



**How Does High-/Low- Context Communication Influence
Advertisement Perception?**

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Dissertation

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Biographical Note

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the present dissertation is to ascertain how high-/low-context communication influences advertisement perception.

Methodological Approach: The methodology consists on a quantitative methodology through the means of a questionnaire.

Findings: This investigation confirms, on one hand, that High-context and Low-context communication influences advertisement perception, on visual recognition, interpretation, liking, irritation attitude towards the ad and purchase intention, but not on perceived complexity, contradictory to most of the previous findings studied in the literature review.

Implications: The scale used for measuring individual context may not be fit to measure High-context and Low-context.

Limitations: The scale used for measuring individual context was only validated with 4 out of the 9 items that constitute it originally. Plus, a larger sample for each nationality would be required to achieve clearer conclusions.

Originality/Value: To the extent of what it's known, no study comparing High-context and Low-context cultures has ever compared Portugal and Germany, also no other study found analysed as many variables as this one for advertisement perception.

Keywords: advertisement, communication, perception, culture, high-context, intercultural communication, low-context.

Resumo

Objetivo: O objetivo desta dissertação é analisar de que forma a comunicação de alto e baixo contexto influencia a percepção de anúncios.

Abordagem metodológica: A abordagem metodológica é quantitativa aplicada através da administração de um questionário.

Resultados: Esta investigação confirma, por um lado, que a comunicação de alto e baixo contexto influencia a percepção de anúncios, no reconhecimento visual, na interpretação, no gosto, na credibilidade, na irritação, na atitude para com o anúncio e na intenção de compra, mas não na complexidade percebida, ao contrário do encontrado em estudos anteriores.

Implicações: A escala utilizada para medir o nível de contexto individual pode não estar apropriada a medir alto e baixo contexto.

Limitações: A escala usada para medir o nível de contexto individual só conseguiu ser validada com 4 dos 9 itens que a constituíam originalmente. E também, uma maior amostra para cada nacionalidade seria necessária para alcançar conclusões mais claras.

Originalidade/Valor: Até o ponto do que é sabido, não existe outro estudo comparando culturas de alto e baixo contexto com Portugal e Alemanha, além disto nenhum outro estudo foi encontrado que medisse tantas variáveis de percepção de anúncios.

Palavras-chave: alto-contexto, baixo-contexto, comunicação, comunicação intercultural, cultura, percepção, publicidade.

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1. Introduction

In the world of today, intercultural communication skills are no longer an asset, but a requirement (McDaniel, Samovar and Porter, 2014). The beginning of the 21st century intensified the process of globalization that has been arising in the last decades and that it affects the international society in all fields, therefore being able to communicate efficiently cross-culturally became a must. Inspired in the fast pace of globalization, already in 1967, media expert Marshal McLuhan, metaphorically described the world as a global village, emphasizing thus the seeming closeness society was witnessing.

In 2005, Friedman become famous for promoting the image of a flat world, where the world would be as a level playing field, in which all competitors have equal opportunities in terms of commerce. In his work, Friedman (2005), alludes to the fact that countries, companies and individuals need to start approaching the world differently, given that geographic boundaries would become increasingly unimportant and that for a business to be successful and competitive it is necessary to learn how to venture internationally. Friedman's metaphor is extremely important and rather dangerous, as it calls attention to how globalization affects business, but one has to be cautious when calling the world a flat place, because cultural boundaries exist and neglecting them can lead to major failures (McDaniel et al., 2014). These failures gain exponential dimensions considering the number of Multinational Corporations actively interacting interculturally between each other and within themselves (Holtbrügge and Kittler, 2007). Lu and Fan (2015) alleged that the most critical skill to be handled by a firm that aims to be profitable in today's fiercely competitive market, especially for a corporation that conducts business worldwide, is communication.

The field of International Business has woken to the need of studying cultural differences and their implications in the conducting of business ever since the concept of globalization became widespread. Hofstede's work (1980) also played a vital role on pointing out the crucialness of cultural differences among nations (Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, Leung and Gibson, 2005). Edward Hall's work (1989) foreseeing great changes in the society of his time, pointed out that the future of mankind depends on its ability to transcend the bounds of individual cultures. His experience in the field with many different cultures and his consequent proposal of a continuum to classify communication as High (HC) or Low Context (LC) revolutionized the world of communication, because

it shed light on how deep culture influences the way different cultures communicate (Hall, 1989).

All international business involves communication. One can go as far as to say, the success of a mere international transaction depends on the capacity of the managers to communicate effectively (Adler, 2003). The communication process takes place when a message is sent and someone stands on the other side to receive it. Advertisement is the way companies communicate with their consumers, the welcoming card to any brand, adapting this communication to its audience is a topic in which most scholars are in agreement: it is a must (Agrawal, 1995; Hornikx and O’Keefe, 2009). Nevertheless, communication takes many forms and shapes and most studies focus on the verbal aspect of this multidimensional concept (. Advertisements feed largely on visuals, in fact, in the last century, the choice of visual stimuli in print advertisements has been increasing significantly (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004). Defenders of the ‘copy theory of pictures’ (Scott, 1994) may look at this tendency optimistically, since they believe visual communication is the key for global advertising, images don’t need translation, the same picture can be understood by all. But can it really? Is visual communication universal?

Despite the fact that little empirical research has been done on the topic (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017), there are a number of studies that seem to point otherwise (Van Mulken, Le Pair and Forceville, 2010; Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017; Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor, 2010). The different ways that cultures see the world can translate into different perceptions of one and the same image, and when the aim of that image is to persuade, which is the case of advertisement, it is important to understand what is being communicated.

In line with what has been said, the research question is “How High-/Low- context communication influences advertisement perception?”. The aim of this dissertation is therefore to identify whether that is a relationship between perception and high and low context cultures. To ascertain if the categorization of a culture as high or low conditionate the way members of that culture see/perceive an advertisement with visual stimuli in various senses: what they see, what they interpret from it, the degree to which they find it complex, their liking, believability, irritation, attitude towards the ad and purchase intention. In a lyrical sense it is often said that a ‘a picture paints a thousand words’, but can a picture also paint a thousand meanings?

In summary, globalization and the consequence relevance of intercultural communication, the role of advertisement as means of communication between business

and consumers and the potential differences of perception among cultures, reflect the importance of the research topic.

The dissertation is structured in five chapters. The first one is the present introduction, the second one corresponds to the literature review, which contains five sections corresponding to the concepts considered crucial for the present work, in chapter three considerations of methodology are explained, chapter four contains the data analysis and presentation of results and chapter five finalizes with the conclusion, implications, limitations and recommendations for further research.

2. Literature Review

The present chapter is going to be dedicated to the review in literature of the main concepts to have in consideration during this dissertation. Intercultural Communication has been in vogue in the last century, the rapid pace of globalization and growth of technology demand it. In line with this idea, advertisement as means of communication also found itself in the need to adapt and communicate as thoughtfully as possible with their audiences. Despite the fact that all the exposed ideas seem true facts, the relationship between different communication styles and advertisement perception still has room for important considerations. Edward Hall (1989) was a pioneer in establishing theoretical means of comparison of communication between cultures and the relationship between his theory and advertisement perception can lead to very interesting revelations.

2.1 Intercultural Communication

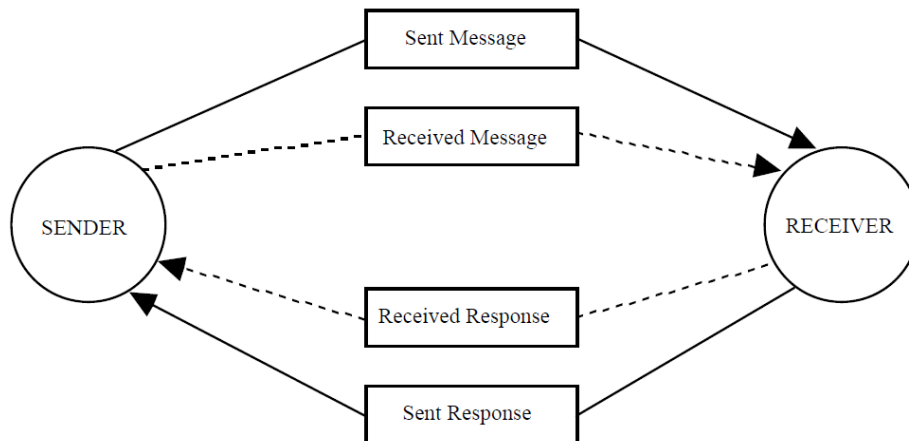
Communication is an attempt to exchange meaning (Adler, 2003). Intercultural Communication can be understood as the purpose to transmit meaning from one individual to another, being that both come from different cultural backgrounds (Kittler and Holtbrügge, 2007). It is argued that, to some extent, all communication is intercultural, because each individual has its very own cultural background different from everyone else (Y.Y. Kim, 1988). Each person comes from a different country, different city, different household. Different people lived distinct histories, different experiences and all that influences who the person is and how the person perceives the world (Hofstede, 1991). Sarbaugh (1988) defended this view, that all acts of communication were intercultural to some extent, but that it was possible to measure the degree of *interculturalness* of each act. Sarbaugh (1988) argued that this *interculturalness* depended on the level of heterogeneity/homogeneity of the people involved in the communication and that the higher the level of *interculturalness*, the harder it is to communicate and to achieve the communication's goals. This factor explains why there are misunderstandings even when two people that share their nationality, and sometimes other significant features, communicate. Accordingly, the misunderstandings can be presumed to be greater as the similarities between the interlocutors lessen (Adler, 2003; Kittler and Holtbrügge, 2007) or as Sarbaugh (1988) puts it as the *interculturalness* increases.

As it was already stated, communication occurs when two or more individuals exchange messages with the aim of creating meaning (Adler, 2003). Communication is

both verbal (words) and non-verbal (e.g. tone of voice, proxemics, gestures, haptic, eye contact, facial expression and physical setting) and includes all behaviours that can be subject of perception and interpretation by others (Adler, 2003; Burkart, 2003 and Kittler and Holtbrügge, 2007). Communication is such a wide concept that some authors argue that it is not possible not to communicate, even if communication is unintended, it exists (Adler, 2003; Kittler and Holtbrügge, 2007).

The act of communication is characterized by a sender and a receiver, the two interlocutors, and a message. The message the receiver receives is not the message the sender sent (see Figure 1). This happens because communication works with codes (e.g. language and behaviour) and the way one person decodes it depends on the way the person perceives and consequently interprets the world (Adler, 2003).

Figure 1 Communication Model



Source: Adler, 2003 (p.2)

As it can be seen in Figure 1, the outcome of communication isn't always understanding. There's a message sent and a message received, and these two don't always match. They may not match because the Sender and the Receiver perceive the message differently (Adler, 2003). Communication is symbolic, e.g. people cannot telepathically make other people feel what they feel, people must somehow decode their feelings into words or externalize it into other behaviours and hope to be understood. Consequently, the meaning must always be encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver, and this process is always influenced by culture (Adler, 2003).

Already in 1959, Edward Hall wrote in his book 'The Silent Language', that Culture was an obscure concept, to which have been given so many definitions, that it would cause no harm to add one more. He defined it then as "the way of life of a people,

(...) the sum of their learned behaviour patterns, attitudes, and material things.” (Hall, 1959, p.39). Hofstede (1980) relates culture with a ‘collective programming of the mind’, he distinguishes three different levels of mind programming: universal (shared by all human beings) individualistic (the very own set of characteristics that differentiates one individual from all the others) and in between the two, the collective (share by a group of individuals). The collective is the one Hofstede identifies as culture and he defines it as: “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.” (Hofstede, 2011, p.3), this means that culture is a common set of characteristics that are encompassed deep in people, as a software that sets the way people will behave and act upon various situations. Culture has a major influence on every aspect of an individual’s life. It shapes the way a person perceives reality. It influences even how an individual experiences time and space (Hall, 1989). And communication is the way an individual has to express himself, he is a product of his culture, therefore “Culture is Communication and Communication is Culture” (Hall, 1959, p.186).

2.2 Perception

Considering what has been written about culture and how effects an individual perception of reality, it is important now to focus on this primary dimension of communication. Perception is the process through which every individual select, organizes and evaluates stimuli from the external world (Asch, 1946, Singer, 1976, Adler, 2003). Adler (2003) characterizes perception as: *selective* (there’s too much information so the brain selects what to pay attention to); *learned* (the patterns of perception are acquired during life experiences that will influence what is screened out); *culturally determined* (cultural background influences how one sees reality); *consistent* (perception tends to remain constant, people accustom seeing things one way and it hardly changes) and *inaccurate* (people will not acknowledge certain things and imagine others). “We therefore see things that do not exist, and do not see things that do exist.” (Adler, 2003, p.3). Our values, interests and experiences strain the world, as if we were wearing glasses with a filter that will make us see what we expect to see or/and are trained to look for. Misperception then happens when individuals perceive something incorrectly, which is a natural occurrence given that perception is itself characterized by inaccuracy. This factor is particularly serious in intercultural communication because the lens of the two interlocutors differ significantly. Cultural differences in perception have been a subject

of study for a relatively recent period, since most of data has been produced since the beginning of the 21st century (Nisbett and Miyamoto, 2005), nevertheless Segall, Campbell and Herskovit, in 1966, reported an experiment, using the Müller-Lyer and Sander parallelogram illusions, in which they concluded that there were significant differences across cultures in susceptibility to optical illusions. They stated that those differences came from no 'racial' differences, but from differences in experience, further arguing that "to a substantial extent we learn to perceive" and that a person's perception is determined by perceptual inference habits and that many of those "inference habits are differentially likely in different societies" (Segall et al., 1966, p.5), which translates into different cultures having different inference habits, the authors argue further that the basic perception process is the same for all mankind, what changes is the contents taken out of that process, and those contents are dissimilar because different groups of people are accustomed to seeing this differently, "only the contents differ and these differ only because they reflect different perceptual inference habits" (Segall et al., 1966, p.5).

