis discussed culture and its dimensions. As we are “prisoners of our own culture” (De Mooij 2014: 61), it is important to understand what we are prisoners of and understand what we cannot understand. This is critical both in single-cultural and cross-cultural environments; imagine the possibilities it can offer if you understand what others do not understand about themselves and others. In this section the Hofstede model of cultural dimensions was discussed in depth so that it can be later studied along with the advertising appeals. The dimension that were discussed were: individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity.

4. ADVERTISING APPEALS AND RELATION TO CULTURE

The fourth chapter discusses advertising appeals and how they are related to culture. Even though a consumer only sees the big picture in an ad, professionals have to be able to analyze different elements in an ad to know if an ad is fit for the culture it is displayed in (De Mooij 2014: 271). Thus, this chapter will concentrate on the literature of advertising appeals, how the appeals have been analyzed, what their relation is with the cultural dimensions and the two countries chosen for this study.

4.1. Advertising appeals

Using advertising appeals is an effective in communicating promotional information to consumers. The motive for their use is not only to get the attention of consumers but also to persuade them to act. (Yu, Paek & Bae 2008.) The action does not necessarily mean purchasing; it could also refer to “liking”, sharing or commenting on a social media post which leads to increased brand awareness (Pelletier & Horky 2015). Advertising appeals provide a way of analyzing advertising content and its effectiveness in a cross-cultural context. Research shows that frequency of advertising appeals varies between countries and cultures (e.g. Moon & Chan 2005). However, other research do not find significant differences between advertising appeals in different cultures (Yu et al. 2008). Thus, there is not a conclusive answer yet to the question of cultures’ influence to advertising appeals (Saleem 2017). Appealing messages can sometimes be globally appealing, but other times, depending on the context, it could be a threat not to consider cultural differences. OMO, a detergent brand, had a global “Dirt is Good” campaign, but they had to consider than even though in the United Kingdom, dirt is just an “unsightly nuisance”, in Asia, it is considered dangerous and threatening and thus the main message of the campaign had to be delivered in a different way than in the UK (De Mooij 2014: 295 – 296).

Several frameworks have been developed for studying advertising appeals. The most common frameworks for cross-cultural advertising appeals research are the emotional – rational framework, and the hard-sell – soft-sell framework. These two are simple frameworks with only two appeals. The emotional – rational appeal refers to whether the advertisement stimulates a person’s emotional responses or whether the advertisement

includes information and logical arguments. The hard-sell – soft-sell framework described whether the advertising appeals are explicitly and directly or implicitly and indirectly presented. (Okazaki, Mueller & Taylor 2010; Zhang, Sun, Liu & Knight 2014). Some frameworks use different terminology when talking about essentially similar appeal, for example some studied use emotional vs rational appeals, some use cognitive vs behavioral vs affective ads, and others use informational vs emotional appeals (Albers- Miller & Stafford 1999a).

Mueller (1987) identified and categorized ten advertising appeals when studying Japanese and American advertising appeals. The ten appeals were: Group Consensus Appeal, Soft Sell Appeal, Veneration of Elderly and Traditional Appeals, Status Appeals, Oneness with Nature Appeals, Individual and Independence Appeals, Hard Sell Appeals, Youth and Modernity Appeals, Product Merit Appeals, and Manipulation of Nature Appeals.

Pollay (1983) identified and defined 42 different advertising appeals (see Appendix 1.) Pollay's framework has been applied to the Hofstede cultural dimensions by Albers-Miller and Gelb in 1996 and thus the framework by Pollay plays an integral role also in this thesis.

Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) categorized 32 advertising appeals in Chinese and American advertisements. Most of the appeals were adopted from the frameworks of Pollay (1983) and Mueller (1987). Researchers tend to use these three frameworks as a base framework for their studies; however, sometimes they adopt only the most essential appeals and add appeals that are relevant for the context of their study. Some studies combine only Pollay's or Mueller's frameworks (e.g. Rakova & Baek 2013) , some have adopted the framework of Cheng and Schweitzer (e.g. Khairullah & Khairullah 2003; Moon & Chan 2005), others combine all three (e.g. Shen 2013). Additionally, there are some studies that combine different appeals without using a popular framework (e.g. Chandy, Tellis, MacInnis & Thaivanich 2001).

Cross-cultural advertising appeal research focuses on the USA and Asian countries and the comparisons between these two. Advertising appeals in the USA are usually compared with China (e.g. Cheong, Kim & Zheng 2010), Korea (e.g. Han & Shavitt 1994; Jeon, Franke, Huhmann & Phelps 1999), India (e.g. Khairullah & Khairullah 2003) and Russia (e.g. Rhodes & Emery 2003). Some studies compare Asian countries with each

other (e.g. Moon & Chan 2005). Other studies study the advertising appeals in one country only such as in the US (Taylor, Miyazaki & Beale 2013), and China (Shen 2013).

Advertising appeals have also been studied in other contexts than the cross-cultural context. Dens and De Pelsmacker (2010) studied the effect of advertising appeals in the context of low- and high involvement product categories and new versus established brands. They noticed that informational appeals are effective for brands in high-involvement product categories, whereas positive emotional appeals are more effective for brands in low-involvement product-categories. Additionally, new brands experience the effect of the appeals stronger than established brands.

Albers- Miller and Stafford (1999a) studied how the effect of emotional and rational appeals differs when comparing goods and service advertising in four different countries. The study categorized Pollay's 42 advertising appeals under 2 categories: rational and emotional. They noticed that in USA and Taiwan, goods and services are treated differently while in Brazil and Mexico they are treated similarly. In all countries, rational appeals were more common in goods advertising. However, the amount of content in an ad and the extent to which rational and emotional appeals are used in an ad, differs between countries. Zhang et al. (2014) made a further distinction between the type of service being advertised: Emotional appeals should be used in the advertisements of experience services (i.e. services that a person can evaluate easily themselves e.g. a hotel) whereas rational appeals should be used in the advertising of credence services (i.e. services that have to be taken on faith e.g. surgery). Furthermore, (Han & Shavitt 1994) noticed a difference between the use of advertising appeals of personal and shared products and (Albers- Miller & Stafford 1999b) noticed that experiential and utilitarian services use different kinds of appeals. Thus, it should be noted that there are many other variables that affect the use of advertising appeals than just culture.

4.2. Advertising appeals in the cultural context

Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) combined the four original cultural dimensions by Hofstede and the 42 advertising appeals by Pollay to create a framework of correlations. It is one of the most well-known cultural advertising studies ever (Saleem 2017: 3). The sample for the study was 200 print advertisements from each of the 11 countries chosen

for the study. The countries were: Chile, Brazil, Taiwan, Japan, India, Israel, Mexico, United States, France, Finland and South Africa. Initially, 30 of the appeals were proposed to have a relationship with a cultural dimension. They are shown in Appendix 1. The 12 appeals that could not be related with any of the four original cultural dimensions were: healthy, sexuality, wisdom, morality, neat, effective, relaxation, enjoyment, traditional, maturity, modern, freedom and technological. Of the 30 initially proposed correlations, 10 were supported empirically and another 8 were supported after one or more outliers were removed.

Appeals that were identified as positively related to individualism (INV+ are: independence, distinctive and self-respect. Self-respect was originally called “security” by Pollay but due to confusions, Albers-Miller and Gelb renamed the appeal as self-respect. Appeals that are negatively related to IDV (INV-) are: popular, affiliation, family, succorance and community. Appeals that are positively related to power distance (PDI+) are: ornamental, vain, dear and status; whereas appeals negatively related to PDI (PDI-) are: cheap, humility, nurturance and plain. Safety, tamed and durable are positively related to uncertainty avoidance (UAI+) whereas adventure, untamed, magic, youth and casual were identified as negatively related to uncertainty avoidance (UAI-). The appeals of effective, convenient and productivity are positively related to masculinity (MAS+) and the appeals of natural, frail and modest are negatively related to masculinity (MAS-). Furthermore, Albers-Miller & Gelb discovered that some countries use more appeals overall than other countries. (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996.)

However, (Okazaki & Rivas 2002) identified the appeals adventure and modern to be related with individualism, and nature and social status to be related to collectivism, even though Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) identified those appeals to be related to other cultural dimensions or being not related with the cultural dimensions at all.

As mentioned previously, Albers-Miller & Gelb tested their initial framework empirically. They found that 10 of the 30 appeals that were originally proposed to be related to one of the dimensions by Hofstede, were related as they proposed. Additionally, eight appeals were identified to be related to one of the dimensions once one or more outliers were removed. Five of the eight appeals that were hypothesized to be related to PDI were related as proposed originally, so PDI seems affect the appeals the strongest of the four dimensions. Three of the eight appeals that were hypothesized to relate to

uncertainty avoidance were correlated as proposed and two of the six appeals related to masculinity were correlated as proposed. None of the appeals originally hypothesized to relate to individuality were correlated in the empirical study as proposed in the initial study. (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996.)

In addition to Albers-Miller and Gelb, print/magazine advertisements were also studied by e.g. Cheong et al. (2010), Mortimer and Grierson (2010), and Rhodes and Emery (2003) with Albers-Miller and Gelb's framework. The same framework has been used to study television advertisements by e.g. Moon and Chan (2005) and Rakova and Baek (2013).

Furthermore, a very similar framework has been used to study mobile phone advertising appeals in Vietnam by Khanh and Hau in 2007. Okazaki and Rivas (2002) adopted Albers-Miller and Gelb's framework in studying corporate websites. Singh, Zhao and Hu (2003) also recognized the framework but continued to create another framework specifically meant for website analyzation, where for example high power distance was proposed to correlate with more frequent display of company hierarchy and pictures of CEOs on their websites. The appeal framework has also been adopted in social media marketing research. Nguyen (2014) studied advertising appeals of corporate YouTube pages. Ma (2013) studied them on the microblogging sites Twitter and Weibo. Wagner, Baccarella, and Voigt (2017) used a similar, but simpler framework than that of Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) to study Facebook brand page content. Tsai & Rita Men (2012) used the 1996 framework to study Facebook and Renren, but only included the individualism and power distance dimensions of the four Hofstede dimensions. To the knowledge of the author, there are no studies yet to study the full initial 1996 framework in the context of Facebook.

This study will analyze all 30 advertising appeals that Albers-Miller & Gelb initially proposed to be correlated to the cultural dimensions in order to get a larger picture and identify whether the appeals in social media brand posts are correlated with the cultural dimensions. Some studies (e.g. Mortimer & Grierson 2010; Tsai & Rita Men 2012) leave one or more cultural dimensions out in order to concentrate on the more relevant ones or the ones with more significant differences between cultures.

4.3. Value paradox of the advertising appeals

The important difference of the terms “desirable” and “desired” was discussed previously in the chapter about culture. The gap between these terms create a value paradox, which is important to identify when analyzing cross-cultural advertising. Due to the paradox, self-reported cultural values may not predict the values depicted in advertising in that culture. Cultural practices (the desirable) should also be taken into account. Thus, researchers should not rely only on the Hofstede dimension model to predict the use of appeals. Managers should also look beyond the most famous and simple solution (i.e. the Hofstede model) and treat culture as the complex concept that it is. (Jung, Polyorat & Kellaris 2009; De Mooij 2014: 55 – 56.)

De Mooij (2014: 273) presents the three categories of paradoxical value statements that are commonly recognized. 1) Statements contrary to common belief 2) statements that seem contradictory but may actually be true, and 3) values that seem paradoxical in one dimension but can be explained by another dimension. The first category explains a situation where the cultural values do not seem to be congruent with the behavior of the people in the culture. This can be seen for example in Japan, which is in fact a collectivistic society since their behavior is collectivistic even though they are increasingly focused on individuality. The second category includes values that coexist in a certain culture even though they seem contradictory at first such as “belonging” and “going it alone”. The third category explains that different combinations of the cultural values can affect the culturally congruent appeals. Spain, for example, is a culture of relatively high power distance so status appeal should be appealing. However, Spain is also a somewhat feminine culture so modesty and jealousy are characteristic. Thus, showing status can be counterproductive. On the other hand, Finland is both feminine and low PDI culture so the status needs are low due to both dimensions. (De Mooij 2014: 293 – 294).

Larimo, Ummik & Kuusik (2015) call for research that studies the difference of effectiveness of desirable and desired values. Referring to the study by Fischer (2006), Larimo et al. (2015), suggest that a value paradox is expected to be related to the PDI and MAS dimensions, but not the INV and UAI dimensions. House et al. (2004) studied the value paradox in similar terms: as the difference between values and practices and also identified a gap in between the “what is” and “what should be” (House et al. 2004: 32 –

37; Jung et al. 2009: 604). Rakova & Baek (2013) also suggested the value paradox to possibly explain their incongruent results.

4.4. Appeals in Finland and in Spain

Finland is a more individualistic culture than Spain, so the expectation is that Finnish social media brand page content would include more independence, distinctive and self-respect appeals. Furthermore, Spanish content is expected to contain more popular, affiliation, family, succorance and community appeals. However, the difference is quite small (12 points) so the difference is unlikely to be seen on the dimensional level. Furthermore, the empirical study by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) did not support the correlation between the appeals categorized as individualistic and individualistic culture. However, other research (Tsai & Rita Men 2012; Ma 2013) in the social media context does support it.

Spain has higher power distance than Finland so Spanish content is expected to be showing the appeals of ornamental, vain, dear and status. Finnish content is expected to contain more appeals of cheap, humility, nurturance and plain. Research has found evidence of correlation in the power distance dimension (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996; Ma 2013). However, incongruence in this dimension could be explained by the value paradox and also incongruent results have been presented (e.g. Mortimer & Grierson 2010).

Spain is more uncertainty avoidant so appeals that are expected to be present more frequently in Spanish ads are safety, tamed and durable; whereas Finnish ads will likely contain more adventure, untamed, magic, youth and casual appeals. Previous research has supported the correlation (Mortimer & Grierson 2010), at least partially (Rhodes & Emery 2003). However, other studies have not found a correlation (Moon & Chan 2005; Ma 2013).

Spain is a more masculine country so masculine appeals: effective, convenient and productivity is expected to be present more than in Finnish content; whereas feminine appeals: natural, frail and modest are expected to be present in Finnish content more than in the Spanish content. Similarly, with the individualism dimension, the difference between the masculinity scores of Finland and Spain are small, so the difference of the

results may also not be so significant. Furthermore, this dimension could be affected by the value paradox (Larimo et al. 2015). The correlation between the culture and the appeals have been supported by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) and mostly by Moon and Chan (2005), but Mortimer and Grierson (2010) disagree, which would indicate a possible value paradox.

However, the propositions for this study are made in the light of the initial framework that was theoretically based. Empirical research in the same study only supported 18 of these 30 correlations.

4.5. Summary

This chapter introduced advertising appeals and integrated them with the cultural model of Hofstede. It also acknowledged the issues that value paradoxes can create in advertising in regard to certain cultural dimensions. The chapter includes explanations on how culture effects and should be considered when planning and executing advertising.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological choices for this study. First, the research design and methodology are discussed. Then the data collection, samples and coding process are described and finally the quality standards: validity and reliability are discussed. Previous research show inconsistent results on advertising appeals and social media is a relatively new topic with little research done on it. Moreover, companies might not yet fully realize its opportunities and potential. Furthermore, culture brings an additional dimension to advertising. Thus, this thesis attempts to answer the research question: “How are advertising appeals used in social media brand posts in Finland and Spain?”

5.1. Research design and methodology

The methodological approach of the thesis is deductive approach i.e. testing theory rather than building theory (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009: 124 – 125). The deductive approach is suitable for the study because there are clear theoretical frameworks on the topic of advertising appeals and even the combination of them and culture, but not enough and not conclusive enough research done on it, especially in the social media context. Additionally, an important characteristic of deduction is explaining causal relationships (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012: 145), which is done when studying the differences in brand posts in two cultures.

The methodological choice for a research can be either mono method or multiple method. Mono method refers to research that is either fully quantitative or fully qualitative. Multiple method can be further divided into multimethod and mixed methods designs. Multimethod refers to a study which uses either multiple quantitative methods or multiple qualitative methods but does not use both quantitative and qualitative methods. However, mixed method used both methods. Furthermore, the methods can be mixed in two ways: either in a complementary, non-integrated manner so that quantitative data is analyzed quantitatively and qualitative data qualitatively or in a more integrated way. This study uses the mixed method design, the qualitative data is being “quantitised” (i.e. qualitatively analyzed results are counted as frequencies and numerically coded for statistical analysis).

(Saunders et al. 2012: 164 – 166.) The benefit of the mixed method, rather than conducting a purely qualitative or a purely quantitative study is that it takes advantage of both of their strengths. (Creswell 2014: 14 – 16.)

There are three main models within the field of mixed methods: convergent parallel mixed methods, explanatory sequential mixed methods and exploratory mixed methods. In the first method, the quantitative and qualitative data are collected roughly at the same time and the information is integrated in the interpretation. The second model refers to a method where the quantitative data is gathered and analyzed first and then the results are further explained with qualitative research, hence the term explanatory. The term sequential is also a key component of the term because the research is done in sequences: first the quantitative part is done and after that it is further explained by qualitative research. The third model is the same as the second model, but done the other way around, so the qualitative research is done first and analyzed, and the information gathered from that phase is used to build the quantitative phase. This method can be used for example to identify appropriate measuring instruments to use in the quantitative phase. (Creswell 2014: 14 – 16.) This study uses the exploratory mixed methods as the data is first analyzed qualitatively and categorized and then that information is analyzed quantitatively.

Another perspective to analyze the mixed method design is to decide whether the core component of the study is quantitative and deductive or qualitative and inductive. Because intercoder reliability is not tested in this study, a supplemental method (i.e. qualitative analysis) is added to enhance validity. Since the quantitative part is the core component of this study and deduction the methodological approach, this study uses the quantitatively-driven mixed method design. In this method, the quantitative sample is usually too big to fully analyze qualitatively and in such case a compromise must be made to analyze the data more efficiently. In this study, efficiency is reached by discussing the posts within the categorized appeals. (Morse & Niehaus 2009: 117 – 120.)

The interest for using a mixed method design rises from the research question, which shows interest in studying differences in social media posts in two different countries from the advertising appeal point of view. However, there can be differences in both the appeals being used and the way the appeals are portrayed in the posts. Thus, a mixed

method design is appropriate. Additionally, the posts have to be interpreted in order to get the results of which appeals do and which do not appear in a certain post.

Content analysis will be used as a methodological approach as it allows for “the reliable, valid, and quantitative answers” to the use of appeals, themes and informational content in ads and for comparing the use of them in different countries (Kassarjian 1977: 16). Content analysis has often been used in studying advertising (Okazaki & Mueller 2007) and especially in studying advertising appeals (e.g. Mueller 1987; Han & Shavitt 1994; Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996). Content analysis is the most widely used methodology in cross-cultural advertising research (Okazaki & Mueller 2007). It has also been used in studying Facebook content from a marketing perspective (e.g. Swani et al. 2013; Touchette, Schansk & Lee 2015; Liu, Li, Ji, North & Yang 2017).

Schreier (2012: 1) defined qualitative content analysis (QCA) as “a method for describing the meaning of qualitative material in a systematic way.” The method is suitable for analysis open for interpretation. Previous research studies advertising appeals often with a quantitative method (e.g. Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996; Moon & Chan 2005; Tsai & Rita Men 2012), even though the material (whether an advertisement contains an appeal or not) can be interpreted differently by different people. Thus, it is beneficial to present the qualitative results, too. Although, researchers tend to tackle this issue by having several coders and testing the intercoder reliability (e.g. Tsai & Rita Men 2012).

Qualitative content analysis is suitable for dealing with “rich data that requires interpretation” and “data that you have sampled from other sources (documents, internet, etc.)”. Social media posts fit both these categories. Schreier (2012: 2) gives an example of quantitative, non-interpretive data: whether a person in a picture is male or female, since interpreting it is usually very easy. (Schreier 2012: 2 – 3.) Quantitative data is also the data we have after we have interpreted the social media posts. Therefore, when a Facebook post is studied to interpret whether it includes for example the appeal *effective*, it is qualitative research. However, when the difference in the frequencies of the occurrence of the appeal between two countries is studied, it is usually quantitative research. Although Schreier (2012: 36) says that presenting results in frequency format does not make QCA automatically a quantitative method but that QCA combines features of both qualitative and quantitative research.

Thus, both methods of research are used in this thesis to support each other. Moreover, instead of displaying only the quantitative results, studying the posts in-depth and explaining their content qualitatively helps in understanding the new context of social media, which allows for new and innovative ways for advertising and deepens understanding on how to create appealing brand posts in social media. The qualitative data is discussed with representative examples, so not all of the 480 will be discussed.

According to Saunders et al. (2009: 414) quantitative data helps us to “explore, present, describe and examine relationships”, which is the objective of the thesis. Thus, quantitative research method is used to analyze data gathered from the results of the qualitative analysis. Furthermore, quantitative research is usually associated with deduction (Saunders et al. 2012: 162), which is the approach taken for this study. For the quantitative part, crosstabs of each appeal are done and chi-squared values calculated. Due to the informal nature of social media content, the qualitative analysis also consists of some less formal characteristics in order to fit the theme that is being discussed. Additionally, almost all of the text is expressed in its translated form in order to make the text clearer. The original posts in both countries were translated to English by the coder and author of this thesis. Only screenshots that were considered to enhance the qualitative analysis substantially were added within the text.

5.2. Data collection

The samples have been collected from Finnish and Spanish Facebook brand pages, so the targets of the posts are Finnish and Spanish people. The brands chosen were selected from Forbes' 2017 “The World's Most Valuable Brands” -list (Forbes 2017). Finland and Spain were chosen as the target countries because, to the best knowledge of the author, the advertising appeals of the social media posts of neither country have never been studied, let alone compared with each other. Social media was chosen as the platform because social media marketing is growing and there is a need for studying culture in the context of social media (Saleem & Larimo 2017). All samples were collected within two days, on the 8th and 9th of March 2018. The 8th of March was International Women's day so an unusual amount of *affiliation* and *succorance* appeals appeared on the posts congratulating women on those days.

Every brand that had a Facebook page both in Finland and in Spain was selected and the 10 previous posts in reverse chronological order (i.e. 10 first in the order of appearance) were included in the study of each brand in both target countries. All types of posts (i.e. picture, text, videos, GIFs and links were included). Furthermore, all posts were included even in the case of having a campaign with a certain appeal as a theme (e.g. Mastercard Finland's Ostoturva (safe shopping online") -campaign.