Many researchers studied the fact that Easterners and Westerners' perceptions differ significantly, arguing that Westerners tend to focus primarily on focal objects and are less sensitive regarding context, a so called analytical perceptual process or context-independent perception; whereas Easterners attribute significant importance to the surroundings, to the background, engaging therefore in holistic perceptual processes, a context-dependent perception (Norenzayan and Nisbett 2000; Nisbett and Masuda, 2003; Miyamoto, Nisbett and Masuda, 2006). This factor leads western cultures to attribute causality to the objects or people, while eastern cultures are more likely to attribute it to the situational context (Nisbett and Miyamoto, 2005).

The studies on cross-cultural perception were motivated by studies on cognition and its cultural differences, thus it ought to be presumed that the differences on perception come from deeper variances and there are studies confirming cultural differences regarding attention, memory and even regarding eye movements (Chua, Boland and Nisbett 2005).

Nisbett, Peng and Choi (2001) elaborated a study on cultural differences on cognition processes and developed a theoretical model that categorized thought systems as Holistic and Analytic. They argued Westerners and East Asians' differences on their cognition were rooted on ancient contrasts between western and eastern civilizations, arguing further that in ancient Greece analytical thought was privileged, there was a "detachment of the object from its context, a tendency to focus on attributes of the object

in order to assign it to categories, and a preference for using rules about the categories to explain and predict the object's behaviour. Inferences rest in part on the practice of decontextualizing structure from content, the use of formal logic, and avoidance of contradiction" (Nisbett et al., 2001, p. 293) and they stated that contemporary western societies are highly influenced by these analytical traits. As for East Asians, the author declared that ancient Chinese chains of thought such as Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism shaped easterners' way of thinking in a holistic manner, define it as: "an orientation to the context or field as a whole, including attention to relationships between a focal object and the field, and a preference for explaining and predicting events on the basis of such relationships. Holistic approaches rely on experience-based knowledge and are dialectical, meaning a search for the "Middle way between opposing propositions" (Nisbett et al., 2001, p. 293). Likewise, the authors claim Eastern societies of today are still strongly influenced by these features.

As said previously, perception is the process through which a person selects what to see, but also organizes and evaluates stimuli. Accordingly, it is believed that individuals from eastern cultures organize the environment holistically, based on relationships and similarities among objects, while people from western cultures organize the environment through rules and categorization of objects, in an analytical manner (Nisbett and Miyamoto, 2005). A study from Tardif, Shatz and Naigles (1997) the interaction of North-American and Japanese mothers with their children and concluded that, when playing with toys with their children, American mothers used more nouns and pointed out the objects and their characteristics, while Japanese mothers used more verbs, pointing out relationships between the toys and the environment. As it can be seen, from very early on, the children's attention is directed towards different points, conditioning what they see. Masuda and Nisbett (2005) argue also that while east Asian societies are highly interdependent, western societies are more independent, contributing thereafter for easterners to focus on relationships before personal goals and allowing westerners to focus on personal goals first.

Masuda and Nisbett (2005) interculturally tested the *change-blindness paradigm*, this paradigm had been studied by Simons and Levin in 1998. According to it, people fail to notice changes on the background of an image or video they were looking at, when asked to focus on something, e. g. when asked to count the number of ball passes between players, the participants were blind to a man passing by with an umbrella or even a man dressed as a gorilla (Simons and Chabris, 1999). Masuda and Nisbett (2005) tested this

paradigm with westerners (North-Americans) and easterners (Japanese, Chinese and Koreans). The authors concluded, in a way, what was expected, the easterners were more effective detecting changes on the background and the westerners were better at finding changes on focal objects (Masuda and Nisbett 2005).

A research conducted by Nixon and Bull (2006) concluded that culture also influences emotion recognition. They studied cross-cultural perceptual accuracy regarding non-verbal cues. Having as a starting point previous findings (Halberstadt 1983) that individuals from low expressive families turn out to be more accurate perceivers of non-verbal communication, in this case emotion recognition, in their adulthood. The authors intended to test if this would occur cross-culturally. They conducted an experiment, in which British and Japanese participants were shown scenes with people (Japanese and British) interacting in five interpersonal contexts. Two experiments were conducted, the first one examined within-culture communication accuracy and the second cross-cultural communication accuracy. Results showed that both cultures are better at perceiving emotional cues within themselves, as expected. The Japanese are more expressive in status relationships, but the British were found to express more intimacy cues.

Differences in attention

Perception is directly related with attention. Regarding visual stimuli, we only perceive what we are looking at and we look at what we are paying attention to. It is observable that different cultures direct their attention differently. One of the reasons for this is socialization, as pointed previously with the study of the interaction between mothers and their infants, it starts very early and it continues throughout their life with the differences on the organization of society, with some societies being more interdependent than others (Masuda and Nisbett, 2003). A posterior study from the same authors (2005) indicates that the *affordances* (term originally used in psychology, used to indicate the possibility of an action in an object or environment) of the environment might also play a role. Other study that indicates this possibility is one conducted by Miyamoto et al., (2006), that collected samples from 1,000 scenes from American and Japanese towns and found Japanese towns to be more complex counting more information to assimilate. When testing the change blindness paradigm with the different samples, the authors found that more changes on context were detected on the Japanese settings by both American and Japanese participants (Miyamoto et al., 2006), one of the reasons for

this is that Japanese environments are generally more complex and call out more attention.

Interpretation and Evaluation

Interpretation is the process of making sense of the external stimuli. People attribute meaning to the things they see and make assumptions based on experience. These assumptions will make for a quicker reaction and avoid the need to learn new meaning each time (e.g. a child that burns himself when touches fire, will assume the next time that he sees fire that it will hurt and therefore will not touch it) (Adler, 2003). Interpretation will lead to categorization, people tend to categorize things in shelves to make sense of reality. This will originate stereotypes, which categorize not individuals but groups of people, ethnic or national groups. Stereotypes can be helpful and harmful, because they work on the base of generalization and while it can help people understand how a group of people function it can also lead to misjudgement (Adler, 2003, Zarndt, 2007).

Misinterpretation will occur when there's a misperception or when the meaning attributed to what is seen is not appropriate, as Adler (2003, p.7) writes, when "using my meanings to make sense out of your reality". This is very frequent when two cultures are communicating. Cross-cultural misinterpretation can occur due to *subconscious cultural 'blindness'* (as interpretation is mostly done on the subconscious, people don't realize they are misinterpreting behaviours or speech), *lack of cultural self-awareness* (consists on the poorness of one's self cultural knowledge, not knowing how one's culture works can be more prejudicial than not knowing how a foreigner culture works, because a person will not be able to realize that is being conditioned by their cultural lenses), *projected similarity and parochialism* (the last two are related, project similarity occurs when one assumes the other is more similar to him than he actually is and this often happens because people assume there's only one way to see the world: his own, this derives from a rigid loyalty to one's belief system, even when people acknowledge that some culture is different, they assume that theirs is somehow 'more right') (Adler, 2003).

Evaluation in this context consist on judging either a person or a situation as good or bad (Adler, 2003). A person's culture will be his/hers means of measurement and because a person tends to see what he/she does as normal and right, the first reaction to something that challenges that will be seen as abnormal or wrong.

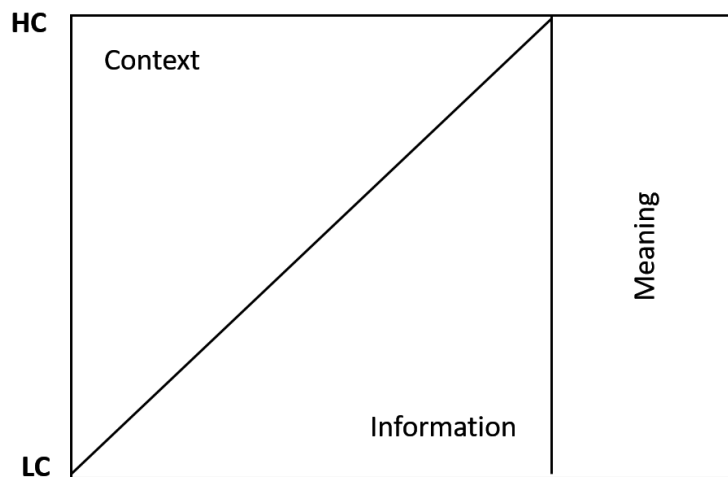
2.3 High- and Low- Context Communication

The purpose of communication is to transmit meaning from the sender to the receiver (Adler, 2003; Kittler and Holtbrügge, 2007). For this meaning to be correctly perceived by the receiver, or as close as possible from the intended, both sender and receiver need to share a background or a context (Hall, 1989).

Edward T. Hall, in his book *Beyond Culture* (1989), tells the story when, in the fifties, the United States spent millions of dollars trying to develop machines to translate Russian and other languages. Many talented linguistics were involved in the project but time after time they've come to the realization that the most accurate and correctly fastest translator was no machine, but a human being that was, both, knowledgeable on the language and on the subject (Hall, 1989).

It was through recognizing the immense importance of context that Edward Hall proposed a model that measures context in the form of a continuum between High Context (HC) and Low Context (LC) (Figure 2). Hall (1989) defined context as the information that surrounds an event and he further argues that this context, the

Figure 2 High and Low Context Model



Source: Hall, 1976 (p.102)

surroundings of information, is crucial for the meaning. His categorization of cultures as high- or low- context is based on how cultures process information, their relationship with time, time orientation, and the way the members of the culture interact with each other and other cultures (Hall, 1989). Hall (1989) uses the model to classify national cultures, but is important to highlight that no culture exists exclusively at one end of the scale, some tend to be lower while others tend to be higher but high and low systems can and

do co-exist in the same culture, different institutions can tend to be more low or high. Nevertheless, there are a series of features that allows a researcher to indicate whether a culture is dominantly high or low context. Having that in consideration, there are cultures that have been classified as almost perfect examples of one end or the other. China was considered by Hall (1989) as being on the high-context end, while USA is a fair example of a LC cultures.

This model has been proven useful for the study of intercultural communication by many researches (Kim, Pan and Park, 1998; Kitayama and Ishii, 2002; Knutson, Komolsevin, Chatiketun and Smith, 2003; Okazaki, 2004; Kittler and Holtbrügge, 2007). Also, there are other theoretical models that allow culture categorization and are analogous and/or complementary to Hall's (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, Korac-Kakabadse and Savery, 2001), such as: Glenn's (1981) proposal of *associative vs. abstractive* cultures; Servaes' (1989) *Western-Aristotelian vs. Asiatic-Platonist* societies and Hofstede's (1980) dimension of *Individualism vs. Collectivism*.

Korac-Kakabadse, et al. (2001) propose an integrative approach to all the perspectives, arguing that their integration and further development would construct a relevant theory on cross-cultural interactions and be of help in the multicultural organizational world of today.

Differences between HC- and LC- Communication

Low Context communication is characterized by transmitting as much information as possible in the message itself, while HC communication is set over a preprogramed information of the setting and the receiver, and consequently the message itself contains minimal information. As Hall (1989, p.79) puts it: "A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite, i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code." In simpler words, HC cultures assume the receiver has knowledge about the situation being communicated, as to LC cultures nothing is assumed and so everything needs to be clearly stated in the encoded message. HC cultures are characterized by a greater appreciation of non-verbal cues – facial expression, tone of voice, gestures, eye movements, body language- while LC cultures privilege verbal communication and value what is said over how it is said. HC cultures are characterized by strong norms and a well-structured social hierarchy and

this also shapes their way of communicating. Relationships between people are valued and taken into consideration as much as the exchange of information. In LC cultures, the environment and the relationships between the interlocutors do not matter as much as the information being transmitted.

In summary, HC communication indicates a preference towards indirect, more implicit messages, that are transmitted in symbolic and artful ways, while LC communication privileges direct and explicit messages, straightforward and task-related (Hall, 1989).

Measuring Cultural Context

As it was previously showed, there are many authors who categorized culture according to communication preferences and other features. The work of Hofstede is one of the most widespread, because it is data-driven, different countries were given precise scores which allow for a clear basis for empirical research (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017). The context theory, on the other hand, has a theoretical approach, Hall categorized nations based on their communication style and their position on the continuum was attributed rather roughly. In line with these evidence, most of the studies that have the context theory as basis, follow a theoretical approach as well (Cardon, 2008).

As a way to mediate this factor, there are authors that use an individual context score scale to ascertain participant's context. The first study to use a measure for context at an individual level was the one of Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, and Heyman (1996), being the first to confirm empirically the differences on communication between cultures based on the HC/LC continuum (with Japanese and American participants). Later, Gudykunst et al.'s (1996) scale was criticized by Ohashi (2000) for being two-dimensional. Ohashi defended that a scale to measure context should be unidimensional in accordance with Hall's concept of a continuum, i.e. one continuous dimension that goes from LC to HC. In consequence, Ohashi created a unidimensional scale that was then used as basis by Richardson and Smith in 2007 and later adapted by Hornikx and Le Pair (2017).

2.4 Advertisement

Advertisement is a form of communication. It is the ultimate way that companies have to spread a message to their customers. As it was said previously, these messages seem to obtain more results when adapted to the cultures of the targeted audiences (Ozaki et al., 2010; Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017). There are a number of studies that indicate that advertisements that reflect cultural values to some extent, tend to be more persuasive than standardized ones (Gregory and Munch, 1997; Han and Shavitt, 1994; Hong, Muderrisoglu and Zinkhan, 1987; Taylor, Miracle and Wilson, 1997).