Some brands had one brand page and the target country was chosen by selecting it from the menu, whereas other brands had separate brand pages for different countries, for example "Audi España" and "Audi Finland". Both were included in the data. However, the brand pages of the two countries had to be considered the same brand, so for example Santander Bank (banking and financing in Spain) and Santander Consumer Finance Finland (consumer and car loans) were considered too different of brands to be compared. Santander does not offer its services in Finland to the same extent that it does in Spain. Additionally, only business to consumer brands were considered in the data. Facebook as a brand was excluded, because its business model is so different from the other brands as its customers are also other businesses that pay for advertising on Facebook. Thus, out of 100 brands, 24 passed the requirements of being included in the data. 240 Facebook posts were collected from the two countries, 480 altogether. A large sample was gathered because it is suitable for the deductive and quantitative methods (Saunders et al. 2012: 146). The data was gathered by taking screenshots, saving them as pictures and eventually saving them as PDF files with 10 screenshots each from the same brand and same country.

The data includes brands from 9 different industries: 8 automotive brands (Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Ford, Lexus, Nissan and Hyundai), 4 technology brands (Samsung, HP, Huawei and Panasonic), 4 consumer packaged goods brands (L'Oréal, Nestle, Lancôme and NIVEA), 2 restaurant brands (McDonald's and Subway), 2 retail brands (H&M and IKEA), 1 beverage brand (Nescafé), 1 financial Services brand (Mastercard), 1 leisure brand (Disney) and 1 media brand (Fox).

This study is limited to the context of social media because it is still quite a new marketing platform, and has only little research done on it. It is also limited to just two countries: Finland and Spain due to time-related and language-related resources. Furthermore, the data is gathered only from one social networking service, Facebook. The purpose of the research is to study the posts themselves, rather than the reaction that people from

different cultures would have for them, thus strict rules on what kind of posts should be made are not suggested, but rather gives insight on what the most valuable brands' posts are like now.

The coding is done according to Pollay's advertising appeals framework and each appeal was coded so that it either was used or was not used in a brand post. The analyzing of the coded material was done based on Albers-Miller and Gelb's framework, so 30 of the appeals were considered to be related to one of the cultural dimensions. The Hofstede model was chosen to be used in this study for X reasons: firstly, it is used in the Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) study and it is an influential framework in marketing and advertising research (Valaei, Rezaei, Khairuzzaman, Ismail & Oh 2016). The Albers-Miller and Gelb study was chosen because their framework has been used quite often within the advertising appeals field by other researchers and thus, it offers also the possibility for a wider theoretical understanding of the topic.

One coder, with the knowledge of both Finnish and Spanish was used to code all the social media brand posts. Of each brand, the Finnish posts were coded first and the Spanish second, then the same practice was done on the next most valuable brand that met the initial requirements. After all the brand posts were coded on whether they showed each individual appeal or not, frequencies of their emergence in both countries was counted. For the qualitative part of this study, each appeal was examined separately and each post using the appeal was analyzed and categorized within each country and compared with the posts that included the same appeal from the other country, thus, gaining better understanding on how each appeal is used in both countries.

As previously defined, an *advertising appeal* is "any message designed to motivate the consumer to purchase" (Mueller 1987: 3) and "something that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting to the consumer" (Wells et al. 2000: 158). Thus, for example including an adult in a picture for a post does not automatically mean that the post includes the *maturity* appeal or if a car brand post does not include a car crash, it is not necessarily coded to include the *safety* appeal. It had to make the post or brand seem more attractive. However, social media posts often do not try to make the consumer buy the product, but rather strengthen the brand (Tuten & Salomon 2015: 54), thus the emergence of the appeal is evaluated also on the basis of what appeal in the post strengthens the appeal of the brand. Each of the 30 advertising appeals expected to be

related with a cultural dimension was coded as a dichotomous judgment (i.e., the appeal is used in the brand post or it is not), as done in previous research (e.g. Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996; Ma 2013).

5.3. Quality standards

Reliability and validity are discussed as quality standards for this study. Reliability refers to “whether your data collection techniques and analytic procedures would produce consistent findings if they were repeated on another occasion or if they were replicated by a different researcher” (Saunders et al. 2012: 192). Social media and Facebook are quickly changing platforms and also the opportunities for marketing changes in them continuously. For example, the increase of companies spending money to gain visibility in social media might lead to more careful consideration on what type of content is posted, rather than just posting something and showing presence. This might affect the advertising appeals used also if social media posts become more ad-like with a higher production value. Due to the dynamic nature of SM, different results could be concluded at different points in time.

There are four threats to reliability according to Saunders et al. (2012: 192) which are the participant error and bias and researcher error and bias. Participant errors and biases are minimal because the posts are essentially inanimate objects that are the same regardless of place or time. Researcher error refers to any factor that affects the researcher’s interpretation. This threat could be minimized by using several coders and testing their intercoder reliability (Creswell 2014: 203), but this study settles with strict definitions for the appeals and treats the social media context similarly in both countries, so for example assumes that tagging someone appeals to people’s need to be liked by peers in both countries. Researcher bias refers to a situation where the researcher may allow her own subjective view get in the way when interpreting the posts. This threat is also minimized by relying strongly on the definitions and noting the context. Additionally, the qualitative part explains further how the appeals are portrayed and thus supports the quantitative results. (Saunders et al. 2012: 192.)

The second quality standard is validity, which is identified in various forms. Construct validity refers to the extent to which the study measures what it was meant to measure.

which is defined as “the extent to which data collection method or methods accurately measure what they were intended to measure” and “the extent to which research findings are really about what they profess to be about”. (Saunders et al. 2012: 684.) In a mixed method study, the validity of both the qualitative data and the quantitative data have to be checked (Creswell 2014: 227) although in this study, the qualitative validity is especially important because it directly affects the quantitative study.

The qualitative validity of this study is strengthened by the rich qualitative descriptions and examples of the data. The researcher bias is also a qualitative validity issue and it is recognized that for example the Finnish cultural background of the coder can cause bias on the interpretations and categorizations of the posts. (Creswell 2014: 201 – 202.)

Quantitative validity can be threatened by two different kinds of threats: internal and external threats. Internal validity threats are “experimental procedures of the participants such as events that happen to the participants during the research process, that can influence the results or if the participants change or mature. (Creswell 2014: 174 – 175.) In the case of this study Women’s Day could be such a factor. However, the posts were collected one brand after another rather than all posts from one country first so it should affect both countries equally. Most of the threats are not particularly relevant in research that studies inanimate objects. Although, the timing of gathering the data can affect the results and was therefore done in a small timeframe of only two days. External validity threats refer to the threats that can happen when drawing incorrect inferences from the sample data to other persons, settings and times (Creswell 2014: 176). For example, it should not be assumed that the same results would apply in all social media platforms such as Twitter or Instagram due to their differing functionalities. Moreover, even Facebook itself is an everchanging platform and changes in marketing policies and algorithms that favor paid advertising can change the kind of brand posts that are published.

6. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part empirical results of the 480 Facebook brand posts are analyzed. First, quantitative results and frequencies of the emergence of the appeals are presented. Next, the use of advertising appeals in Finland are discussed, then the use of appeals in Spain and lastly the comparison between the two countries is made keeping in mind their cultural dimension scores. The last part also analyzes the data qualitatively and studies each appeal more in-depth. Frequencies of the use of an appeal are presented in numerical, rather than word form in order to make the text clearer. Frequencies of all 42 appeals are presented in Appendix 2.

Table 4 shows the frequencies of posts including each of the 30 appeals proposed to relate to the cultural dimensions. The table also shows the percentage of posts the appeal appears in. Following Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) and Ma (2013), each appeal was coded as a dichotomous judgement: the appeal was either used in the post or it was not used. Only six appeals were identified to have a significant difference (p -value < 0.05) in the frequency of use in the two countries. Furthermore, four out of those six appeals were significant in the opposite direction as expected and five out of six appeals were related to the individualism/collectivism dimension.

6.1. Appeals in Finland

As a relatively individualistic country, brand posts in Finland are expected to show more appeals related to individualism than to collectivism. However, the collected data shows that in Finnish social media brand posts, collectivistic appeals (INV-) were used more often than individualistic appeals (INV+), in 33 and 20 posts, respectively. The reason for the apparent difference in the use of individualistic and collectivistic appeals seems to be because there are five INV- appeals and only three INV+ appeals.

Table 4. Frequencies and significance of differences of used appeals.

Appeals		Finland	Spain	Finland (%)	Spain (%)	χ^2	p-value
INV+	Distinctive	12	30	5.0 %	12.5 %	8.454	.004
	Security	1	2	0.4 %	0.8 %		
	Independence	7	7	2.9 %	2.9 %		
INV-	Popular	5	0	2.1 %	0.0 %	5.053	.025
	Affiliation	9	25	3.8 %	10.4 %	8.103	.004
	Family	1	7	0.4 %	2.9 %	4.576	.032
	Succorance	9	17	3.8 %	7.1 %	ns	
	Community	9	0	3.8 %	0.0 %	9.172	.002
PDI+	Dear	2	3	0.8 %	1.3 %	ns	
	Ornamental	11	15	4.6 %	6.3 %	ns	
	Status	0	1	0.0 %	0.4 %	ns	
	Vain	10	12	4.2 %	5.0 %	ns	
PDI-	Cheap	17	18	7.1 %	7.5 %	ns	
	Humility	11	8	4.6 %	3.3 %	ns	
	Plain	22	24	9.2 %	10.0 %	ns	
	Nurturance	14	9	5.8 %	3.8 %	ns	
UAI+	Safety	10	3	4.2 %	1.3 %	3.874	.049
	Tamed	1	0	0.4 %	0.0 %		
	Durable	5	7	2.1 %	2.9 %		
UAI-	Adventure	14	16	5.8 %	6.7 %	ns	
	Untamed	2	4	0.8 %	1.7 %	ns	
	Magic	3	4	1.3 %	1.7 %	ns	
	Youth	2	5	0.8 %	2.1 %	ns	
	Casual	2	0	0.8 %	0.0 %	ns	
MAS+	Effective	31	19	12.9 %	7.9 %	ns	
	Convenient	26	18	10.8 %	7.5 %	ns	
	Productivity	19	15	7.9 %	6.3 %	ns	
MAS-	Frail	2	1	0.8 %	0.4 %	ns	
	Modesty	1	0	0.4 %	0.0 %	ns	
	Natural	8	8	3.3 %	3.3 %	ns	

Power distance in Finland is low, so the expectation is that low power distance appeals (PDI-) would be used more in Finnish brand posts. The results support this proposal. 64 PDI- appeals and 23 PDI+ appeals were used in the Finnish posts. However, the emergence of the *plain* and *cheap* appeals is responsible for the enormous difference of the use of PDI- and PDI+ appeals to a large extent.

Uncertainty avoidance in Finland is relatively high, so uncertainty avoidant appeals (UAI+) should be used slightly more than UAI- appeals. The difference in the Finnish brand posts is not big, but the posts included a few more UAI- appeals than UAI+ appeals, in 23 and 16 posts, respectively. UAI+ appeals *safety* and *durable* are appeals that are often shown in automotive brand posts. However, appeals related to uncertainty avoidance (positively or negatively) are not used a lot in brand posts overall when compared with the appeals related to other dimensions.

Finland scores 26 on the masculinity dimension so it is a feminine culture. However, this can certainly not be seen in the data gathered of Finnish brand posts. Masculine appeals were used multiple times (76 masculine appeals were identified) more than feminine appeals (11 MAS- appeals were identified) across all industries. However, advertising may be naturally masculine appeal driven; companies want people to see them and their products as effective, convenient and encouraging productivity rather than frail, modest and natural, although those appeals can also convey a positive image of the product.

6.2. Appeals in Spain

Spain is quite equally individualistic and collectivistic. Therefore, it would be expected there to be similar amount of individualistic and collectivistic appeals used. However, Spanish posts included more collectivistic (INV-) appeals than individualistic appeals, 49 and 39, respectively. Although, the automotive industry brand posts contained more individualistic appeals. The *distinctive* and *independence* appeals were especially apparent in Spanish automotive brand posts. On the other hand, consumer packed goods brand posts did not show any individualistic appeals in 40 posts, but 9 collectivistic appeals were shown in the same posts.

Spain has quite high power distance, a lot higher than Finland but quite average when compared to the whole world. However, similar to Finland, the data shows that PDI- appeals are used almost twice as much as PDI+ appeals, 59 and 31 times, respectively. However, almost half (13 out of 31 PDI+ appeals) were used in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) brand posts even though CPG posts make only 40/240 of all posts. Cosmetics brands were included in the CPG industry so appeals like *ornamental* and *vain* were often used.

The high uncertainty avoidance of the Spanish culture could not be seen in the use of appeals. Only 10 posts presented UAI+ appeals, whereas 29 posts presented UAI- appeals, of which 16 out of 29 appeals were *adventure*. The adventure appeal was used mainly in the automotive industry posts (5 times) and the tv channel Fox's posts (4 times). Considering Spain's high uncertainty avoidant culture, it was expected that uncertainty avoidant appeals such as safety, tamed and durable would have been used more.

The Spanish culture is quite equally feminine and masculine, but with a score of 42, a bit more feminine. However, similarly to Finland, Spanish brand posts included a lot more masculine (52) than feminine (9) appeals. In the automotive brand posts, no feminine appeals were identified.

6.3. Differences of the use of appeals between countries

Altogether, more appeals were identified from the 240 Spanish posts (420 appeals used) than the 240 Finnish ones (400 appeals). However, the three industries with the most brands included (automotive, consumer packed goods and technology), all showed more appeals on Finnish posts than on Spanish ones. The results of the qualitative part of the research are presented next. Only appeals that have been matched with one of the cultural dimensions will be discussed. Moreover, only appeals that emerged five or more times in both countries are discussed in order to get results that are more generalizable. *Safety* does not meet these requirements but is still discussed because the frequency of its use in Finland and Spain was significantly different ($p < 0.05$)

6.3.1. Individualism versus collectivism

Spanish brand posts used more appeals related to individuality, both positively and negatively, than Finnish ones did altogether, i.e. Spanish brand posts used more individualistic and collectivistic appeals. Within the INV+ appeals, the *distinctive* appeal was used over two times in Spain than in Finland (30 and 12 times, respectively), even though it was expected that Finnish posts would have used more of the *distinctive* appeal because Spain is only somewhat individualistic with the score of 51, but Finland is even more with the score 63.

INV+ appeals were used 30 times in Finland and 39 times in Spain. Both countries' social media included posts that promote the distinctiveness of the product. The *distinctive* appeal was used for example in Finland by Toyota claiming that their car is "special", "at least distinctive" and "everything but gray". In Spain, BMW was particularly eager to portray *distinctiveness* of their product by stating directly "to explore the limits of exclusivity", "icon of maximum exclusivity" (figure 3) and "an exclusive glance to the future". All of the posts also included a styled picture of BMW's newest car. A common theme regarding *distinctiveness*, especially in Spain, was the rare, unique and exclusive opportunity to attend an event. For H&M Spain, it was their own fashion event, for NIVEA Spain, to be one of the first ones to test their new product and for many of the car brands (e.g. Spanish Lexus and Hyundai), to watch the live stream from the 88th Geneva International Motor Show online. At least the opportunities were made to sound exclusive and unique. Spanish brands (e.g. Panasonic, Mastercard and Hyundai) also promoted *distinctiveness* by phrases like "do not miss [the chance to] ...", whereas Finnish posts did not use this kind of intimidation. In Finland, only Samsung used the "get the product before everyone else" -method. They also appealed to our personal will to be distinctive and unique from others by suggesting that you can make your Instagram pictures more unique with Samsung's pencil for touchscreen. Thus, differences in post content regarding the distinctive appeal mainly seemed to relate to Spanish brands offering the opportunity to attend unique and exclusive events, whereas Finnish brands did not. If Finnish brands had similar events, they did not try to appeal to the viewer by concentrating on the rarity of the event.

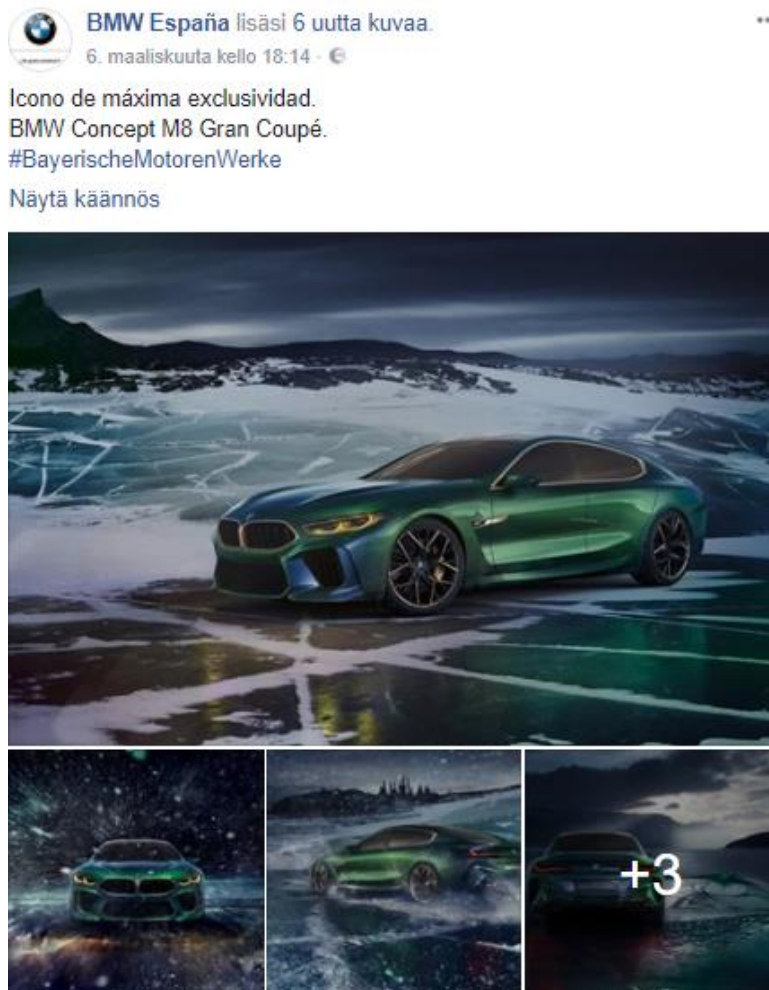


Figure 3. Distinctive appeal in BMW Spain's post.

The *independence* appeal was used 7 times in both Finland and Spain. In Finland, *independence* was conveyed by encouraging to “find you passion, believe in your chances and challenge yourself” by Toyota with a link integrating a picture on the post of a handicapped skier and a text in English “start your impossible”. BMW Finland encouraged viewers to “create your own rules” and Samsung Finland had a video post that encouraged followers to buy and use their newest phone “in order to be yourself”. Toyota and Nissan in Spain emphasized the option to personalize your car with the texts: “more powerful and personalizable than ever” and “increases the options for personalization for the customer”. Ford Spain posted a picture related to Women’s Day with two Ford Mustangs and a text on top of them: “you are the only one who decides your own destiny”.

There was a significant difference between the use of collectivistic appeals in Spanish than Finnish posts overall, although only *affiliation* had a significant difference in its use in Finland and Spain in the direction that was expected. 33 collectivistic appeals were identified from the Finnish, and 49 from the Spanish posts. Difference in the use of *popularity* was significant, but in the other way than expected. 5 Finnish posts and no Spanish posts used the appeal. Furthermore, *community* appeared 9 times in Finland and not at all in Spain. *Affiliation*, *family* and *succorance* all appeared more often in Spain than in Finland: 25 and 9; 7 and 1; and 17 and 9 times, respectively. 4 out of 9 of the Finnish posts and 12 out of 17 Spanish posts including the *succorance* appeal were related to either International Women's Day or Valentine's Day, which itself is also strongly themed around succorance.

In this study, *affiliation* emerged in 25 Spanish and 9 Finnish brand posts. Affiliation was portrayed in several different ways in social media posts, and perhaps differently than in traditional media posts and arguably differently than what the appeal was originally supposed to mean. The definition includes: "to be accepted, liked by peers". These social media posts were considered to include the appeal if it tries to appeal for example to the viewers will to be accepted, not just indicating that the viewer will be accepted if she or he uses the product. Asking for followers to engage and be social by sharing their experiences or tagging a friend in the comments was coded as reaching for the *affiliation* appeal, because one reason why people engage in social media is in order to be accepted (Nadkarni & Hofmann 2012). Many posts appealing to *affiliation* were stereotypical brand posts that tries to engage followers by including sentences like Finnish McDonalds' "tag the person who..." and Spanish McDonalds' "who joins you in any craziness/crazy idea?" (Figure 4).

Furthermore, HP had a post in both countries of a picture of friends and groups of people having fun and being social insinuating that "buying the product = happiness, friends and being accepted". Samsung also had a common post in both countries where a video expresses the message that if you use a Samsung phone and camera, you will get more likes and reactions on social media, which people interpret as being accepted. Brands conveyed *affiliation* a bit differently even in the same country. While McDonald's Spain made the viewer feel included and think about who of their friends would join them in any craziness, Spanish Lancôme took a different approach. They had a marketing campaign, where they had "beauty influencers" united and using the products on


McDonald's on käyttäjän Sonia Delpino seurassa. ...
 1. maaliskuuta kello 13:00 - 

Salir de la rutina es más fácil de lo que piensas si tienes a alguien con quien probar cosas nuevas, como las últimas Grand McExtreme de McDonald's Urban Experience. Y a ti, ¿quién te acompaña en cualquier locura? 🤪🤪

Näytä käännös



Figure 4. Affiliation in McDonald's Spain's post.

livestreams and pictures. However, they did not try to include the viewer of the brand post to the event, so even though the post is about gathering and uniting people, the viewer might feel excluded, although, this type of a post could also be a subtle try to convey status. Additionally, they posted a Women's Day post that they "want to celebrate [Women's Day] with you and our [beauty] ambassadors". The theme of "let's join to celebrate Women's Day" also appeared on the posts of Panasonic and Mercedes-Benz in Spain, but not in Finland, where the Women's Day posts just stated "Happy Women's Day".


A unique term regarding *affiliation* was raised from a Spanish IKEA post that said: “lengthen the *sobremesas* and shorten the distances”. *Sobremesa*, which is a Spanish term to refer to the time spent at the table after eating, is not even a term in Finland or the Finnish language because Finnish people do not tend to spend time at the table after eating the way the Spaniards do.