This line of thought follows the same logic as the ancient discipline of Rhetoric, a form of study since the time of Aristotle, considered by many the art of persuasion. For rhetoricians, any statement can be expressed in a diversity of manners and one of these manners will be the most effective, dependent on the audience and the goal of the communication. In the case of advertisement, the ultimate goal is to persuade, in which case, according to a rhetorical perspective, the manner in which the statement is expressed may be more relevant than the content (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996). The instruments of rhetoric are the rhetorical figures, these can be defined as “an artful deviation in form that adheres to an identifiable template.” (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004, p.114). In the last century, the choice of visual stimuli in print advertisements has been increasing significantly as form of communication (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004). In accordance with these findings, some authors felt the need to attribute a categorization to visual rhetorical figures, in order to separate it from the categorization of verbal rhetorical figures, usually adapted to the visual domain (Van Mulken et al., 2010). Forceville (1994) and McQuarrie and Phillips (2004) developed a typology of rhetorical visual stimuli (Figure 3). Forceville’s (1994) typology considers three pictorial metaphors, ‘Simile’, happens when comparison is made directly, having two images side by side; ‘Hybrid Metaphors’ when two images are combined together as one, and ‘Contextual Metaphors’ take place when a comparison is made with an absent concept that must be interpreted from the context. Phillips and McQuarrie’ typology is analogous to Forceville’s, but it adds a dimension of Meaning Operation, which refers to the target of the cognitive process required to comprehend the picture (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004). As it can be seen in figure 3, different combinations of the two dimensions mean different degrees of complexity, and this translates into the effort people have to put into understanding the message an advertisement encompasses. The Relevance Theory developed by Sperber and Wilson (1995) indicates precisely that it is crucial to find a balance between the effort

Figure 3 Typologies of Visual Metaphors

		McQuarrie and Phillips (2004)			
		Meaning Operation			
		Richness			
		Visual Structure	Connection 'A is associated with B'	Comparison	
Similarity 'A is like B'	Opposition 'A is not like B'				
- Complexity +	Simile	Juxtaposition			
	Two side-by-side images				
	Hybrid Metaphor	Fusion			
	Two combined images				
	Contextual Metaphor	Replacement			
Present image points to an absent image					

Source: Own elaboration

people put into deciphering a message and the benefits expected to be provided from those efforts. The theory argues that people will be willing to put more effort into understanding a message according to the benefits they perceive they will gain. When transposing this to advertisement, the relation lies between the effort placed on decoding an ad and the satisfaction taken from that success (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2007). There are studies that show that this satisfaction is then connected with a higher ad liking and a more positive attitude towards the ad (Forceville, 1994; Phillips, 1997; Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017). Although this indicates the success of more complex messages, this is only true to some extent, since the Relevance theory also signposts that when people need to put more effort into decoding a message than what they believe it's its benefits, the relation it's the opposite. This fact means that while a more complex message may be more successful than a simpler one, a too complex message may be ineffective as well, hence the importance of balance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). The importance of this balance is supported in yet another perspective, the resource matching hypothesis, according to which the peak of persuasion is obtained if there's a balance between the cognitive resources required to understand the message and the cognitive resources available from the receiver (Anand and Sternthal, 1990; Larsen, Luna and Peracchio, 2004 as cited in Hornikx and Le Pair, 2007). In other words, a message is considered too complex if the cognitive resources needed to decipher it exceed the ones the receiver possesses and too simple when the cognitive resources needed are less than what the

receiver has, a message that balances perfectly with the receiver is expected to be the most persuasive.

As said above, the use of visual rhetorical figures is one of the reasons advertisement messages can be complex to interpret. Metaphors are complex because they communicate indirectly, not explicitly, through implicatures. An implicature is a linguistic concept that can be defined as information that is communicated implicitly (Sperber and Wilson, 1995), i.e. not directly, through metaphors. Phillips (1997) adds that implicatures are what the audience perceives and interprets or infers in order to assign meaning to a message.

Implicatures can be *strong* or *weak*, in an advertisement, the main message, easier to convey or more direct is the *strong* implicature, and the less obvious, more prone to relay on the audience's imagination is considered *weak*. A *strong* implicature is usually envisioned by the advertiser as it is the main message they intend to transmit, while *weak* implicatures can be intentional or just the audience's own creation based on the interpretation they vision (Philips, 1997). Consumer's interpretation of advertisement implicatures can derive, according to Sperber and Wilson (1986), from cultural, product or advertisement knowledge.

Product or advertisement knowledge can lead to an oriented interpretation based on information consumers have of that specific product or of advertisement in general, e.g. as most people believe advertisements are created to sell the product, they rarely make negative interpretation of what they see, assuming that the advertisement language is a positive one. This does not mean that the response to the advertisement is positive (their liking or willing to buy it) (Philips, 1997). Cultural knowledge is what makes the consumer see through his/her cultural lenses as it was mentioned previously, the consumer will then use his meaning, symbols, stereotypes to make sense of what the advertisement exhibits. The cultural knowledge is of main importance because in a world of cross-cultural exchange, where global brands face the challenge to advertise to more than one culture, it is crucial to understand how the culture sees and interprets in order to convey successful advertisement (Hornikx and O'Keefe, 2009).

In line with the last paragraph, many researchers argue that advertisement messages should be in accordance with cultural values (Belk, Bryce and Pollay, 1985; Boddewyn, Soehl and Picard, 1986; Okazaki et al., 2010). Most marketing research on cross-cultural advertisement focuses on Hofstede's dimensions of individualism vs.

collectivism, arguing that this dimension is particularly significant for marketing proposes.

Advertisement appeals can be classified as soft-sell or hard-sell, and this dichotomy has been studied in relation to cultural values (Okazaki et al., 2010). Soft-sell appeals are considered less direct than hard-sell appeals, one possible definition is “image and atmosphere are conveyed through a beautiful scene or the development of an emotional story of verse. Human emotional sentiments are emphasized over clear-cut product related appeals” (Mueller, 1987, p.53). A hard-sell approach can be defined as “sales orientation is emphasized here, specifying brand name and product recommendations. Explicit mention may be made of competitive products, sometimes by name, and the product advantage depends on performance. This kind of appeal includes statements such as ‘number one’ and ‘leader’” (Mueller, 1987, p.53). In other words, hard-sell points out directly the characteristics of products, while soft-sell appeals lead the consumer to indirectly infer the products qualities. In relation to the concept of implicatures, one can observe that hard-sell appeals would use less and stronger implicatures, while soft-sell would use more and weaker implicatures. As it says in the beginning of the paragraph, the qualification of appeals as soft and hard has been subject of study in relation to culture differences, soft-sell appeals were found to be more predominant in Eastern cultures, while hard-sell appeals are stronger in the West. Mueller (1987) found that soft-sell appeals appeared four times more in Japan than in the U.S. Lin (2001) analysed the content of Chinese and U.S. advertisement and concluded that hard-sell was more common in the U.S. and soft-sell in China. Studies have also compared U.K. and the U.S. in relation to soft vs. hard sell appeals (Nevett, 1992) and concluded that British advertisements contained less direct information than the U.S. ones, suggesting therefore a softer approach.

Okazaki et al. (2010) developed a framework to measure the strength of soft-sell and hard-sell appeals. They identified three dimensions of each kind of appeal and subsequent subdimensions for each dimension. Accordingly, the three dimensions corresponding to soft-sell appeals are (table 1): feeling (creative, instinctive, imaginative and abstract); implicitness (insinuation, appealing, subjective and expressive) and image (entertaining, interpretive, playful and impression based). For hard-sell appeals, the dimensions are: thinking (rational, logical, analytic, factual and concrete); explicitness (precise, explanation, convincing, persuasion and instructive) and fact (educational, descriptive, realistic informative and evidence based).

Table 1 Hard-Sell vs Soft-Sell Appeals

Hard Sell Advertisement Appeals	Soft Sell Advertisement Appeals
Thinking	Feeling
-Rational	-Creative
-Logical	-Instinctive
-Analytic	-Imaginative
-Factual	-Abstract
-Concrete	
Explicitness	Implicitness
-Precise	-Insinuation
-Explanation	-Appealing
-Convincing	-Subjective
-Persuasion	-Expressive
-Instructive	
Fact	Image
-Educational	-Entertaining
-Descriptive	-Interpretive
-Realistic	-Playful
-Informative	-Impression based
-Evidence based	

Source: Own elaboration

Advertisement and Context Theory

As it was said at the beginning of this section, a significant number of studies have been made proving the relevance of cultural adaptation on advertisements (Gregory and Munch, 1997; Han and Shavitt, 1994; Hong et al., 1987; Taylor et al., 1997), yet the number of studies made on adaptation of advertisements based on context theory exists on a lesser level, which is most likely related to what has been said in sub-section 2.3.2, that the theoretical approach of Hall's context theory makes it harder for studies to be based on it for empirical purposes. Nevertheless, there are some studies elaborated in the advertisement field related to complex messages that were conducted with relationship to high-/low- context communication.

He Bai (2016) analysed advertisements having as comparing points precisely HC- and LC- cultures, finding that, in terms of language, in LC-cultures all information is provided, informational is direct and factual, while in HC-cultures the information is minimal, extremely indirect and metaphorical, i.e. advertisement for the same toothpaste, Crest, the English version is:

“Now there is something more dentists can recommend for your gums that’s proven to help get them healthier. Crest Plus Gum is the only cavity fighting toothpaste that’s so

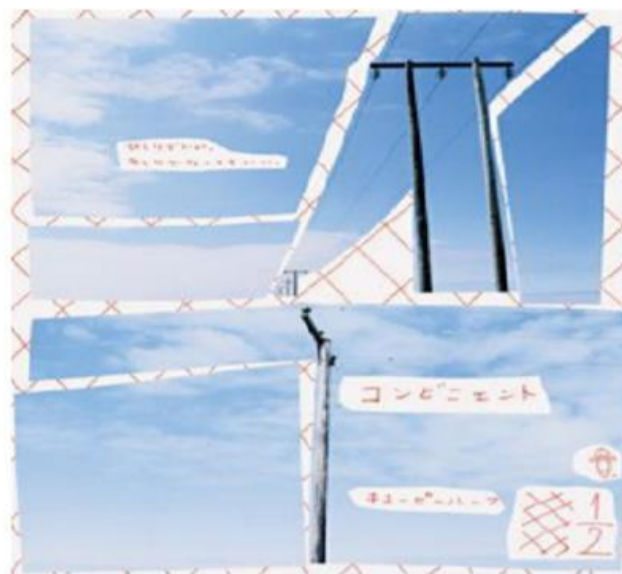
effective, and it's clinically proven to help reserve the gum disease-gingivitis. Just what the dentists ordered.” (Bai, 2016, p. 24)

And the Chinese version:

“Behind that healthy smile, that's a Crest kid.” (Bai, 2016, p. 24)

It can be clearly seen, that are major differences between the two, given that English people value all the factual given information, but the Chinese would be uncomfortable with so much expressed information as they already have assumptions about the product. As for the advertisement from China it works because, in the Chinese culture children are the centre of life and so their well-being is exhausted taken into consideration in the buyer's choice. This kind of advertisement has a completely different perspective than the English one, as it relies on the culture's values and beliefs and even

Picture 1 An Advertisement for salad



Source: Bai (2016, p. 25)

though there's no direct description of the function or quality of the product, the audience has pre-existing contextual information that can be inferred by the what's said (Bai, 2016). In a more visual concept, Bai (2016) analysed a Japanese advertisement for salad that would probably be completely lost in a LC-culture (see picture 1).

This advertisement stands for a salad that has less fat than usual. The two sentences from the picture say (first top than below): “Whether or not I am fine by myself”

and “Convenience”. The image shows two pictures, the top one has a pole with two pillars and below one can see a picture on a pole with only one pillar that serves for the same task: holding the wire. The advertisement aims to transmit the message that the pole with one pillar does the same as the pole with two, making the simpler one more convenient, as the second sentence says. The idea here is to show that a salad with 50% less fat does the same function (tastes the same), but it’s more convenient (it’s healthier) (Bai, 2016). The message of this advertisement is ambiguous and requires interpretation, plus contains minimal direct information about the product, it works in Japan, as Japan is on the top of the HC-LC continuum, but it is that it would cause confusion and perplexity in a LC country, consequently it can be seen that a communication that works in HC culture would most likely fail redundantly in a LC culture, and vice-versa.

In a different perspective, Callow and Shiffman (2002) studied the degree to which consumers infer meaning from images in advertisement. They examined consumers from the Philippines (high-context culture), and consumers from the U.S. (low-context culture). The expectation, based on Hall’s continuum, was that participants of the Philippines would infer more meaning from the ads than the ones from U.S. The participants were shown ads with individuals in interaction and the authors measured the implicit meaning based on participant’s personal achievement and affiliation. The expectation was verified and the Filipinos scored higher on both the scales, leading the researchers to conclude that high-context cultures infer more implicit meaning from images than low-context cultures.

In line with the last referred study, Le Pair and Van Mulken (2008) investigated perceived complexity and appreciation of advertisements with visual metaphors in France and Spain (as high-context cultures) and the Netherlands (low-context culture). The predictions were that perceived complexity would be lower and ad appreciation would be higher in the high-context cultures. Results showed that perceived complexity was indeed higher for the Netherlands than for Spain, but not for France and ad appreciation was, as expected, higher for both France and Spain than for the Netherlands. Curiously, Van Mulken et al. (2010) examined perceived complexity and appreciation of visual metaphors in advertisements with the same countries, but this time the results were contradictory to the expectations, the French and the Spanish did not score lower on perceived complexity nor higher on ad appreciation than the Dutch.

Hornikx and Le Pair (2017) also analysed perceived ad complexity and ad liking with Belgian and Dutch participants (being Belgium a higher-context culture than the

Netherlands) and it was confirmed that Belgian participants perceived the ads less complex than the Dutch and also like them better than the latter.

Most studies seem to indicate that the context theory has an influence on ad perception, mainly ads with visual metaphors, nevertheless most studies have analysed only perceived complexity and appreciation.

2.5 Summary

Rewinding to the concept of perception reviewed, which definition can be the process through which every individual select, organizes and evaluates stimuli from the external world (Asch, 1946, Singer, 1976, Adler, 2003), it is understandable that perception is what allows every individual to create his own reality. By this definition, and limiting our spectrum to the visual stimuli, perception is a concept that encompasses what an individual see (selection), how he interprets what he sees (organization) and how he evaluates and judges that information (evaluation). Other factor that can be concluded from what has been previously written is that culture strongly influences this process (Adler, 2000, 2003; Segall, et al. 1966).