The *family* appeal appeared in 7 Spanish posts and 1 Finnish post. The Spanish posts that used the *family* appeal often used also appeals like nurturance, enjoyment and safety, whereas this kind of “family unit” concept was not shown in Finnish brand posts. Spanish Nescafé had a post, which can appeal to maternal instincts, where a mother is waking up her child in the morning (figure 5). They also had a post that can appeal for paternal instincts, and family values overall, because it included a family spending time and enjoying a morning, with the father in the foreground drinking coffee and mother and daughter in the background eating breakfast. Nestlé Spain used the family appeal in their post reminding of the importance of breakfast with the text: “did you know that only 35% of children eat an adequate breakfast every morning?” and a video including tips for an ideal breakfast. Huawei Spain had a video post of a family enjoying their time in a ball pit and taking pictures with their Huawei phone (figure 6). Hyundai Spain had also a video post promoting the safety of their car (figure 7) although it is probably meant for global use because it is in English. The video starts by a father and a son coming back to their car from a hike. They close the car doors and the father activates an Electronic Child Safety Lock. They drive for a while and the child seems like he has to go to the toilet. Then he sees a sign pointing to the toilets and shouts for the father to stop the car. He then stops the car beside the road and tries to inactivate the Electronic Child Safety Lock. Simultaneously the son was about to open the door and jump out. Then, the camera angle switches to film outside the car and the viewer of the post sees another car coming from behind, looking like he would run over the child. The screen is split so the viewer also sees how the Electronic Child Safety Lock is still activated. Thus, the child could not open the door and was safe. However, all of it happens in a fast pace so the viewer might not notice that the safety lock is activated and gets anxious for a while. This kind of safety and nurturing of the family occurred only on one Finnish post: IKEA had a post about a discount on a nightlamp, which they claim to have a “calmly pulsating heart, so it protects very effectively from monsters”.

NESCAFÉ 26. helmikuuta kello 22:32 · 🌐

¡Hínchate a besos por la mañana! ¿Cómo es para ti un despertar ideal?
 ¡Contesta y podrás ganar uno de los 5 botes del nuevo NESCAFÉ Classic
 que sorteamos! #Por1DespertarNatural

Näytä käännös



27 t. näyttökertaa

Figure 5. Succorance and family appeals in NESCAFÉ Spain's post.

Huawei Mobile 7. maaliskuuta kello 21:45 · 🌐

👉 ¡Ya puedes tener los mejores selfies con el nuevo #HuaweiPsmart!

📷 Olvídate de salir mal en las fotos gracias a su modo belleza y su cámara frontal de 8Mpx.



981 näyttökertaa

Figure 6. Nurturance in Huawei Spain's post.



Figure 7. Family and safety appeals in Hyundai Spain's post.

Succorance was used in 9 Finnish and 17 Spanish posts. It was a common appeal among the International Women's day posts in both countries since the Women's Day is themed around one of the definitions of succorance: to feel deserving. L'Oréal posted a *succorance* themed Women's Day post in both countries. In Finland, gratitude was also an important theme of the post: "We have already achieved a lot but there is still more to achieve. Tell us who inspires you to be the woman you are today? #thankher #thankhim #thankthem #pressforprogress #womensday". The Spanish L'Oréal had a similar post with the text: "our [beauty] ambassadors wanted to make a tribute to the most important women in their lives" and a picture including the text "all of us [women] are worth it". The next post on their feed is almost the same with a picture with the text "all of us [women] are worth it" and the text: "today more than ever we want to make tribute to all women #todaslovamos [we are worth it] #Thankher #pressforprogress".

Although *succorance* was mainly portrayed in Women's Day posts, the appeal also appeared in other posts. Finnish McDonald's had a post on Valentine's Day depicting a marriage proposal, which is an expression of love and thus fits the *succorance* appeal category. The post included the text "do you want?", a heart emoticon and a GIF of a heart shaped jewelry box and a nugget inside, instead of a ring. Finnish Nescafé reminds that "a lot of important relationships start beside a coffee cup", whereas Spanish Nescafé

encourages to “fill yourself up with kisses in the morning” with a video of a mother hugging and waking up her child (figure 5).

Community was used in 9 Finnish and 0 Spanish posts. It was used by McDonald’s in Finland in two posts. They both appealed to society, patriotism and national identity. The first post included the text “do you know already who you will vote for? [in the presidential election which occurred two days after the post was made]” and a picture of election poster road signs, but instead of the presidential candidates, it had pictures of hamburgers (figure 8). The second post included the text: “McVegan [vegan hamburger] – craved for around the world, made in Finland”) and the Finnish hashtags “#suomimainittu #torille #inventedhere”. The first hashtag means “Finland mentioned” and the second one literally “to the market square”, which both are typical sayings to boost the Finnish national spirit. “Torille” is a term to gather people at the main market square in Helsinki to celebrate the win of a Finnish national sports team. However, its more commonly used sarcastically in the internet, if something Finnish is even remotely mentioned or succeeds internationally. Disney also used the community appeal to combine an important day for the Finnish culture, Kalevala Day (a day to celebrate Finnish culture and one of the most important pieces of Finnish literature), with Disney’s own characters and stories in a national spirited picture and wishes to have a good Kalevala Day (figure 9).



Figure 8. Community in McDonald's Finland's post.

As a more collectivistic country, Spain was expected to have more community appeal. However, the context of social media probably affected the results because the Finnish global online community is relatively small to all other countries' populations, which is why the Finns get overjoyed when they see representation of their country. Thus, the Finns have their own memes and jokes about Finland and Finnishness, which are conveyed in good humor and can be used by brands in less official platforms such as social media.

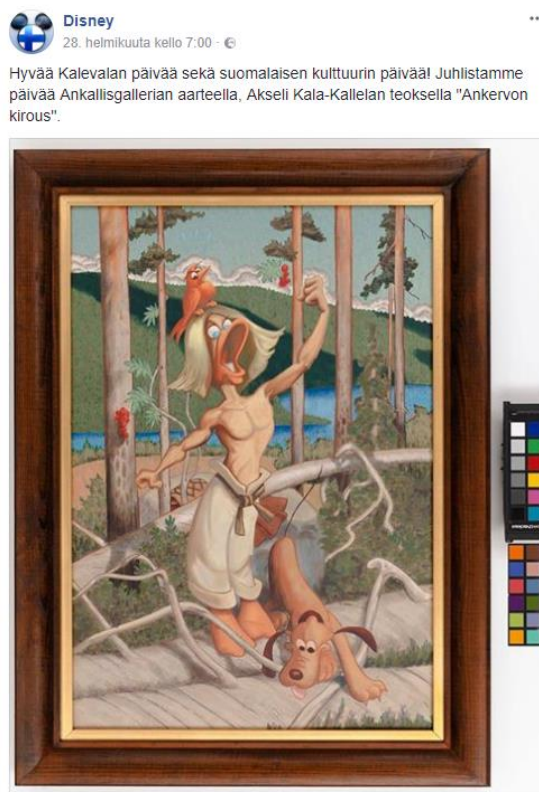


Figure 9. Community in Disney Finland's post.

6.3.2. Power distance

High power distance appeals (PDI+) were used more in Spain (31 times) than in Finland (23 times) overall. Each individual PDI+ appeal (dear, ornamental, status and vain) was used more in Spain than in Finland, although the differences were not significant.

The *ornamental* appeal was used 11 times in the Finnish, and 15 times in the Spanish posts and it was conveyed in two main ways in both countries: either the text directly emphasized words like “styled” and “designed” or the picture or video within the post portray the appeal indirectly. The Finnish posts included more directly showed appeal such as Ford claiming that a car model of theirs is “stylish” and the car model ambassador notices the “stylish details” of the car. However, ornamental appeals were also identified from Finnish picture posts (as opposed to just text) such as a McDonald’s beautiful, decorative, detailed and styled picture of Santa Clause’s sleigh above a city, where a McDonald’s sign shines bright (figure 10). Spanish Lexus shows a typical *ornamental* automotive brand post. Especially the picture is decorative, detailed with the city in the background and the designed and beautiful car in the foreground (figure 11). Spanish Lancôme offers a different perspective on the use of the ornamental appeal with a simple, but beautiful and decorative picture of a flower field with a path going through it.



Figure 10. Ornamental in McDonald's Finland's post.

The *vain* appeal was portrayed quite similarly in Finland and Spain and used 10 and 12 times, respectively. Both countries’ posts identified of using the appeal consisted mainly of focusing on a socially desirable appearance and conventionally attractive people, especially women. Furthermore, logically, the appeal was often used in beauty product posts such as L’Oréal and Lancôme in both countries. Spanish Huawei also used *vain* in

a post with the text: “forget about looking bad in photos thanks to its [Huawei phone] beauty mode and 8-megapixel front camera”) and a video of a conventionally attractive looking family (figure 6).



Figure 11. Ornamental in Lexus Spain's post.

Altogether Finnish posts used more PDI– appeals (cheap, humility, plain, and nurturance) than Spanish posts, 64 and 59 times, respectively, but the difference is not significant. The *plain* and *cheap* appeals were used extensively in both countries.

Cheap appeared on 17 Finnish and 18 Spanish posts. The cheap appeal was mostly used in both countries when informing about discounts, either as a percentage of the normal price or displaying the discounted price and old price crossed out. However, typical to social media marketing, a post gets more views if people comment, like or share it, so there were many posts in both countries offering a chance to win a free product if the

viewer engages with the posts as Lancôme Finland does: “win a free eyebrow dye and styling: participate in the competition by commenting one of the times below that suits you the best”. McDonald’s Spain offers a free coffee for those who share one of their pictures with a friend “who needs a good push on Mondays”. McDonald’s Finland succeeded to convey the *cheap* appeal from a perspective that also promotes *morality* but also their own product in a natural way: There is a debate on how women’s euro is not one euro but 76 cents (YLE 2017), so McDonald’s say that “for us, a euro is always exactly one euro. Happy International Women’s Day” with a picture of a female and male signs and cheese hamburgers below them, which insinuates that they are for equal pay and that their cheese burger always costs a euro, which is inexpensive.

Unobtrusive, plain-folk and down-to-earth posts were identified to include the *humility* appeal. They appeared in 11 Finnish and 8 Spanish posts. Finnish IKEA post included a picture of the winners of a competition to win a gift card to IKEA (figure 12). The picture seems to be taken from their home (judging by the brick wall and photo frames behind them) and is very down-to earth and includes plain-folk. Finnish IKEA also posted a link to their blog where 16 plain-folk IKEA FAMILY -members and customers test IKEA products that will help them live a more sustainable lifestyle. Nescafé Spain, on the other hand, insinuate they understand the life of plain folk by asking their followers to answer the question: “which of these alarms is your worst enemy at the time of waking up?” and picture choices for the vote: a roadwork and an alarm clock and texts describing them. It is a down-to-earth way of saying “we feel your pain waking up... but have a Nescafé coffee”. Some posts were identified as using humility just because they were so unobtrusive and not directly trying to make a person buy something but more trying to ignite an idea.



Figure 12. Humility in IKEA Finland's post.

Overall, 22 Finnish and 24 Spanish posts used the plain appeal. In both countries, all of Subway's posts are much more colorful than the other brands' posts. However, Spanish Subway posts were identified to use the *plain* appeal often, which means that many of the posts are unaffected, natural, prosaic, homespun, simple, artless and unpretentious. An example of how the appeal emerges is the post with the text: "what would your favorite Sub be like?" and a yellow background with green dashed line in the shape of a Sub sandwich and a question mark over it (figure 13). The post itself is simple and artless, but also because of that, it catches attention. H&M in Spain also had simple posts with pictures of a few clothing items and a text introducing the items as selected by editors of their own magazine. Even though they appeal to the expertise of the editors, the posts are still simple and unpretentious. Finnish posts using the plain appeal often were informative, news-like posts informing for example about an event or an expo the company is attending (figure 14), the results of a lottery, and wishing a happy Women's Day or Valentine's Day.



Figure 13. Plain appeal in Subway Spain's post.



Figure 14. Plain appeal in Hyundai Finland's post.

14 Finnish and 9 Spanish posts were identified to use the nurturance appeal. The posts that used the nurturance appeal were often related to a charity both in Finland and in Spain. In Spain, the charities were about breast cancer and the posts were on the brand pages of Samsung and Mastercard. In Finland, Mastercard promoted a charity that when you pay with contactless payment at a certain festival, Mastercard will donate a meal to the World Food Programme. McDonald's Finland had a post about collecting 80 000 euros to McDonald's own charity, Finland's Ronald McDonald House to help children with long-term illnesses. However, not all nurturance posts were about charities. Some reminded to buy Valentine's Day gifts (Finnish Mercedes-Benz and Subway) and others to surprise your closest ones with cards (Spanish HP). Subway Spain informed in two of their posts that on Women's Day, they are going to give a free cookie with each order to their clients in their restaurants in Catalonia, Valencia and the Canaries.

6.3.3. Uncertainty avoidance

Appeals related to uncertainty avoidance were used the least of all cultural dimensions both in Finland and in Spain. UAI+ appeals (safety, tamed and durable) were used 16 times in Finland and 10 times in Spain.

Safety emerged 10 times in Finnish posts and 3 times in Spanish posts. Although, 6 of the 10 safety appeals in Finland appeared on Mastercard's posts and 0 times on Spanish Mastercard's posts. All 6 Finnish Mastercard's posts were a part of a campaign called "Ostoturva" campaigning for safe buying online. Hyundai Spain had a post with the *safety* appeal (figure 7) that was already discussed previously in the paragraph about family. In the video a son had to get out of the car to go to the toilet and the viewer saw another car coming closer and could feel anxiety that the car was going to run over him, but the electronic child lock system sensed the car and did not allow for the doors to open. Mercedes-Benz Spain also appealed to *safety* with a post with the text "relax yourself in curves... a total grip in any situation with the 4MATIC four-wheel drive". Additionally, they had a video promoting "safe driving in any [weather] condition".

Durable appeared mostly on automotive brands' posts. BMW was responsible for most of the posts using the appeal in Finland. However, their posts mentioned very directly

that the car is powerful with sentences such as “the most powerful form of luxury”, “the most powerful production M3 car” and “combines the robustness of the X models and the brawn of a sports car”. Toyota Finland, on the other hand, showed the durability of their car with a post from Rally Mexico (figure 15). Spanish Mercedes-Benz conveyed the durability of their car by showing two videos of one of their cars driving in the snow and texts insinuating the harsh conditions in which the cars endure, for example, one of the texts say “the polar circle. Fierce winds. 35 degrees below zero. There, we have sent a secret prototype of our first EQ electric models.” Additionally, Audi Spain had a Women’s Day post empowering women with a powerful video with a woman driving roughly and narrating: “no-one can deny that we are strong”. Together with empowering women, the post simultaneously insinuates the durability of the car. The appeal was used in 5 Finnish and 7 Spanish posts.



Figure 15. Durable in Toyota Finland's post.

UAI- appeals emerged more in Spanish than Finnish posts. However, the difference in the use of UAI- appeals between Spanish and Finnish posts was small (29 and 23 UAI- appeals used, respectively). *Adventure* formed the largest part of the UAI- appeals in both countries (14 in Finland and 16 in Spain) and the television channel Fox was responsible of four of those appearances in both countries. The automotive industry was responsible for 4 *adventure* appeals in Finland and 5 in Spain. The adventure appeal was the only UAI- appeal that appeared enough times to be generalizable enough to discuss. Spanish

brand posts with the *adventure* appeal seemed more authentic, whereas in Finnish posts it seemed forced. Finnish posts included Audi with the text “for women who drive the world forward”, a Women’s Day post, which does fit the defining terms for adventure (boldness, bravery, courage), but still it does not come out as authentically appealing. Lexus used texts like “represents brave design” and “be one of the first ones to see our new, brave model”. HP claimed that their gaming weekend was “full of exciting gaming moments” but the excitement cannot be felt as strongly as they probably wanted it to feel. The only Finnish post that really appealed authentically as *adventure*, was Panasonic’s post encouraging viewers to read a link about a man who travelled alone to the North Pole and why he took his Panasonic Lumix camera with him.

As mentioned, Spanish posts seem to convey the *adventure* appeal more strongly and authentically. One of McDonald’s posts included a picture of two young women hanging upside down in a jungle gym and the text “getting out of your routines is easier than you think if you have someone to try new things with... Who joins you in whatever craziness?” Spanish Hyundai had a reporter in the Mexico Rally to copilot a rally car. In the post, they ask for the viewers to guess the maximum heart rate of the reporter and thus, participate in a competition to win prizes. Therefore, the Spanish posts really conveyed the adventure appeal by videos and pictures connected to the text whereas the Finnish posts mostly just claimed something is “exciting” or “brave”.

6.3.4. Masculinity versus femininity

MAS+ appeals (effective, convenient, productive) were used a lot in both countries, even though neither of the countries is particularly masculine. Furthermore, Finland, the more feminine country showed more MAS+ appeals than Spain (76 and 52 times, respectively).

The *effective* appeal appeared on 31 Finnish and 19 Spanish posts. The automotive industry used the effective appeal in both countries to emphasize the workability and usefulness of their product. A common way to emphasize *effectiveness* was to refer to difficult weather conditions in which the car still performs well, for example Audi Finland had a post with a link and a picture of two Audis in snow in midwinter and the text “in any weather condition. Get to know Audi’s winter campaign collection 2018”. Toyota took two different perspectives in executing their *effective* posts. In Finland, they had a rough picture of a car driving in the Mexico Rally and throwing dirt with the text “three

tough drivers of the rally team of Toyota make the most of the car in Rally Mexico”. The post insinuates that since their car performs in such conditions, it is effective, functional and useful for anyone. Toyota Spain however, took a more plain-folk approach with the text “is it your AYGO [small city car model] that adapts to the city or is it the city that adapts to your AYGO?” and a video of the car moving fluently around the city, insinuating the usefulness of the car in cities.

NIVEA in Finland also used the effective appeal with texts such as “effectively moisturizing cream”, “one of the most moisturizing creams there is” and “nourishes your skin effectively”. Spanish cosmetics brands did not use this kind of language. However, Spanish Nestlé conveyed the *effectiveness* of their product by having quick videos of recipes showing how their ingredients can be used efficiently to make tasty food. Both countries’ Subways used the effective appeal to emphasize tastiness: Subway Spain with the text “tasty Italiano Picante (one of their sandwiches)” and a tasty picture of the sandwich and Subway Finland with the text “tasty Vegan Delite keeps you full for a long time” with also a tasty picture of the sandwich included.

The *convenient* appeal was used 26 times in Finland and 18 times in Spain and sometimes portrayed by just claiming that the product is convenient. In Finland, words like “convenient” and “practical” were used and in Spain, it was most common direct way to convey the appeal was by using the words “versatile” or “adaptable” and “versatility”. Convenience was conveyed in a more subtle and practical way in some posts. Finnish Samsung had a photographer take a Samsung phone with her to the New York Fashion Week and had her report on how convenient and easy the phone is to use. On the other hand, Samsung Spain had Spanish actress/comedian explain details about the Galaxy S9 phone by for example showing that the phone is water resistant by putting it in a tank of water and showing how easy it is to translate anything using the phone camera, which instantly translates the text. Cosmetic brands portrayed convenience by describing for example “3 simple steps to apply makeup” (L’Oréal Spain), how to “get more dense eye lashes in only few steps” (L’Oréal Finland) and products that have combined several products like moisturizing crème and foundation in the same product (Lancôme Finland) and a shampoo that washes, untangles and nourishes hair (L’Oréal Spain). Nescafé Finland also wanted to emphasize the convenience of making a Nescafé coffee so 4 out of their 10 posts contained the appeal. One of them reminded that their products are suitable for diverse settings: “in bed, at work or on the go”. The other Nescafé Finland posts encouraged the viewer to “check how to bring the coffee shop to your home”, “just

add water and you will get quality coffee in just a moment – enjoy for example on your sofa” and “quality coffee in just a moment. Only add water and enjoy”.

Productivity was used in Women’s Day posts in Finland and Spain to remind of achievements made in women’s rights and to encourage women to work to achieve their dreams. Toyota used local celebrities in both countries to celebrate their achievements. Toyota Finland posted videos of their sponsored Paralympics athlete ambitiously getting ready for the Paralympics (with the help of his Toyota). Toyota Spain’s posts remind the viewer of Toyota’s good old days with Rally Victories by showing an old video from the 90’s where Toyota wins a race. Nestlé Finland’s campaign for sustainability also includes *productivity* appeals because the posts point out contributions people and projects have made towards a more sustainable environment. The appeal appeared on 19 Finnish and 15 Spanish posts.

Even though both countries, especially Finland, are more feminine than masculine, it could not be seen in the data. MAS– appeals (*frail, modesty* and *natural*) appeared in only 11 Finnish and 9 Spanish brand posts. Moreover, the *natural* appeal was responsible for most of the MAS– appeals in the posts since it appeared in 8 Finnish and 8 Spanish posts.

The *natural* appeal was often conveyed by a picture of nature, often with the product in it. The appeal was also used to portray corporate responsibility efforts by Nestlé Finland. They had a marketing campaign about corporate environmental responsibility and had videos of organizations and people who take part in sustainable development, for example they had a post about a person who helps people living near the Andes to grow white moss and a project which prevents loss of forests by promoting sustainable coffee production in Brazil. Audi Spain had overall a very appealing and humorous post including nature and animals (figure 16). It was a video post where a penguin fell down and a text in Spanish “you can fall one time”, then another penguin fell and a text “two times”, another penguin fell and a text “even three times” appeared, but then a penguin smoothly sliding and the text “pero no quattro” (but not four [times] (in Spanish, four is spelled “cuatro” but pronounced the same)) which is also a word play with the Audi car model Audi Quattro. The post/ad keeps the viewers interest because of the cute penguins and because the texts keep us waiting what comes next. Even though the post fits the definition of natural since it tries to appeal with the animals, another appealing component of the post is humor, which is not even an option in Pollay’s framework.



Figure 16. Natural appeal in Audi Spain's post.

6.4. General observations about social media posts

Social media is a very different type of marketing platform than traditional platforms like magazines and television are for two main reasons. First of all, it allows for easy interaction between the company and consumers and second of all because it is cheap to post, even though social media marketing is going increasingly towards paid ads. Paying for more visibility for posts might be necessary if a company wants their post to be seen in the excessive information flow on social media. Due to these characteristics, social media brand posts seem to focus more on communication, informing the brand page followers about what is going on with the brand at the very moment, reminding followers of their existence and trying to spread word-of-mouth of their brand rather than trying to get them buy a product by posting high production value content.

On social media posts also regular people, customers and the companies' employees are shown, which gives some unique insight on what the company is about and gives a more personal feeling of the company. Additionally, social media gives the opportunity to inform about anything that could strengthen the brand or increase sales but would be too

expensive to advertise on the television or magazine, such as posting recipes that use the company's products or congratulating women on Women's Day.