The Context Theory is one of the most famous theories to propose a classification of cultural differences regarding communication (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017). High- and Low-context cultures prefer more indirect and direct communication, respectively, and that preference has been proved to influence visual perception of metaphors in advertisements (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017; Callow and Shiffman, 2002; Le Pair and Van Mulken, 2008; Mulken et al., 2010).

Advertising is the way companies have to communicate with their consumers, focusing on section 2.4 it has been made clear that adapting this communication to the targeted audience (in this case, culture) is highly recommended in order to succeed, so adaptation to cultural values and culture's styles of communication is recommended. In this section, it is also stated that visual stimuli has been the preferred choice in the last century, and despite some lines of thought, the literature on perception seems to indicate that visual communication may have as many interpretations as any other means of communication (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004).

3. Research Methodology

The aim of this dissertation is to study “How High-/Low- Context Cultures influence advertisement perception?”

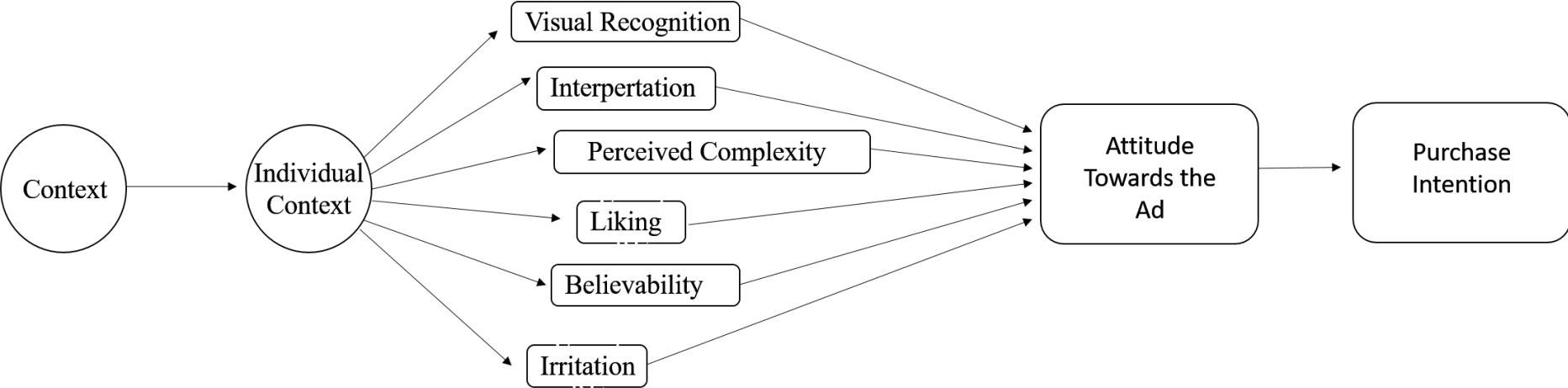
The aim of this study is to inspect whether the context of a culture influences its way of perceiving advertisement and affects the visual recognition, the interpretation, the perceived complexity, liking, irritation, believability, attitude towards the ad and purchase intention, all of these variables are supposed to be influenced by the degrees of complexity of the two ads.

In order to try to answer this question and be able to draw conclusions it is important to apply a methodology that best fits the subject of the investigation. This chapter, will therefore, be dedicated to general methodological considerations justifying and trying to explain the empirical procedures.

3.1 Theoretical Model and Hypotheses

As a way to measure perception, the concept was divided into the three processes which constitute it. Selection is to be measured through the variable Visual Recognition, that is going to ascertain what people see when looking at an advertisement; organization is to be measured through Interpretation, the meaning people infer from what they see, in other words, what they interpret from what they see, and for evaluation, four variables were selected from prior studies that were considered to weave judgement on images, they are: Perceive Complexity (whether or not people find the advertisements complex); Liking (if they like it or not); Believability (if they find the ad believable); Irritation (if the ad irritates them); attitude towards the ad, which can be more positive or negative and it's influenced by the previous variables (perceived complexity, liking, believability and irritation) and purchase intention (which is expected to be positively influenced by attitude towards the ad). Based on this consideration, a model (figure 4) is proposed liking all the connections:

Figure 4 – Theoretical Model



Source: Own elaboration

The variables proposed on the theoretical model, are supposed to be influenced by the context of the cultures in analysis. Therefore, based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{A.1} HC respondents will point out more visual elements from the advertisements than LC respondents;

H_{A.2} HC respondents will infer more meaning from the advertisements than LC respondents;

H_B HC respondents find the more complex ad less complex to interpret than LC respondents;

H_{C.1} HC respondents will like the more complex ad more than LC respondents;

H_{C.2} LC respondents will like the less complex ad more than HC respondents;

H_{D.1} HC respondents consider the more complex ad more believable than LC respondents;

H_{D.2} LC respondents consider the less complex ad more believable than HC respondents;

H_{E.1} HC respondents will consider the more complex ad less irritating than LC respondents;

H_{E.2} LC respondents will consider the less complex ad less irritating than LC respondents;

H_{F.1} HC respondents will have a more positive attitude towards the more complex ad than LC respondents;

H_{F.2} LC respondents will have a more positive attitude towards the less complex ad than HC respondents;

H_{G.1} HC respondents will show a greater purchase intention towards the product from the more complex ad than LC respondents;

H_{G.2} LC respondents will show a greater purchase intention towards the product from the less complex ad than HC respondents.

3.2 Quantitative Methodology

The quantitative methodology is integrated in the positivist paradigm and it is its goal to identify and present data, indicators and observable tendencies (Sousa and Baptista, 2011). This type of methodology is considered to be particularly suitable “when there’s the possibility of collecting quantifiable variable measures and inferences from samples of a population” (Sousa and Baptista, 2011, p.53).

Among other features, the quantitative methodology is characterized by an experimental or quasi-experimental method, by the formulation of hypotheses that verify relationships between different variables, to explain and establish the cases of casual relationships, by the verification of hypotheses through statistical analysis and by the generalization of results from a designated sample. As main advantage, this methodology is considered to allow the analysis and integration of results presented in previous investigations on the same theme (Sousa and Baptista, 2011).

According to what is stated in the section, it is considered that the nature and features of the quantitative methodology are appropriate for the aim of this dissertation, being the questionnaire, which will be more thoughtfully explained in the next section, the selected instrument for data collection.

3.2.1 Questionnaire Design

Sousa and Baptista (2011) define questionnaire as “an instrument of investigation that aims to collect information having as basis, usually, the inquiry of a group that represents the study population” (p. 91). The aim of this dissertation is to compare the advertisement perception of cultures with different communication context and therefore a questionnaire with two advertisements with visual stimuli is proposed.

3.2.1.1 Material

The participants will be shown 2 advertisements, both were selected from an advertisement online database. The first one is a detergent advertisement of the brand Ariel, that contains visual metaphors and from which it can be inferred both strong and weak implicatures, following a soft-sell approach (Annex A). The second ad is from the toothpaste Colgate, which contains a direct message and highlights facts about the product, in a harder-sell approach (Annex B). The reason behind the choice of these advertisements is because both stand for products that the general population needs to use

on their daily or weekly routines, this fact is expected to decrease the variation of the effect of product knowledge on the respondent's perception, which according to Sperber and Wilson (1995) is one factor of influence on consumer's interpretation of advertisements. In addition, the brands were removed from both advertisements using a simple image editor software, attempting to decrease the variation of brand knowledge among the respondents, which can also play a significant role on perception of advertisements (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). Furthermore, the goal was also to select two advertisements from different approaches in order to do choose a communication that would likely appeal more to a higher context population (first ad) and a lower context population (second ad).

The first ad follows a soft-sell approach, given its implicitness, creativity, subjectivity while the second ad follows a harder-sell approach, being more explicit, descriptive and logical (Okazaki et al., 2010). In accordance with the typologies studied in the literature review, the main visual metaphor in the first ad can be classified as a Hybrid Metaphor or Fusion (a cheesecake in the shape of a spot, i.e. the cake is the spot) (Forceville, 1994; Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004), which is the one with the intermediate level of complexity degree in both typologies. Given that Phillips and McQuarrie's (2004) framework allows for a categorization for the 'meaning operation', the image can also be classified as establishing a connection ('A is associated with B'). As for the second ad, the communication is a lot more straightforward, and it can be found a Juxtaposition metaphor or Simile (smiles next to the tooth whitener, meaning tooth whitener= smiles) (Forceville, 1994; Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004), which is the one considered less complex. Apart from the classified metaphors, both images have other implicatures, but the first one has a more indirect approach, weaker implicatures can be interpreted, and consequently makes it more complex than the second one (both advertisements are in Annex 1).

3.2.1.2 Instrumentation and Measures

For each advertisement, it is measured visual recognition, interpretation, perceived complexity, liking, believability, irritation, attitude towards the ad and purchase intention.

The table 2 exhibits the structure of the questionnaire, it can be seen that it contains 2 open-ended attitudinal questions, 17 attitudinal questions plus 3 intention questions with 7-point rating scales, 9 attitudinal questions with 5-point Likert scales and 4 socio-

demographic queries, since two advertisements are exhibited, the questions of section III are duplicated, one set for each image, originating a total of 57 items per questionnaire.

Questions from similar surveys were re-used, consequently almost all these variables were selected from prior studies, in which all scales were validated and showed high reliability, except from visual recognition and interpretation, which were a result of own creation based on future research recommendations from Hornikx and Le Pair (2017). These two (visual recognition and interpretation) will be ascertain through open-ended questions, in which the participants will be asked two questions, what they see in the advertisement and what they think is the meaning of the message. Perceived Complexity is to be measured through two 7-point scale questions “The message is easy/hard to understand” and “The message of the advertisement is simple/complex” (used previously in Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017 and created from Le Pair and Van Mulken, 2008). Liking was also measured with two 7-point scale questions “The advertisement is badly/well chosen” and “The advertisement is unattractive/attractive” also used in Hornikx and Le Pair (2017). Believability is assed with five 7-point scale questions “The advertisement is convincing/unconvincing”; “credible/ not credible”; “truthful/untruthful” and “believable/unbelievable”, used in Okazaki et al., (2010) that adapted it from Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow (1998).

Table 2 – Questionnaire’ Structure

Variable	Question	Response scales	Source
Individual Context Score Scale	1. Speakers should not expect that listeners will figure out what they really mean unless the intended message is stated precisely. 2. It is more important to state a message efficiently than with great detail. 3. Even if not stated exactly, a speaker's intent will rarely be misunderstood. 4. Intentions not explicitly stated can often be inferred from the context. 5. A speaker can assume that listeners will know what they really mean. 6. People understand many things that are left unsaid. 7. Fewer words can often lead to better understanding. 8. You can often convey more information with fewer words. 9. Some ideas are better understood when left unsaid.	5-point Likert scale	in Hornikx and Le Pair (2017) taken from Richardson and Smith (2007)
Visual Recognition	What do you see in the image above?	open-ended question	Own creation based on Hornikx, Le Pair 's (2017) recommendations for future research
Interpretation	What do you think is its meaning?	open-ended question	Own creation based on Hornikx, Le Pair 's (2017) recommendations for future research
Complexity	The message of the advertisement is easy/hard to understand The message of the advertisement is simple/complex	7-point scale	Hornikx, Le Pair (2017)
Liking	The advertisement is badly/well chosen The advertisement is unattractive/attractive From 1-7 how much do you like the advertisement?	7-point scale	in Hornikx and Le Pair (2017) taken from Le Pair and Van Mulken, (2008)
Believability	Do you consider this advertisement: Convincing/Unconvincing Credible/Not Credible Acceptable / Unacceptable Truthful / Untruthful Believable/ Unbelievable	7-point scale	in Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor (2010) adapted from Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow (1998)
Irritation	Do you consider this advertisement: Annoying/Unannoying Irritating/Unirritating Disturbing/Undisturbing	7-point scale	in Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor (2010) adapted from Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow (1998)
Attitude toward the Ad	Do you consider this advertisement: Good/Bad Pleasant/Unpleasant Favorable/Unfavorable Positive/Negative	7-point scale	in Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor (2010) taken from Mitchell and Olson (1981)
Purchase Intention	Would you like to try the product? Yes/No Could you imagine yourself buying this product? Yes/No Could you imagine this brand to be one of your most likely choices when you next buy this product? Yes/No	7-point scale	in Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor (2010) adapted from Terlutter, Diehl and Mueller (2006)

Source: Own elaboration

Irritation corresponds to the extent to which an advertisement is perceived as unpleasant and annoying (Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor, 2010) and it was measured with three 7-point scale items “annoying/unannoying”; “irritating/unirritating” and “disturbing/undisturbing”, these scales was also used in Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor (2010) that adapted it from Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow (1998). Attitude toward the ad is to be measured with four 7-point scale questions “good/bad”; “pleasant/unpleasant”; “favourable/unfavourable” and “positive/negative” used in used in Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor (2010) that took it from Mitchell and Olson (1981). Purchase intention is measured with three 7-point scale intention questions “Would you like to try the product?”; “Could you imagine yourself buying this product” and “Could you imagine this product to be one of your most likely choices when you next buy it?”, used by Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor (2010) that adapted it from Terlutter, Diehl and Mueller (2006).

In addition, individual context score was measured, using with a 5-point Likert scale with 9 attitudinal items, taken Hornikx and Le Pair (2017) that was used for the same purposes (ascertain individual context scores to mediate the effect of nationality on ad perception). The authors took the scale from Richardson and Smith (2007) but in their study, it contained 17 items, the exceeded items were removed due to lack of reliability, consequently the scale used in this work is the 9-item one from Hornikx and Le Pair (2017).

Plus, the questionnaire begins with four socio-demographic questions: nationality, age, gender and educational degree. The questionnaire can be found in Annex C.

3.2.1.3 Translation

Given that the aim of the dissertation is to study different cultures, translations were made to try to reach the highest number of respondents. Hence, there are 4 versions of the survey: English (original), Portuguese, Spanish and German. The theme of translation vs adaptation is highly discussed in the cross-cultural survey field, and there are three different approaches ASQT (Ask the same question and translating); ADQ (Ask different questions) and mixed approach (Yan, Lee, Liu and Hu, 2016). In this research, the ASQT approach was used, given the advantage of maximum standardization of the stimuli across cultures. Although it is greatly understood the disadvantage of ‘near-close translation’, for not being cultural suitable at times, this issue was minimized to the extent

that little adaptations were made and every version was reviewed by native speakers in order to improve it as much as possible. The languages were chosen by convenience, considering the knowledge of the author of this dissertation.

3.2.1.4 Participants and Procedure

As a first step, the survey was administered in the streets of Porto, to foreigners (tourists) and Portuguese citizens with the aim of collecting feedback to improve the questionnaire, and to ascertain if it could be understood with relative ease by the different cultures.

After the first procedure, the output of the feedback originated the creation of little explanations before every section in a way of clarifying their aim and facilitating the fill. The survey was then administered through e-mail. Although the survey could be answered by any citizen, *Amadeus* database was used as means to select lists of e-mails. E-mail was also sent to all FEP students and the survey was shared on social media. Through *Amadeus* there were collected lists of e-mail addresses from Germany, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden). As a way to reduce the population, a filter was used to limit the number of employees of the companies being searched (from 1 to 100). E-mails were sent between the 1st and 17th of August 2017. In total, 38 385 e-mails were sent, out of these 2567 e-mail did not reach the recipient due to a variety of sending faults, meaning that the population is instead of around 35 818 (note that the sharing of the survey in social media makes it impossible to ascertain the exact population).

The questionnaire was composed mostly by scales, apart from the 4 open-ended questions correspondent to the variables of Visual Recognition and Interpretation. To treat the data, all the answers were read and to each one was attributed a number from 1 to 7, classifying the degree of complexity and richness of the answers.

4. Data Analysis and Results Presentation

In this chapter, the collected data is going to be examined and analysed through various forms. The first sub-chapter (4.1) contains general numeric information of the data and organizes it for further analysis; 4.2 corresponds to the measures of validity and reliability of all the scales involved in the questionnaire; 4.3 contains a general path model to allow the verification of the relationship between all the variables (the theoretical model) that is then further studied in 4.3.1 with a Multi-group analysis. 4.4 marks the beginning of the comparative analysis with 4.4.1 displaying the measurements to ascertain the statistical relevance of the differences of context between the cultures at study. Then subchapter 4.4.2 is composed by Tests of Hypotheses are conducted. In 4.4.3 comparative path models are designed and analysed, and a Multi-Group analysis is applied in 4.4.3.1. And finally, sub-chapter 4.5 summarizes all the procedures and presents the respective results.

4.1 General data considerations

The questionnaire was answered by a total of 450 people, out of these 2 responses were not considered valid because at least one of the 4 open-ended questions was not validly answered, originating a total of 448 responses.

The total sample is composed by 25 nationalities, displayed on table 4 ordered by number of responses:

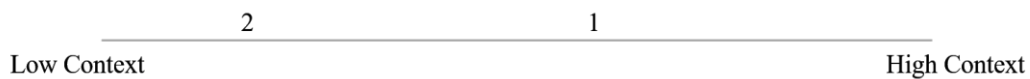
Table 3 – Questionnaire Responses by Nationality

Country	N° responses	Country	N° responses
Germany	174	Taiwan	3
Portugal	122	Bulgaria	2
United Kingdom	44	Romania	2
Finland	22	Spain	2
Norway	22	Ukraine	2
Denmark	18	Belgium	1
Sweden	7	China	1
Italy	6	Colombia	1
Austria	4	Hungary	1
Brazil	4	Ireland	1
France	3	Scotland	1
Iceland	3	Switzerland	1
		USA	1

Source: Own elaboration

In relation to the context theory and as a way to ascertain the theoretic position of the groups on Hall's continuum, Erin Meyer's Cultural Map tool was used. The Cultural Map is a tool developed by American author Erin Meyer that establishes positions of different nationalities on continuums for different characteristics, one of them being communication context based on Hall's theoretical views (Meyer, 2014). The assess to the tool is paid, but an e-mail was sent to the Cultural Map tool team explaining the procedures and ambitions of this research and free assess was kindly granted for 3 months. Thus, The Cultural Map tool suggests the following position for Portugal and Germany.

Figure 5 Context Continuum



Source: The Cultural Map tool (Erin Meyer, 2015)

As it can be observed, Portugal (1) already falls into the HC part of the continuum, while Germany (2) falls on the low part of the continuum. These two nationalities were the chosen for the comparative analysis because they are the ones with the biggest sample.

Out of the total number of respondents, the average age is of 41; 221 (49%) respondents are male and 227 (51%) are female. 73% of respondents attended academic education, 25% only completed their high school studies and the level of studies of the remaining 2% is under high school.

4.2 Reliability and Validity Measurement

This section is going to be dedicated to the reliability and validity tests executed for all the scales present in the questionnaire, in order to ensure that the mentioned scales are consistent, valid and therefore appropriate for the measurements they are intended to conduct.

To ascertain reliability and validity, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated using the SMART PLS software.

Cronbach's alpha is "a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale" (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011, p.53) and since its creation, more than half a century ago,

it has been the most popular measure of scale reliability (Raykov and Grayson, 2003). Internal consistency stands for the degree to which all the elements of a test or scale are actually fit to measure the same construct, in other words, it measures how related the items are within a scale. Cronbach's alpha goes from 0 to 1, and it functions on a growing perspective, the higher the value, the higher the inter-relatedness of the items. Even though there is no consensual decision about the acceptable values of Cronbach's alpha and different remarks have been made over time, Tavakol and Dennick (2011) present 0.70 as the minimum the measure can reach and still represent a reliable scale, but 0.60 is considered enough for George and Mallery (2003) (as cited in Gliem and Gliem, 2003).

CR "represents and index reflecting the impact of error upon a scale" (Raykov and Grayson, 2003, p. 143) and according to the literature the minimum acceptable is 0.70 (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011).

AVE is the average variance common to a construct and its measures (Hulland, 1999), according to Farrell (2010) is the "average amount of variation that a latent construct is able to explain in the observed variables to which it is theoretically related" (p.324). In accordance with Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011) the AVE values shouldn't be lower than 0.50.

Table 4 assembles all the variables measured by scales present in the questionnaire. Since both scales measured two different advertisements, the reliability and validity was measured for the same scale twice (1 being the ones that measured advertisement 1 and 2 the ones that measured advertisement 2). As it can be observed on table t, all scales represent high reliability and validity.

Table 4 – Validity and Reliability Measures

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Individual Context *	0,686	0,795	0,500
Perceived Complexity 1	0,773	0,895	0,809
Liking 1	0,896	0,935	0,827
Believability 1	0,902	0,927	0,719
Irritation 1	0,835	0,901	0,752
Attitude towards the ad 1	0,909	0,936	0,784
Purchase intention 1	0,920	0,950	0,863
Perceived Complexity 2	0,832	0,922	0,856
Liking 2	0,872	0,922	0,797
Believability 2	0,939	0,954	0,805
Irritation 2	0,869	0,920	0,793
Attitude towards the ad 2	0,939	0,956	0,845
Purchase intention 2	0,932	0,957	0,881

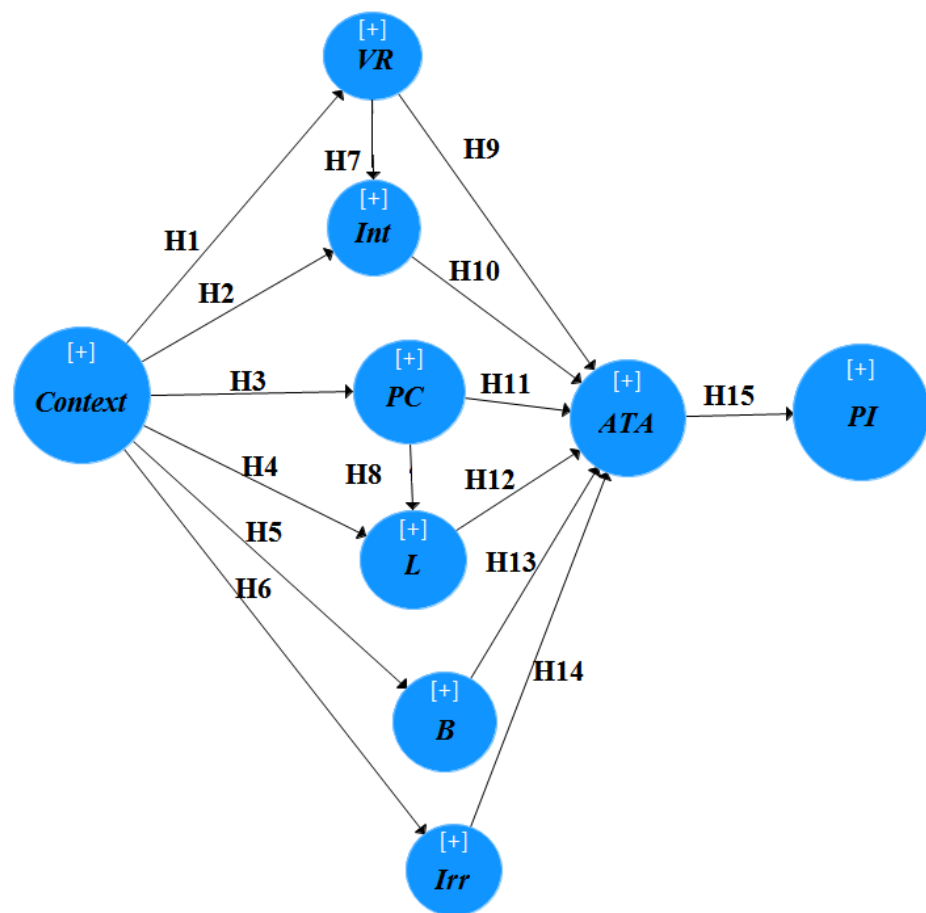
Source: Own elaboration

The first one, identified with an *, the individual context scale, was the one that proved to be the most challenging. In order to obtain reasonable values, only 4 out of 9 items were considered (items 3,4,5 and 9) and still the scale was only validated using the data from the German participants (biggest sample). With this scenario the scale proved just appropriate with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.68. It is important to refer that the previous work that used the same scale, achieved a Cronbach's alpha identical to the present one, of 0.68 (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017) and as the authors stated: "principal component analysis did not lead to a more reliable scale" (p.6). Contrarily to this investigation though, the work of Hornikx and Le Pair (2017) analysed two cultures with closer contexts (according to Hall's classification) than the ones used in this investigation, the Netherlands and Belgium, which may be the reason why the scale was validated with all the items then. This challenging aspect is a clear limitation of this work but it is also a very relevant factor to the present and future research on the theme, as it calls attention to the fact that it may not be possible for two cultures that range very disparately on the context continuum to be measured using the same scale.

4.3 General Path Model

As next step, a path model was created, using the software SMART PLS, to test the general hypothesis, that context influences advertisement perception. Figure 5 presents the model, the blue circumferences represent the variables, the blue lines symbolize the relationships at test. This first model was calculated using all the data collected (total 448 responses). The aim is to test the influence of the individual context variable, here represented as ‘*context*’, on all the variables that represent perception (visual recognition as *VR*; interpretation as *Int*; perceived complexity as *PC*, liking as *L*; Believability as *B*, and Irritation as *Irr*). Further, it was also tested the influence of all the variables of perception on attitude towards the ad (*ATA*) and *ATA* on Purchase Intention (*PI*).

Figure 6 - General Path Model



Source: Own elaboration

Path coefficient significance should be assessed through a process of bootstrapping (Hair et al., 2011), and that's what was made in this case using SMART PLS. Hypotheses are validated based on the *p-value*, following the permit that if the *p-value* does not surpass 0,05 then statistical significance is encountered (Marôco, 2014).

Since all variables were measured for two advertisements, in order to compare the results, the hypotheses were tested separately for each one. Table 5 shows the hypotheses confirmation for ad number 1 and Table 6 for ad number 2.

Observing Table 5, it can be deduced that Individual Context does indeed influence Interpretation, Perceived Complexity, Liking, Believability and Irritation. This means that the individual context score of the respondents influenced their scores on these variables, proving a direct influence of individual context over them. These findings are in accordance with the literature review (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017; Callow and Shiffman, 2002; Le Pair and Van Mulken, 2008; Van Mulken et al., 2010). The lack of statistical relevance on the influence between individual context and visual recognition (*p-value* of 0,12) indicates that, at least for ad 1, individual context did not influence the number of visual elements the respondents pointed out. There's no literature connecting context specifically with what people see and point out in images, only proved differences in meaning inferring (Callow and Shiffman, 2002), the assumption is that for people to interpret different things they ought to pay attention to different elements, yet this assumption is not proved for ad 1. Analysing the influence of variables on attitude towards the ad, it can be concluded that *VR*, *Int* and *PC* have no influence, but Liking, Believability and Irritation do. These results are, in part in accordance with the literature, since Believability, Liking and Irritation all influence attitude towards the ad (Okazaki, et al., 2010). Perceived complexity is found to influence ad liking, as expected (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017), but not to influence attitude towards the ad, which means that the degree to which respondents found the ad less or more complex did not interfere with their attitude to be more positive or negative. Lastly and well in accordance with the literature review, Visual Recognition was found to have an impact on Interpretation, and perceived complexity on liking, as well as Attitude towards the Ad 's influence over Purchase Intention.