Some companies want to take advantage of the opportunity of creating a strong community on social media and thus, post content that makes the follower feel like he or she has an exclusive access to see what the company does. Therefore, companies post some behind the scenes material and inform about unique chances to get to participate in events that the company holds or participates in. Moreover, brands post competitions and lotteries to engage their followers. Engagement, such as liking and commenting, gives a post increased visibility by making it visible also to people who are not following the brand page.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The research question of this thesis was the following: “*Are there differences in social media brand posts between different cultures and if there are, what are they?*” This final section of the thesis summarizes the key findings of the study in relation to the research question, discusses theoretical and managerial implications and lastly acknowledges limitations of the study and discusses what should be concentrated on in future research.

7.1. Summary and key findings

Overall, the results of the study mostly do not support the results of the Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) deductive study, which was used as the basis for this study. They found that none of the individuality dimension’s appeals were significantly different in the countries studied when tested empirically, whereas this study found that mainly the appeals under the proposed individuality dimension, were significantly different. Although in this study, three out of five individuality dimension appeals were significantly related in the opposite direction than expected (*distinctive, popular and community*). Distinctive was the only INV+ appeal with a significant difference of emergence in the two countries. Additionally, the uncertainty avoidance appeal, *safety*, was also significantly related to the country of origin of the post, but in the opposite direction than suggested. Only *affiliation* and *family* were significantly related in the expected way. Any of the other 24 appeals did not emerge in significantly different frequencies in the two countries’ social media posts. However, for example, the way that the community appeal was used in the Finnish posts, using humor and memes, fits in with the Finnish culture, although it does not necessarily fit the cultural dimension. Moreover, the posts using the community appeal in Finland serve as a great reminder of the complexity of culture and cultural values. Furthermore, it serves as a reminder of the less formal nature of social media.

Incongruency could be explained by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) originally categorizing some appeals under unsuitable cultural dimensions due to the complexity of culture. For example, Pollay’s *community* refers to national community and national identification, which might not be related to collectivism since collectivism is more about the people you know, your family and friends. Incongruency could also be explained by

insufficient definitions of appeals and difference in interpretations because of it. However, unsuitable suggestions for relations between a certain appeal and a cultural dimension do not explain the similar extent to which appeals are used in the two countries. In this study the similarity of results could also be due to the two countries not being culturally different enough for it to be seen in social media marketing.

The influence of the corporate headquarters could partially explain the similarity in the extent to which the appeals are used in the two countries. Especially videos and some pictures seemed often to be made by the headquarters for global use. Furthermore, brands sometimes want to make people to associate certain appeals to the brand itself, for example *magic* is part of Disney's brand and *cheap* is a part of IKEA's brand and thus these appeals appear more often on their posts than on other brands posts. However, brands do not always use the same appeals to a similar extent in different countries, for example, Nescafé Finland's brand seems to try to appeal with *convenience* much more than Nescafé Spain's brand.

7.1.1. Individualism versus collectivism

Individualism showed most significant differences between the countries, but the differences were not all in the same direction as expected, so there is incongruity within the cultural dimension. Additionally, there is no consensus on the use of individuality appeals within academic literature. Some studies support the theory that INV+ appeals are used more in the more individualistic countries and INV- appeals are used more in the more collectivistic countries (Tsai & Rita Men 2012; Ma 2013). Other studies cannot find differences in the use of appeals suggested to be related to the individualism dimension (Albers-Miller and Gelb 1996).

In Finland, collectivistic appeals were used more than individualistic appeals. This supports neither the results of the original deductive study by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) nor more recent studies done on social media platforms (Tsai & Rita Men 2012; Ma 2013). According to Larimo et al. (2015), the value paradox does not explain incongruent results in the individuality dimension.

According to previous studies (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996; Ma 2013) the *distinctive* appeal correlates with individuality. However, Albers-Miller & Gelb could support this

only after Mexican advertisements were excluded from the data. Furthermore, this study shows the opposite results since Spain, as the less individualistic country, used the distinctive appeal significantly ($p < 0.05$) more. Security and independence were used to a similar extent in both countries.

Overall, Spanish posts used more collectivistic appeals than Finnish posts. However, the results are incongruent with other studies. Within the collectivism dimension, two appeals (affiliation and family) had significant differences in the frequency of their emergence in Finland and Spain accordingly with the cultural dimension. Initially Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) suggested *affiliation* to be correlated with collectivism, but their second, deductive, study denies the correlation. However, in these Facebook posts, a very significant ($p < 0.005$) difference was found in the use of the appeal, since *affiliation* was used in 24 Spanish posts and only in 9 Finnish posts.

Additionally, Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) found a negative correlation with the *family* appeal and collectivism, whereas in this study a positive relation was found between the family appeal and collectivism since family appeal was used significantly ($p < 0.05$) more in Spanish posts (7 times) than in Finnish ones (1 time). According to Ma (2013), *community* and *popularity* are correlated with collectivism, but the data from Facebook posts show that Finland uses these appeals more than Spain. The *popular* appeal was used 5 times in Finland and 0 times in Spain ($p < 0.05$) and the *community* appeal was used 9 times in Finland and 0 times in Spain ($p < 0.005$). Albers-Miller & Gelb's (1996) results show the same as Ma's study, that popularity is correlated with collectivism, but only after the data from Israel was overlooked. In this study, *succorance* appeared in 9 Finnish posts and 17 Spanish posts, which is not a significant difference. Albers-Miller and Gelb found *succorance* to be correlated with collectivism after data from Chile is overlooked.

7.1.2. Power distance

Each of the high power distance appeals (PDI+) were used more in Spanish posts than in Finnish ones, even though according to Larimo et al. (2015), there could be a value paradox between the cultural dimension and the appeals regarding power distance. However, unlike in previous studies (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996; Tsai & Rita Men 2012; Ma 2013), the difference of the use of PDI+ appeals was not significant in this study. All

of the PDI+ appeals (dear, ornamental, status, vain) were used to a similar extent in Finland and in Spain.

64 PDI- appeals were identified from the Finnish posts and 59 from the Spanish ones. This study shows almost equal usage of the *cheap* appeal in Finland and Spain, 17 and 18 times appearing in the posts, respectively, even though an empirical correlation has not been found between the appeals and low power distance in previous research. Albers-Miller & Gelb (1996) found a strong positive correlation between the *cheap* appeal and PDI-, whereas Ma (2013) found a strong negative correlation.

The *plain* appeal, which is predicted to be appealing in low power distance cultures, appeared in 22 posts in Finland and 24 in Spain. It is described with words such as “unaffected”, “simple”, “artless” and “unpretentious”, which could be interpreted as having no appeal considering the category options of the Wagner et al. (2017) study. Wagner et al. (2017) identified 15.8% of automotive social media posts to have none of the 24 appeals they were looking for. Albers-Miller & Gelb (1996) did not find a correlation between the *plain* appeal and low power distance; even though they also suggested that power distance had the overall strongest correlation with the other proposed appeals. The plain appeal could also gain more popularity in social media posts if companies become cautious of the reactions people have for obtrusive advertisements on social media. Additionally, a cultural paradox has been shown to occur regarding the power distance dimension at least in Estonia (Larimo et al. 2015) and Finland (Saleem 2017). Qualitatively analyzed, *plain* appeal in Finland was often used to communicate extra, news-like information that the followers might want to know about a brand, whereas in Spanish posts with the plain appeal were simple and artless, but more ad-like.

The high use of the *plain* appeal could indicate differences between social media and traditional advertising, since this study identified that almost 10% of all posts were *plain*, whereas Larimo et al. (2015) identified only 2.35% of Estonian magazine ads to show the appeal. On the other hand, Ma (2013) identified communication on microblogs to contain the plain appeal on only 1% of microblogging communication on Twitter in the US and 1.4% on Chinese microblogging site Weibo. These differences could be due to the different platforms and it shows how different social media platforms can be from each other rather than just the traditional advertising platforms.

Humility has not been shown to be correlated to the power distance dimension and this study supports the previous studies (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996; Tsai & Rita Men 2012; Ma 2013) since the appeal was not used to a significantly different extent in the two countries. *Nurturance* also appears not to be related to power distance as is supported also by Moon and Chan (2005), even though Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) suggest that it might be after they removed an outlier country from their data.

7.1.3. Uncertainty avoidance

UAI+ appeals have been shown not to be correlated with the uncertainty avoidance dimension (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996). However, Ma (2013) claims that *security* (defined similarly as *safety* in this study) is correlated positively with high uncertainty avoidance. In Facebook brand posts, *safety* appeared 10 times in Finland and 3 times in Spain, the exact opposite way than in Ma's study. *Durable* is not included individually in many advertising appeals studies, but Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) did not distinguish a significant difference of its use in different countries, and neither does this study. Mortimer and Grierson (2010) found the more uncertainty avoidant country to use UAI+ appeals more but they do not disclose on which of those appeals are used and to what extent.

Spanish posts used more uncertainty seeking (UAI-) appeals than Finnish posts, similarly with the results of Ma (2013), even though Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) found a positive correlation with UAI- appeals and uncertainty seeking cultures. Spain is highly uncertainty avoidant, which cannot be seen in the use of appeals in brand posts altogether. UAI+ appeals were seen in 10 posts, whereas UAI- appeals were seen in 29 posts. However, over half (16/29) of the occurrence of the UAI- appeals was due to the appeal *adventure*. According to Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), *adventure* is correlated with UAI- only once outliers were removed from the data.

Differences in cultural dimensions mostly did not seem to predict differences in the posts as analyzed in the qualitative study either, although, a few appeals showed some distinction. When studying the plain appeal, it seemed that Finnish posts used social media in communicating extra information to the followers and Spanish post remained more ad-like. Furthermore, the community appeal in Finland appeared as a surprise since the framework only considers the Hofstede dimensions and not in its entirety. If the

Finnish culture would have been considered in its entirety (the onion diagram in figure 2), also symbols and heroes, which were used to show the community appeal, would have been taken into consideration. However, taking all of the parts of the onion into consideration all the time would be practically impossible due to all nuances cultures have.

7.1.4. Masculinity versus femininity

Appeals related to MAS+ are *effective*, *convenient* and *productivity*, which were very apparent in both Finnish and Spanish posts. Furthermore, more masculine appeals emerged in the more feminine country. These results support the ones of Mortimer and Grierson (2010). Although, they found more MAS+ appeals in the more feminine culture, the difference with the more masculine culture was not significant. According to Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), *effective* was correlated after Brazilian data was excluded, *convenient* was significantly correlated and *productivity* was not correlated with the masculinity dimension. However, Ma (2013) found *effective* to be used to a similar extent in the US and in China. Overall, there seems to be no consistency on the appeals related to the masculinity dimension.

Previous studies show that *effective*, *convenience* and *productivity* are commonly used appeals cross-culturally (e.g. Czarnecka & Brennan 2009; Oyedele, Minor & Ghanem 2009; Ma 2013; Rakova & Baek 2013; Wagner et al. 2017). Feminine appeals (frail, modesty and natural) were rarely used in either country's posts. Modesty and frail are appeals that might not fit many industries such as the automotive industry. On the other hand, feminine appeals and especially *natural* could fit for example the organic food industry well. According to Larimo et al. (2015), the use of masculine appeals could be affected by the value paradox. However, arguably the appeals associated with masculinity are just more effective selling points.

7.2. Theoretical implications

When reviewing academic literature in the theory part, it was mentioned that the Hofstede model is optimal for the need of predicting behavior (De Mooij 2014: 183). However, this study mostly cannot confirm that differences in culture as evaluated by the Hofstede

model would predict the kind of social media posts marketers publish or the kinds of advertising appeals they use. There still is no scientific consensus on the relation between cultural dimensions or cultures overall with the appeals used in advertisements, much less on social media posts. Some studies show significant differences between uses of appeals, others show significant differences but the other way around and third group of studies show no difference. Moreover, the studies debate with each other on each individual dimension separately, so most studies can find some appeal or cultural dimension they agree on but still disagree on all the rest. Furthermore, the suggested value paradox has been suggested to affect the power distance dimension and the masculinity dimension, but more research should be done to verify its existence (Larimo et al. 2015). This study contributes to the list of complex and incongruent results as consistent and significant differences in any of the appeals could not be found.