For ad number 2, table 6 shows a different reality: influence of individual context is only confirmed for H1 and H2, proving Visual Recognition and Interpretation are

influenced by Individual Context. All the other hypotheses related to individual context are not confirmed. Given that ad number 2 was the less complex of the two ads, it is not abnormal that the significance of the differences is not as relevant as in ad number 1. The last nine hypotheses have a similar outcome as in ad number 1: H9, H10 and H11 were not confirmed, and H7, H8, H12, H13 and H14 are confirmed, proving a relationship between visual recognition and interpretation and between perceived complexity and liking between liking, as well as believability and irritation over attitude towards the ad but not between visual recognition, interpretation and perceived complexity and attitude towards the ad. Once more, H15 is also accepted, proving the influence of attitude towards the ad on purchase intention.

Table 5 – Hypotheses Testing for Ad 1

Hypotheses	Description	P-value	Confirmation
H1	Individual Context influences Visual Recognition (VR)	0,12	Not Accepted
H2	Individual Context influences Interpretation (Int)	0	Accepted
H3	Individual Context influences Perceived Complexity (PC)	0	Accepted
H4	Individual Context influences Liking (L)	0	Accepted
H5	Individual Context influences Believability (B)	0	Accepted
H6	Individual Context influences Irritation (Irr)	0,002	Accepted
H7	Visual Recognition (VR) influences Interpretation	0	Accepted
H8	Perceived Complexity (PC) influences Liking	0	Accepted
H9	Visual Recognition (VR) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0,903	Not Accepted
H10	Interpretation (Int) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0,933	Not Accepted
H11	Perceived Complexity (PC) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0,731	Not Accepted
H12	Liking (L) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0	Accepted
H13	Believability (B) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0	Accepted
H14	Irritation (Irr) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0	Accepted
H15	Attitude towards the Ad (ATA) influences Purchase Intention (PI)	0	Accepted

Source: Own elaboration

Table 6– Hypotheses Testing for Ad 2

Hypotheses	Description	P-value	Confirmation
H1	Individual Context influences Visual Recognition (VR)	0,044	Accepted
H2	Individual Context influences Interpretation (Int)	0,009	Accepted
H3	Individual Context influences Perceived Complexity (PC)	0,346	Not Accepted
H4	Individual Context influences Liking (L)	0,929	Not Accepted
H5	Individual Context influences Believability (B)	0,282	Not Accepted
H6	Individual Context influences Irritation (Irr)	0,688	Not Accepted
H7	Visual Recognition (VR) influences Interpretation	0	Accepted
H8	Perceived Complexity (PC) influences Liking	0	Accepted
H9	Visual Recognition (VR) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0,318	Not Accepted
H10	Interpretation (Int) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0,868	Not Accepted
H11	Perceived Complexity (PC) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0,349	Not Accepted
H12	Liking (L) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0	Accepted
H13	Believability (B) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0	Accepted
H14	Irritation (Irr) influences Attitude towards the Ad (ATA)	0	Accepted
H15	Attitude towards the Ad (ATA) influences Purchase Intention (PI)	0	Accepted

Source: Own elaboration

4.3.1 Multi-Group analysis

Following the analysis made previously, a t-statistics multi-group calculation was made to measure the statistical significance of the differences found on the general path model. This multi-group calculation is based on a standard score, also called z-score, and it enables the comparison of two scores that are from different normal distributions. The interpretation can be made based on the following critical values: 10% level of significance: >1,645; 5% level of significance: >1,96 and 01% level of significance: >2,575. The calculation is made using the following equation:

$$z = \frac{\text{Path sample1} - \text{Path sample2}}{\sqrt{\frac{(m-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2 \text{ sample1} + \frac{(n-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2 \text{ sample2} * \sqrt{\frac{1}{m} + \frac{1}{n}}}}$$

Where:

Path sample_x corresponds to the mean of sample x

S.E.sample_x corresponds to the standard deviation of sample x

m corresponds to the size of the sample category 1

n corresponds to the size of sample category 2

In this case we are calculating the values obtained from ad 1 and ad 2, so:

Path sample₁ corresponds to the mean of the group of variables in ad 1

Path sample₂ corresponds to the mean of the group of variables in ad 2

S.E.sample₁ corresponds to the standard deviation of the variable in ad 1

S.E.sample₂ corresponds to the standard deviation of the variable in ad 2

And since the sample is the same for both ads, *m* and *n* correspond both to 448 (the total number of responses).

First only the confirmed hypotheses that are in common for both ads were selected, they are: H2, H7, H8, H12, H13, H14 and H15. These hypotheses correspond to a group of variables whose liaison proved statistically significant in the previous calculations (with *p values* <0,05). Now with the multi-group analysis the aim is to ascertain if the structure of the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is not altered in

groups with changed features (Marôco, 2014), in order to assess if there are significant differences between the means of the liaisons from ad 1 and 2.

Table 7 – Multi-Group analysis (z results)

Hypotheses	Corresponding Group of variables	Mean Ad 1	Mean Ad 2	STDEV Ad 1	STDEV Ad 2	z	Significant difference
H2	<i>Context</i> → <i>Int</i>	0,228	0,142	0,04	0,057	1,236396038	Not Confirmed
H7	<i>VR</i> → <i>Int</i>	0,332	0,392	0,045	0,045	-0,9438630487	Not Confirmed
H8	<i>PC</i> → <i>L</i>	-0,43	-0,266	0,038	0,041	-2,937000921	Confirmed
H12	<i>L</i> → <i>ATA</i>	0,506	0,49	0,042	0,042	0,2696751568	Not Confirmed
H13	<i>B</i> → <i>ATA</i>	0,264	0,305	0,04	0,04	-0,7255947187	Not Confirmed
H14	<i>Irr</i> → <i>ATA</i>	-0,203	-0,184	0,038	0,039	-0,3493224501	Not Confirmed
H15	<i>ATA</i> → <i>PI</i>	0,688	0,665	0,026	0,028	0,602610443	Not Confirmed

Source: Own elaboration

Table 7 summarizes the liaisons at test, in the first column we can see the hypothesis, in the next the corresponding liaison, followed by all the values needed for the calculation: the mean of groups in ad 1 and the corresponding mean in ad 2, next come standard deviations and the last two columns indicate the z outcomes and the consequent confirmation of the significant differences. In this particular case only the liaison between Perceived Complexity (*PC*) and Liking (*L*) demonstrates a significant difference between the two advertisements, exhibiting a z -score $>2,575$ (5% of significance). Looking at the means of the two groups, it can be seen that in ad 1 the influence is more intense (-0,43) than in ad 2 (-0,266), which means *PC* has a stronger influence over *L* in ad 1 than in ad 2. The relation is negative, which means, the more complex the respondents find the ad the less they like it, since the first ad is the more complex, it makes sense for the relationship between *PC* and *L* to be stronger in it. According to the literature review, perceived complexity and liking are related and they have a positive relationship only up to a certain extent, since the reviewed theories showed that people will find it more satisfactory to decipher a complex message, but not a too complex message (Sperber and Wilson, 1995), and since the majority of cultures that answered the questionnaire were low-context (Germany, Scandinavian Countries and UK as LC and Portugal as HC), the message may have been considered too complex for their liking, hence the outcome.

4.4 Comparative Analysis

In this next sub-chapter, a comparative analysis is made between the two countries that represent the biggest samples out of the total of the collected data (Germany with 174 responses and Portugal with 122 responses). Although other nationalities compose the data, the number of responses does not reach 100 for any other country, consequently it is not possible to have a significant sample to analyse thought structural models, which is the procedure used in 4.4.2. Each country represents a different context communication style, as Germany is considered a Low-context culture, and Portugal a High-context culture, according to Hall (1989), which fits the requirements for the aimed comparison.

4.4.1 Individual Context Score Analysis

In this next section, the variable ‘*context*’ is going to be tested through T-Tests of independent samples to ascertain the statistical relevance of the differences between Portugal and Germany:

Thus, the hypotheses at stake are:

$$H_0: \mu_{context} = \mu_{context}$$

$$H_1: \mu_{context} \neq \mu_{context}$$

Table 8 –T-Test for Individual Context result

Means		<i>P-value</i>	Outcome
Portugal	Germany		
0,35	-0,31	0	H₀ is rejected

Source: Own elaboration

The *p-value* obtained for this pair was of 0, lower then 0,05, which means H₀ is rejected: the difference of the means of the variable *context* of Portugal and Germany are statistically relevant. Which translates into: the variable *context* is not independent from nationality. The means are 0,35 and -0,312 for Portugal and Germany respectively. As expected Portugal’s means are higher than Germany’s, as the context theory predicts. These results allows for a comparison to de made between the variables.

4.4.2 Hypotheses Testing

After all the data analyses procedures, this subchapter is dedicated to the testing of Hypotheses based on T-Tests conducted using the software *IBM SPSS Statistics 24*.

Since both samples are higher than 30 responses, a parametric test should be applied (Marôco, 2014), and in this case a T-Test for Independent samples is to be conducted.

The variables at test are all variables that composed the proposed concept of perception: Visual Recognition, Interpretation, Perceived Complexity, Liking, Believability, Irritation, plus Attitude Towards the Ad and Purchase Intention. Due to the fact that there's two advertisements: $VR_1, Int_1, PC_1, L_1, B_1, Irr_1, ATA_1$, and PI_1 stand for the variable results for ad 1, and $VR_2, Int_2, PC_2, L_2, B_2, Irr_2, ATA_2$, and PI_2 for ad 2. Table 9 summarizes all the hypotheses at test:

Table 9 – T-Test Hypotheses for each variable

Variable	Hypotheses	Variable	Hypotheses
VR_1	$H_0: \mu_{VR1} = \mu_{VR1}$ $H_1: \mu_{VR1} \neq \mu_{VR1}$	VR_2	$H_0: \mu_{VR2} = \mu_{VR2}$ $H_1: \mu_{VR2} \neq \mu_{VR2}$
Int_1	$H_0: \mu_{Int1} = \mu_{Int1}$ $H_1: \mu_{Int1} \neq \mu_{Int1}$	Int_2	$H_0: \mu_{Int2} = \mu_{Int2}$ $H_1: \mu_{Int2} \neq \mu_{Int2}$
PC_1	$H_0: \mu_{PC1} = \mu_{PC1}$ $H_1: \mu_{PC1} \neq \mu_{PC1}$	PC_2	$H_0: \mu_{PC2} = \mu_{PC2}$ $H_1: \mu_{PC2} \neq \mu_{PC2}$
L_1	$H_0: \mu_{L1} = \mu_{L1}$ $H_1: \mu_{L1} \neq \mu_{L1}$	L_2	$H_0: \mu_{L2} = \mu_{L2}$ $H_1: \mu_{L2} \neq \mu_{L2}$
B_1	$H_0: \mu_{B1} = \mu_{B1}$ $H_1: \mu_{B1} \neq \mu_{B1}$	B_2	$H_0: \mu_{B2} = \mu_{B2}$ $H_1: \mu_{B2} \neq \mu_{B2}$
Irr_1	$H_0: \mu_{Irr1} = \mu_{Irr1}$ $H_1: \mu_{Irr1} \neq \mu_{Irr1}$	Irr_2	$H_0: \mu_{Irr2} = \mu_{Irr2}$ $H_1: \mu_{Irr2} \neq \mu_{Irr2}$
ATA_1	$H_0: \mu_{ATA1} = \mu_{ATA1}$ $H_1: \mu_{ATA1} \neq \mu_{ATA1}$	ATA_2	$H_0: \mu_{ATA2} = \mu_{ATA2}$ $H_1: \mu_{ATA2} \neq \mu_{ATA2}$
PI_1	$H_0: \mu_{PI1} = \mu_{PI1}$ $H_1: \mu_{PI1} \neq \mu_{PI1}$	PI_2	$H_0: \mu_{PI2} = \mu_{PI2}$ $H_1: \mu_{PI2} \neq \mu_{PI2}$

Source: Own elaboration

The first step is then to examine the *p-values* in order to understand if H_0 is rejected or not, to verify if the difference of the means of the variables between the two countries has statistical significance.

As it can be seen on table 10, the means of the two countries represent statistical relevant differences in visual recognition, interpretation, liking, believability, irritation, attitude towards the ad and purchase intention for ad 1 and visual recognition, interpretation, attitude towards the ad and purchase intention for ad 2.

Visual recognition and interpretation both were confirmed to have significant differences between the two countries, and as expected Portuguese (HC) respondents scored higher on both *VR* (Ad 1: 2,66>2,03; Ad 2: 2,40>2,02) and *Int* (Ad 1: 3,60>2,26; Ad2: 3,24>2,18) for both ads, which is in accordance with the literature that states HC cultures infer more meaning from ads than LC cultures (Callow and Shiffman, 2002).

Table 10 – Significant differences of Variables Portugal and Germany

Variable	Mean Portugal	Mean Germany	<i>P-value</i>	Interpretation	Significant Difference
<i>VR1</i>	2,66	2,03	0	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>Int1</i>	3,60	2,26	0	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>PC1</i>	6,87	7,4	0,206	H_0 is not rejected	Not Confirmed
<i>L1</i>	13,8	11	0	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>B1</i>	22,54	20,7	0,024	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>Irr1</i>	8	10,1	0	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>ATA1</i>	19,23	16,7	0	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>PI1</i>	12	10	0,001	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>VR2</i>	2,40	2,02	0,003	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>Int2</i>	3,24	2,18	0	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>PC2</i>	3,04	3,21	0,461	H_0 is not rejected	Not Confirmed
<i>L2</i>	15,6	14,7	0,072	H_0 is not rejected	Not Confirmed
<i>B2</i>	23	22	0,170	H_0 is not rejected	Not Confirmed
<i>Irr2</i>	8	8,7	0,183	H_0 is not rejected	Not Confirmed
<i>ATA2</i>	20,11	18,7	0,025	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed
<i>PI2</i>	12	10	0	H_0 is rejected	Confirmed

Source: Own elaboration

Also in accordance with what was expected, both countries scored higher on both variables for ad 1 (soft-sell appeal) than for ad 2 (harder-sell appeal), these findings are in line with the literature reviewed that stated soft-sell appeals have more weak

implicatures and can have more meaning being inferred from than hard-sell appeals (Mueller, 1987; Ozaki et al. 2010).

It is relevant and surprising to notice that perceived complexity does not represent statistically significant differences for neither one of the ads between these two countries, Portugal (HC) and Germany (LC), which, of all the countries in comparison in this study are the ones further apart on the continuum of context. The means of this variable indicate that Portuguese respondents do consider both ad 1 and 2 less complex than the German respondents (Ad 1: $6,87 < 7,4$; Ad 2: $3,04 < 3,21$), but as it has been proved, this difference is not statistically significant. These findings are not in accordance with most of the literature reviewed, in which studies seem to prove the contrary, both theoretical work and empirical, (Le Pair, Mulken, 2008; Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017), although the study of Van Mulken et al., (2010) also did not find significant differences on perceived complexity between Spain, France (HC) and The Netherlands (LC).

Evidence for differences on ad liking are also not found for ad number 2, but are for ad number 1. As ad 2 is the less complex of the two ads, it is also not as surprising that the differences in liking are not as significant, still it was expected that LC respondents liked ad 2 better than HC respondents and vice versa for ad 1. When comparing the means for ad 1, predictions are confirmed, Portuguese (HC) respondents did score significantly higher than German (LC) respondents ($13,8 > 11$), which corresponds to the findings of previous works (Le Pair, Mulken, 2008; Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017), yet when looking at the values for ad number 2, HC respondents actually scored higher, nevertheless this difference has been proved not to be statistically relevant. Believability, Irritation only met statistical relevant differences for Ad number 1, and for this one expectations are confirmed, given that Portugal scored higher on believability, meaning that Portuguese respondents found ad 1 more believable than German respondents ($22,54 > 20,7$). For irritation, also as expected, Portugal scored lower than Germany, meaning Portuguese respondents found Ad number 1 less irritating than German ones ($8 < 10$); *ATA* and *PI* found statistical relevance for both ads, in ad 1, also in accordance with predictions, Portuguese respondents demonstrated a more positive attitude towards the ad than the ones from Germany ($19,23 > 16,7$), and a greater purchase intention ($12 > 10$). *ATA2* and *PI2* are statistically relevant, but the findings are contradictory to expectations, as Portuguese respondents scored higher on both (*ATA2*:

20,11>18,7; *PI2*: 13,4>10,7) Just as surprising note, for ad 2, the means for the rest of the variables reflect the same relationships as in ad 1, meaning LC respondents (Germans) did not believe the second ad more, nor found it less irritating, even though, following the literature review this one would appeal more to the German audience in general. Nevertheless, the differences are not statistically relevant for analysis.

Table 11 – Confirmation of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Description	Confirmation
H _{A.1}	HC respondents will point out more visual elements from the advertisements than LC respondents.	Confirmed
H _{A.2}	HC respondents will infer more meaning from the advertisements than LC respondents	Confirmed
H _B	HC respondents find ad 1 less complex to interpret than LC respondents	Not Confirmed
H _{C.1}	HC respondents will like ad 1 more than LC respondents	Confirmed
H _{C.2}	LC respondents will like ad 2 more than HC respondents	Not confirmed
H _{D.1}	HC respondents consider ad 1 more believable than LC respondents	Confirmed
H _{D.2}	LC respondents consider ad 2 more believable than HC respondents	Not confirmed
H _{E.1}	HC respondents will consider ad 1 less irritating than LC respondents	Confirmed
H _{E.2}	LC respondents will consider ad 2 less irritating than LC respondents	Not Confirmed
H _{F.1}	HC respondents will have a more positive attitude towards ad 1 than LC respondents	Confirmed
H _{F.2}	LC respondents will have a more positive attitude towards ad 2 than HC respondents	Not Confirmed
H _{G.1}	HC respondents will show a greater purchase intention towards the product from ad 1 than LC respondents	Confirmed
H _{G.2}	LC respondents will show a greater purchase intention towards the product from ad 2 than HC respondents	Not Confirmed

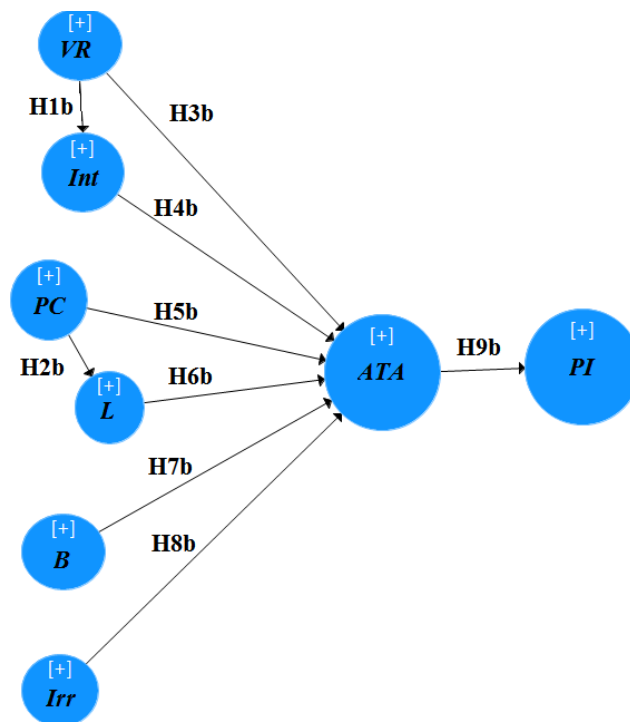
Source: Own elaboration

4.4.3 Comparative Path Model

In this next sub-chapter, a comparative analysis is made between the two countries that represent the biggest samples out of the total of the collected data (Germany with 174 responses and Portugal with 122 responses). Although other nationalities compose the data, the number of responses does not reach 100 for any other country, consequently it is not possible to have a significant sample to analyse thought structural models. Each country represents a different context communication style, as Germany is considered a Low-context culture, and Portugal a High-context culture, according to Hall (1989), which fits the requirements for the aimed comparison.

The individual context score difference between the two countries has been proved statistically relevant (subchapter 4.4.1), so all the requirements are checked. A path model was designed to connect the variables and establish the relationships that are going to be tested for both countries. Figure 6 illustrates the Path Model 2 that is going to be analysed for both countries, Portugal and Germany. The description of the hypotheses

Figure 7 - Path Model



Source: Own elaboration

Legend: *VR*-Visual Recognition; *Int* - Interpretation; *PC*- Perceived Complexity; *L*- Liking; *B*- Believability; *Irr*- Irritation; *ATA*- Attitude Towards the Ad; *PI*- Purchase Intention.

The coefficient significance of the path model was assessed through bootstrapping. Table ç exhibits the results for Ad number 1 in both countries and Table z for Ad 2 also for both countries.

It can be seen that, in both ads the same hypotheses are confirmed in both countries, which means that in both countries and for both ads, it was proved the influence of *VR* over *Int*, *PC* over *L*, *L*, *B* and *Irr* over *ATA* and *ATA* over *PI*. These hypotheses were also confirmed with the general path model of sub-chapter 4.2.

Table 12 – Hypotheses Description

Hypotheses	Description
H _{1P1} & H _{1G1}	Visual Recognition (<i>VR</i>) influences Interpretation (<i>Int</i>) in Ad 1
H _{2P1} & H _{2G1}	Perceived Complexity (<i>PC</i>) influences Liking (<i>L</i>) in Ad 1
H _{3P1} & H _{3G1}	Visual Recognition (<i>VR</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 1
H _{4P1} & H _{4G1}	Interpretation (<i>Int</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 1
H _{5P1} & H _{5G1}	Perceived Complexity (<i>PC</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 1
H _{6P1} & H _{6G1}	Liking (<i>L</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 1
H _{7P1} & H _{7G1}	Believability (<i>B</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 1
H _{8P1} & H _{8G1}	Irritation (<i>Irr</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 1
H _{9P1} & H _{9G1}	Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) influences Purchase Intention (<i>PI</i>) in Ad 1
H _{1P2} & H _{1G2}	Visual Recognition (<i>VR</i>) influences Interpretation (<i>Int</i>) in Ad 2
H _{2P2} & H _{2G2}	Perceived Complexity (<i>PC</i>) influences Liking (<i>L</i>) in Ad 2
H _{3P2} & H _{3G2}	Visual Recognition (<i>VR</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 2
H _{4P2} & H _{4G2}	Interpretation (<i>Int</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 2
H _{5P2} & H _{5G2}	Perceived Complexity (<i>PC</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 2
H _{6P2} & H _{6G2}	Liking (<i>L</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 2
H _{7P2} & H _{7G2}	Believability (<i>B</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 2
H _{8P2} & H _{8G2}	Irritation (<i>Irr</i>) influences Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) in Ad 2
H _{9P2} & H _{9G2}	Attitude towards the Ad (<i>ATA</i>) influences Purchase Intention (<i>PI</i>) in Ad 2

Source: Own elaboration

Table 13- Hypotheses testing for Ad 1 Portugal vs. Germany

Portugal			Germany		
Hypotheses	<i>P-value</i>	Confirmation	Hypotheses	<i>P-value</i>	Confirmation
H _{1P1}	0	Accepted	H _{1G1}	0	Accepted
H _{2P1}	0	Accepted	H _{2G1}	0	Accepted
H _{3P1}	0,428	Not accepted	H _{3G1}	0,777	Not accepted
H _{4P1}	0,646	Not accepted	H _{4G1}	0,629	Not accepted
H _{5P1}	0,907	Not accepted	H _{5G1}	0,927	Not accepted
H _{6P1}	0	Accepted	H _{6G1}	0	Accepted
H _{7P1}	0,001	Accepted	H _{7G1}	0	Accepted
H _{8P1}	0,002	Accepted	H _{8G1}	0,015	Accepted
H _{9P1}	0	Accepted	H _{9G1}	0	Accepted

Source: Own elaboration

Table 14- Hypotheses testing for Ad 2 Portugal vs. Germany

Portugal			Germany		
Hypotheses	<i>P-value</i>	Confirmation	Hypotheses	<i>P-value</i>	Confirmation
H _{1P2}	0	Accepted	H _{1G2}	0	Accepted
H _{2P2}	0,008	Accepted	H _{2G2}	0	Accepted
H _{3P2}	0,088	Not accepted	H _{3G2}	0,666	Not accepted
H _{4P2}	0,52	Not accepted	H _{4G2}	0,96	Not accepted
H _{5P2}	0,999	Not accepted	H _{5G2}	0,869	Not accepted
H _{6P2}	0	Accepted	H _{6G2}	0	Accepted
H _{7P2}	0	Accepted	H _{7G2}	0	Accepted
H _{8P2}	0,002	Accepted	H _{8G2}	0	Accepted
H _{9P2}	0	Accepted	H _{9G2}	0	Accepted

Source: Own elaboration

4.4.3.1 Multi-group analysis

In line with what has been done previously, a multi-group analysis was performed to assess the statistical relevance of the differences of the proved liaisons between the two countries for each ad. This calculation was made with the same equation as previously:

$$z = \frac{\text{Path sample1} - \text{Path sample2}}{\sqrt{\frac{(m-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2 \text{ sample1} + \frac{(n-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * S.E.^2 \text{ sample2} * \sqrt{\frac{1}{m} + \frac{1}{n}}}}$$

Where, in this case:

*Path sample*₁ corresponds to the mean of the liaison in Portugal (1)

*Path sample*₂ corresponds to the mean of the liaison in Germany (2)

*S.E.sample*₁ corresponds to the standard deviation corresponding of the liaison in Portugal (1)

*S.E.sample*₁ corresponds to the standard deviation corresponding of the liaison in Germany (2)

m is 122 (number of responses from Portugal)

n is 174 (number of responses from Germany)

Table 15 and 16 summarize the results for ad 1 and ad 2, respectively:

Table 15 - Multi-Group Analysis (z results) for Ad 1

Hypotheses	Liaisons	Mean 1	Mean 2	STDEV 1	STDEV 2	z	Significant difference
H _{1P1} & H _{1G1}	<i>VR → Int</i>	0,435	0,255	0,079	0,071	1,679291292	Confirmed
H _{2P1} & H _{2G1}	<i>PC → L</i>	-0,349	-0,403	0,066	0,065	0,5685136791	Not Confirmed
H _{6P1} & H _{6G1}	<i>L → ATA</i>	0,389	0,532	0,113	0,054	-1,253908195	Not Confirmed
H _{7P1} & H _{7G1}	<i>B → ATA</i>	0,27	0,288	0,078	0,06	-0,1863030528	Not Confirmed
H _{8P1} & H _{8G1}	<i>Irr → ATA</i>	-0,32	-0,162	0,102	0,067	-1,355013376	Not Confirmed
H _{9P1} & H _{9G1}	<i>ATA → PI</i>	0,633	0,061	0,061	0,032	9,002146966	Confirmed

Source: Own elaboration

Table 16 - Multi-Group Analysis (z results) for Ad 2

Hypotheses	Liaisons	Mean 1	Mean 2	STDEV 1	STDEV 2	z	Significant difference
H _{1P2} & H _{1G2}	<i>VR</i> → <i>Int</i>	0,41	0,313	0,081	0,074	0,8735917019	Not Confirmed
H _{2P2} & H _{2G2}	<i>PC</i> → <i>L</i>	-0,253	-0,301	0,09	0,067	0,4382399112	Not Confirmed
H _{6P2} & H _{6G2}	<i>L</i> → <i>ATA</i>	0,511	0,427	0,077	0,056	0,9074569375	Not Confirmed
H _{7P2} & H _{7G2}	<i>B</i> → <i>ATA</i>	0,324	0,352	0,074	0,054	-0,3141966796	Not Confirmed
H _{8P2} & H _{8G2}	<i>Irr</i> → <i>ATA</i>	-0,18	-0,24	0,056	0,06	0,7028379405	Not Confirmed
H _{9P2} & H _{9G2}	<i>ATA</i> → <i>PI</i>	0,657	0,693	0,058	0,04	-0,5303818487	Not Confirmed

Source: Own elaboration

As it can be observed in both tables, only two liaisons have a statistically significant difference between the two countries, which is the relationship between *VR* and *Int* (at a significance of 10%), and *ATA* and *PI* for ad number 1 (at a 5% significance).