7.3. Managerial implications

This study does not show the preferences of consumers or the exact appeals companies should be using, but rather the way they use the appeals and how they can take advantage of the unique platform of social media to use the appeals. The nature of social media offers many opportunities as well as threats for brand communications. Yes, it is true that one brand post or a complaint from a customer could ruin or at least harm a brand, but the competition for gaining a social media browser's attention is tough and standing out is a key factor. A "hey, we have a new car model" -post might catch the eye of a car superfan, but a penguin falling over and over and finally just sliding casually catches even the eye of a person who only needs a car to get from one place to another. Considering people's obsession over cute animals, surprisingly few companies tried to take advantage of that. Furthermore, humorous posts were not very common. However, posting on social media is relatively inexpensive so companies might think that it is enough to post *just something* to remind followers, every now and then, that they exist. Additionally, there is a threat that people will see the brand as trying too hard and being inauthentic, then unfollow the brand and forget about it completely.

Similar inauthenticity and annoyance could be felt if brands overuse the "like, tag someone, comment, share" -mantra. "Tagging" someone can have a positive effect if also the person tagged wants to be tagged. However, tagging someone could also have

negative social effects, which would likely be avoided in cultures where the acceptance of others and saving face is highly important. Additionally, this kind of a factor could be important in uncertainty avoidant cultures.

Especially when trying to enter new markets without the local cultural knowledge or resources to study the culture in depth, it is important to remember not to treat culture as a simple black and white issue. Reading about just some cultural values and taking them as a given might be a threat because of the complexity of what is culture and all the levels of it. Furthermore, political, economic, and other societal events and changes can also affect what kind of a reception a post receives. Moreover, when creating social media content for people with the same cultural background, it is important to remember the nuances of the culture and quirks that do not always come up in generalized research. An example of this could be the use of the community appeal in Finnish posts even though the Finns are not collectivistic.

7.4. Limitations and suggestions for future research

There are four main limitations in this study. Firstly, the results are not necessarily generalizable to all social media since the data was gathered only from Facebook and only from the most valuable brands. Future research could continue to study other social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram in the Western world and local social networking sites in different countries. Moreover, Facebook could be already too saturated with brand posts and advertisements and new forms of social media are created continuously so academic literature could study different options for marketing in different social media. Also, smaller, less valuable brands than the top 100 also deserve to be studied.

Secondly, the study is limited to only two countries: Finland and Spain. Social media brand posts should be studied in cultures that are very different from each other, but also that are similar to each other. Also, studies that contain more countries than just two should be conducted. For example, Saleem and Larimo (2017) suggest researchers to study seven or more countries to get more generalizable results.

Thirdly, the framework used to analyze and categorize the posts and appeals limits our potential on understanding social media brand posts from a more diverse perspective. Future research could study social media marketing inductively and create new marketing frameworks created specifically for social media. Some researchers (e.g. Wagner et al. 2017) have already tried to create suitable frameworks specifically for social media, but more alternatives with extensive definitions for appeals are needed. Moreover, these frameworks should consider the less official environment of social media and the opportunities for interaction that social media offers. For example, the emergence of humor, cuteness and entertainment could be studied especially in the social media context. Brand posts could also be studied from other marketing perspectives than the appeals perspective and the marketing opportunities of User Generated Content should be examined further.

Fourthly, this study analyzes only the emergence of appeals and cultural values and not the post viewer's reaction to the post, his or her attitude towards the brand, intention of buying or the effect of post content on sales. Thus, future research could gather data for example in interview-like situations where people evaluate the personal feeling and opinion about a brand post and the researchers interpret the appeals that are used in a post. In future research, more than one coder and testing intercoder reliability is advisable.

Other limitations include the following: Only business to consumer brands were considered in this study so in the future business-to-business brands should be studied also. Additionally, this study concentrated mainly on brand posts of products so future research could study brand posts of services. Moreover, some studies could be done on which appeals are combined with each other and how, since this study analyzed the use of the appeals separately.

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APPENDIX 1. Appeal's Description and Relation to a Cultural Dimension

Appeal	Description	Cultural dimension
Distinctive	Rare, unique, unusual, scarce, infrequent, exclusive, tasteful, elegant, subtle, esoteric, handcrafted	Individualism
Independence	Self-sufficiency, self-reliance, autonomy, unattached, to do-it-yourself, to do your own thing, original, unconventional, singular, nonconformist	Individualism
Self-respect (security)	Confident, secure, possessing dignity, self-worth, self-esteem, self-respect, peace of mind	Individualism
Popular	Commonplace, customary, well-known, conventional, regular, usual, ordinary, normal, standard, typical, universal, general, everyday	Collectivism
Affiliation	To be accepted and liked, to associate or gather with, to be social, to join, unite, or otherwise bond in friendship, fellowship, companionship, cooperation, reciprocity, to conform to social customs, have manners, social graces and decorum, tact and finesse	Collectivism
Family	Nurturance within family, having a home, being at home, family privacy, companionship of siblings, kinship, getting married	Collectivism
Succorance	To receive expressions of love (except sexuality), gratitude, pats on the back, to feel deserving	Collectivism
Community	Relating to community, state, national publics, public spiritedness, group unity, national identity, society, patriotism, civic and community organizations or other than social organization	Collectivism
Ornamental	Beautiful, decorative, ornate, adorned, embellished, detailed, designed, style	High power distance

Vain	Having a socially desirable appearance, being beautiful, pretty, handsome, being fashionable, well-groomed, tailored, graceful, glamorous	High power distance
Dear	Expensive, rich, valuable, highly regarded, costly, extravagant, exorbitant, luxurious, priceless	High power distance
Status	Envy, social status or competitiveness, conceit, boasting, prestige, power, dominance, exhibitionism, pride in ownership, wealth (including the sudden wealth of prizes), trend-setting, to seek compliments	High power distance
Cheap	Economical, inexpensive, bargain, cut-rate, penny-pinching, discounted, at cost, undervalued, a good value	Low power distance
Humility	Unaffected, unassuming, unobtrusive, patient, fate-accepting, resigned, meek, plain-folk, down-to-earth	Low power distance
Nurturance	To give gifts, especially sympathy, help love, charity, support, comfort, protection, nursing, consolation, or otherwise care for the weak, disabled, inexperienced, tired, young, elderly, etc.	Low power distance
Plain	Unaffected, natural, prosaic, homespun, simple, artless, unpretentious	Low power distance
Safety	Security (from external threat), carefulness, caution, stability, absence of hazards, potential injury, or other risks, guarantees, warranties, manufacturers' reassurances	High uncertainty avoidance
Tamed	Docile, civilized, restrained, obedient, compliant, faithful, reliable, responsible, domesticated, sacrificing, self-denying	High uncertainty avoidance
Durable	Durable Long-lasting, permanent, stable, enduring, strong, powerful, hearty, tough	High uncertainty avoidance
Adventure	Boldness, daring, bravery, courage, seeking adventure, thrills, or excitement	Low uncertainty avoidance

Untamed	Primitive, untamed, fierce, course, rowdy, ribald, obscene, voracious, gluttonous, frenzied, uncontrolled, unreliable, corrupt, obscene, deceitful, savage	Low uncertainty avoidance
Magic	Miracles, magic, mysticism, mystery, witchcraft, wizardry, superstitions, occult sciences, mythic characters, to mesmerize, astonish, bewitch, fill with wonder	Low uncertainty avoidance
Youth	Being young or rejuvenated, children, kids, immature, underdeveloped, junior, adolescent	Low uncertainty avoidance
Casual	Unkempt, disheveled, messy, disordered, untidy, rugged, rumpled, sloppy, casual, irregular, non-compulsive, imperfect	Low uncertainty avoidance
Effective	Feasible, workable, useful, pragmatic, appropriate, functional, consistent, efficient, helpful, comfortable	Masculinity
Convenient	Convenient Handy, time-saving, quick, easy, suitable, accessible, versatile	Masculinity
Productivity	References to achievement, accomplishment, ambition, success, careers, self-development, being skilled, accomplished, proficient, pulling your weight, contributing, doing your share	Masculinity
Natural	References to the elements, animals, vegetables, minerals, farming, unadulterated, purity (of product), organic, grown, nutritious	Femininity
Frail	Delicate, frail, dainty, sensitive, tender, susceptible, vulnerable, soft, genteel	Femininity
Modesty	Being modest, naive, demure, innocent, inhibited, bashful, reserved, timid, coy, virtuous, pure, shy, virginal	Femininity

Appeal not related to a cultural dimension	Description
Freedom	Spontaneous, carefree, abandoned, indulgent, at liberty, uninhibited, passionate
Healthy	Fitness, vim, vigor, vitality, strength, heartiness, to be active, athletic, robust, peppy, free from disease, illness, infection, or addiction
Sexuality	Erotic relations: holding hands, kissing, embracing between lovers, dating, romance, intense sensuality, feeling sexual, erotic behavior, lust, earthiness, indecency, attractiveness of clearly sexual nature
Wisdom	Knowledge, education, awareness, intelligence, curiosity, satisfaction, comprehension, sagacity, expertise, judgment, experience
Morality	Humane, just, fair, honest, ethical, reputable, principled, religious, devoted, spiritual
Neat	Orderly, neat, precise, tidy, clean, spotless, unsoiled, sweet-smelling, bright, free from dirt, refuse, pests, vermin, stains and smells, sanitary
Relaxation	Rest, retire, retreat, loaf, contentment, be at ease, be laid-back, vacations, holiday, to observe
Enjoyment	To have fun, laugh, be happy, celebrate, to enjoy games, parties, feasts and festivities, to participate
Traditional	Classic, historical, antique, legendary, time-honored, long-standing, venerable, nostalgic

Maturity	Being adult, grown-up, middle-aged, senior, elderly, having associated insight, wisdom, mellowness, adjustment, references to aging, death, retirement, or age-related disabilities or compensations
Modern	Contemporary, modern, new, improved, progression, advanced, introducing, announcing
Technological	Engineered, fabricated, formulated, manufactures, constructed, processed, resulting from science, invention, discovery, research, containing secret ingredients

APPENDIX 2. Frequency of emergence of all 42 appeals

Appeal	Finland	Spain
Adventure	14	16
Affiliation	9	25
Casual	2	0
Cheap	17	18
Community	9	0
Convenient	26	18
Dear	2	3
Distinctive	12	30
Durable	5	7
Effective	31	19
Enjoyment	19	25
Family	1	7
Frail	2	1
Freedom	0	5
Healthy	1	2
Humility	11	8
Independence	7	7
Magic	3	4
Maturity	0	3
Modern	60	69
Modesty	1	0
Morality	8	2
Natural	8	8
Neat	4	3
Nurturance	14	10
Ornamental	11	15
Plain	22	24
Popular	5	0
Productivity	19	15
Relaxation	9	5
Safety	10	3
Security	1	2
Sexuality	3	3
Status	0	1
Succorance	9	17
Tamed	1	0
Technological	12	7
Traditional	4	4
Untamed	2	4
Vain	10	12
Wisdom	14	14
Youth	3	5