The first liaison confirmed, *VR* over *Int*, indicates a significant difference between the countries, in this case the mean is higher for Portugal, which means that the relationship between visual recognition and interpretation is stronger for Portuguese respondents than for German respondents (0,435>0,255).

The relationship between having a positive attitude towards the ad and purchase intention has been confirmed in all the calculation made for all models presented and it is a liaison that is discussed in the literature review (Hornikx and Le Pair, 2017). The fact that this liaison has more statistic relevance in ad number 1 is also not surprising, given that this is the more complex ad, that would demand more resources to understand and consequently arouse more dichotomous reactions. Despite the fact that this relationship is confirmed in both countries, for Portugal the mean is significantly higher (0,633) than for Germany (0,061), which means that for Ad 1 the *ATA* has an expressively more intense influence over *PI* for Portuguese respondents.

4.6. Summary

The aim of this subchapter is to present and summarize the results obtained from all the procedures made. To maintain some organization, the results are going to be presented, subchapter by subchapter, and at the end a list of all the hypotheses is presented.

First it was assessed the validity and reliability of all scales, and despite some troubles with the individual context scale, all scales revealed to be appropriate for analysis.

In the next subchapter, it was created a model path for the total of results, with the aim of empirically testing the relationships between the variables at study. With this model, statistical evidence was found for the influence of *context* over *Int*, *context* over *PC*, *context* over *L*, *context* over *B*, *context* over *Irr* for Ad 1; *context* over *VR* for Ad 2, and *VR* over *Int*, *PC* over *L*, *L*, *B* and *Irr* over *ATA*, and *ATA* over *PI* for both ads. The liaisons validated for both ads were then submitted to a Multi-Group analysis, in which statistically relevant differences were only detected for the liaison *PC* over *L*, proving that perceived complexity has a significant more influence over liking in ad 1 than in ad 2, which is expected giving the differences in complexity of the two ads.

Subchapter 4.4 marked the beginning of the comparative analysis, which started with the validating of the statistically significant differences between the variable *context* for Portugal and Germany. Statistically significant differences were found, which confirmed the expected, that respondents from HC (Portugal) and LC (German) scored significantly different on the individual context measure. The confirmation that Portugal had indeed a higher mean, allowed the continuation of the comparison analyses between the two cultures.

Succeeding the context differences validation, tests of hypotheses were conducted to ascertain the statistical significance of the differences between the variables. There were found significant differences between the two countries for *VR1*, *Int1*, *L1*, *B1*, *Irr1*, *ATA1*, *PI1*, *VR2*, *Int2*, *ATA2* and *PI2*. These results reflect most of the expectations from the literature review, since more significant differences were found on Ad number 1, the more complex one, and these differences reflected the expected responses from a LC and HC culture.

Lastly, a path model was created to test the differences between the relationships of the variables in Portugal and Germany, the only two samples higher than 100. The exact same relationships proved statistically significant for the two countries, and consequently a Multi-Groups analysis was elaborated to ascertain the significance of the differences between them. Out of this analysis only the relationship between *ATA* and *PI* for ad 1 was found significantly different between the two, which translates that even though attitude towards the ad influences positively purchase intention for both countries, in Portugal the relationship is more intense.

5. Conclusion

The aim of the present dissertation is to understand how high-context and low-context communication influences advertisement perception. The findings on the literature review clarified that, communication and culture have a deep connection that is well reflected on Hall's (1959) quotation "Culture is Communication and Communication is Culture" (p.186). It became clear that studying intercultural communication is a relevant aspect for any organization that aims to be successful in the globalized world of today. One of the first authors to defend this principle was Edward Hall (1989), who classified cultures as high- and low-context based on their communication style and ascertained that they are very different, in particular, regarding their preference for indirect and direct communication, respectively. The review of previous studies on the matter also allowed the understanding that cultures classified as High- and Low-Context differ significantly on the manner they understand messages, especially if these messages contain certain degrees of complexity, like metaphors. The literature analysed on the theme of advertisement, introduced a world of communication between business and costumers and it made clear that when the aim is to persuade, the form of the communication is as or even more relevant than the content, and also that, nowadays, visual communication is the preferred choice for advertisements.

Although the context theory represents a great contribution for the field of intercultural communication and it has been very relevant in the research of cultural similarities and dissimilarities in advertisement, empirically it has received limited attention (Cardon, 2008; Kittler and Holtbrüge, 2011). The fact that its base is purely theoretical stimulates that most work follows the same path. The present study used a scale to measure individual context scores as a way to have an empirical perspective on Hall's theoretical classification.

The differences in the individual context score between Portugal and Germany, in this study representing a high-context and a low-context culture, respectively, proved to be significant, which implies that Hall's classification of these two cultures still is up to date, as expected. This factor also means that both cultures have different preferences regarding communication styles and that those differences are expected to display differences in advertisement perception.

Soft-sell appeals contain an indirect language, appealing to a creative and emotional side while hard-sell appeals are straightforward and fact based. It is then expected that Portugal as a high-context culture would prefer the soft-sell appeal and Germany, as a low-context culture, would show preference for the hard-sell appeal. The two cultures displayed indeed differences on the perception of the two advertisements at study, and even though the preference of the high-context culture towards the soft-sell appeal was confirmed, the preference of the low-context culture for the hard-sell appeal was not. It is also important to mention that the differences of perception were in general less significant for the hard-sell appeal. This factor confirms that context has a greater influence in more complex messages than in simpler ones and it may also indicate that, even though the ad chosen as hard-sell contains most of the characteristics of a hard-sell appeal typified by Ozaki, et al. (2010), given the low context of the Germans, to be of their preference the message needed perhaps to have an even 'harder' approach. These findings are very important because they demonstrate that advertisers need to be very clear when advertising to cultures such as Germany.

Nevertheless, the differences of perception for the soft-sell appeal proved significant, and demonstrated that this advertisement would be, based on the results, more successful in Portugal than in Germany, as Portuguese respondents liked it better than the Germans, and also revealed less irritation, more believability, more positive attitude towards it and a greater purchase intention. Still, a very relevant fact is that the differences on perceived complexity were not significant, which means German respondents did not find the advertisement significantly more complex than the Portuguese. That can be many reasons for why this happened, but given the nature of these dissertation, it is impossible not to mention the fact that their communication and perception differences may be so relevant that maybe Germans missed the meaning to an extent that also lead them to miss the degree of complexity, in other words, the advertisement may have been so complex to them that they weren't even aware of its complexity. As the scores on visual recognition and interpretation revealed also to be higher for Portugal, which means the Germans did indeed infer less meaning from the advertisement, this becomes a highly likely explanation. The meaning inferring differences are very important, they highlight that the Portuguese respondents not only pointed out more elements of the image when describing it, but also inferred more meaning from those elements, e.g. were able to find more implicatures. This was expected to happen and proves that when sharing a message with a low-context culture, if not direct, crucial meaning may be lost.

It is important to note that there's no way to rule out the influence of other cultural differences between Portugal and Germany to have had an influence of the disparities found. The countries are different and other variables may have interfered, but what this study does state is that the respondents of the two countries did indeed score differently on the individual context scale, these differences match with Hall's theoretical classification and that they had differences in perception, especially regarding the soft-sell ad.

The comparison of the path model also allowed to detected differences on the relationships between the variables and it was found that visual recognition and interpretation have a stronger influence on Portugal on the soft-sell advertisement, which means when Portuguese respondents pointed out more elements they also inferred more meaning from the image. Another finding was that attitude towards the ad influences purchase intention for the same advertisement significantly more for the Portuguese respondents than for the German respondents, which means that, even though an influence between attitude towards the ad and purchase intention is verified for both cultures, for the Portuguese this influence is more intense. This also constitutes an important prove that the soft-sell advertisement would be more successful in Portugal than in Germany.

The present work proves that Hall's context theory can still be an important tool to study how to adapt advertisement for different kinds of communication, it also demonstrates that it is possible to mediate the theoretical approach of the continuum using an individual context scale to assess the score of the respondents. However, it is relevant to highlight that the scale used for measuring individual context was only validated for 4 out of the 9 items that composed it originally (that can be found on the questionnaire of annex C). This limitation constitutes also an implication in the sense that it calls attention to the fact that using one scale to measure context in both HC and LC cultures may not be possible, the communication style of the two is so different that it is possible that an adaptation for two scales is needed. Another limitation is that, even though, in total 25 nationalities were collected, this fact became rather irrelevant because most of them were represented by only 1, 2 or 3 responses. It would be interesting for future work to commit to only two or three nationalities and focus on gathering more data from each one.

The lack of prove for the differences in perceived complexity also constitute an important implication in the sense that the results found were unexpected, and open the door to other opportunities of study that could be conducted to further detect the extent

to which low-context and high-context cultures perceived complexity differently, more advertisement with visual metaphors could be used to ascertain this more accurately.

The present work constitutes a contribution to the field, in the sense that it is the first known study to make these comparison between Portugal and Germany, it is still one of the few studies to have used the individual context scale, that definitely need to have further work to be more appropriate to measure dissimilar levels context. This dissertation has also made a comparison of perception by analysing eight variables, which is more than most studies that have focused mostly on perceived complexity and liking.

To sum it all, answering the question presented at the beginning, high and low communication influence perception in the sense that cultures that are classified as one or the other show different views of the advertisement. All three dimensions of perception (selection, organization and evaluation) proved to be dissimilar between the two cultures at study. High-context and Low-context respondents were asked to look to the same two advertisements and different outcomes arouse from their descriptions, interpretations and judgements of different kind. This constitutes a relevant factor for a world in which geographical boundaries have decreased but the differences between the cultures have not necessarily suffered the same closeness. To end with the lyrical manner in which it started, it is safe to say that an image paints a thousand meanings.

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Annexes

Annex A- Ad 1



SHOW OFF YOUR
SMILE BESTIE

NEW Colgate®
OPTIC WHITE®
PLATINUM.
EXPRESS WHITE
WHITER TEETH IN
3 DAYS

NEW Colgate®
OPTIC WHITE®
PLATINUM.
EXPRESS WHITE
WHITER TEETH IN
3 DAYS

ANDREA BROOKS & BLAIR FOWLER YouTube Beauty Stylists

NEW Colgate® Optic White® Express White
WHITER TEETH IN 3 DAYS*
JUST BY BRUSHING

Check out Andrea & Blair's beauty and style tips
YouTube [Youtube.com/colgateopticwhite](https://www.youtube.com/colgateopticwhite)

Colgate®

*For best results, use as directed for 4 weeks.

© 2015 Colgate-Palmolive Company

Annex C – Questionnaire (Original version-English)

Advertisement Perception and Cultural Context

This questionnaire was developed as part of a master's thesis. Each answer would be a great help on the work being developed. Hence, it is with great expectation that I ask your help in the form of an answer. Thank you!

Personal information

Nationality: _____

Age: _____

Gender

Male Female

Educational Level

Below High School High School University

Individual Context Score Scale

Questions 1–9 ask how much you agree or disagree with each statement. From a scale of 1 to 5, write the number that better describes your opinion in front of each statement. There are no right or wrong answers, the aim is to obtain your honest opinion.

Scale: 1 Completely Disagree to 5 Completely agree

1. Speakers should not expect that listeners will figure out what they really mean unless the intended message is stated precisely _____
2. It is more important to state a message efficiently than with great detail _____
3. Even if not stated exactly, a speaker's intent will rarely be misunderstood _____
4. Intentions not explicitly stated can often be inferred from the context _____
5. A speaker can assume that listeners will know what they really mean _____
6. People understand many things that are left unsaid _____
7. Fewer words can often lead to better understanding _____
8. You can often convey more information with fewer words _____
9. Some ideas are better understood when left unsaid _____

Advertisements

The next section intends to ascertain the way you perceive the next two advertisements. Again there are no wrong or right answers, all opinions are valid.

Image 1



Visual Recognition and Interpretation

What did you see in the image?

What do you think is its meaning?

The next section will include scale answers. Please draw a circle around the number that best describes your opinion.

Complexity

The message of the advertisement is:

Easy to understand 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Hard to understand

Simple 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Complex

Liking

The advertisement is:

Badly chosen 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Well chosen

Unattractive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Attractive

From 1 to 7, how much do you like the advertisement?

I don't like it at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I like it a lot

Believability

Do you consider this advertisement:

Convincing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unconvincing

Credible 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not credible

Acceptable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unacceptable

Truthful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Untruthful

Believable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unbelievable

Irritation

Do you consider this advertisement:

Annoying 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unannoying

Irritating 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unirritating

Image 2



Visual Recognition and Interpretation

What did you see in the image?

What do you think is its meaning?

The next section will include scale answers. Please draw a circle around the number that best describes your opinion.

Complexity

The message of the advertisement is:

Easy to understand 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Hard to understand

Simple 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Complex

Liking

The advertisement is:

Badly chosen 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Well chosen

Unattractive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Attractive

From 1 to 7, how much do you like the advertisement?

I don't like it at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I like it a lot

Believability

Do you consider this advertisement:

Convincing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unconvincing

Credible 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not credible

Acceptable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unacceptable

Truthful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Untruthful

Believable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unbelievable

Irritation

Do you consider this advertisement:

Annoying 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unannoying

Irritating 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unirritating

Disturbing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Undisturbing

Attitude toward the Ad

Do you consider this advertisement:

Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bad

Pleasant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unpleasant

Favourable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unfavourable

Positive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Negative

Would you like to try the product?

Yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No

Could you imagine yourself buying this product?

Yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No

Could you imagine this brand to be one of your most likely choices when you next buy this product?

Yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No