Advertising in high- and low context cultures;

A comparative content analysis between Sweden and Brazil.

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Abstract

In today's increasingly globalised world, research within cultural differences is called for to be able to categorize nations and aid cross border communications around the world. This thesis is a quantitative study of differences in advertising communication between what is considered high and low context cultures, through a deeper look into Sweden and Brazil. Trade agreements between these two nations are well-established and highly profitable, but differences in cultural bases are vast, potentially leading to misunderstandings and wrongful communications conduct if not taken in consideration. Studies within cultural differences classify Sweden as a low context individualistic nation and Brazil as a high context collectivistic nation, but these classifications were made many years ago and research within cultural imperialism, globalisation and transnational consumerism state that the world is changing and that further research within the specific communities is needed today. With this problem in mind we have in this study chosen to ask the question of what the differences in advertising context are between Sweden and Brazil and if the theories actually match reality as it is today? The purpose of this question is to further the frame of reference within the theories and to aid in cross border communications. This in order to understand the connection and if needed re-categorize the nations within the spectrum. The study was made through a comparative content analysis of television advertising in both countries, determining differences in context attribute frequency. The results and conclusions of the study show that theories of high and low context classifications do not match reality between these two nations, and that globalism has in fact had an effect on advertising communications.

Keywords: high context culture, low context culture, globalisation, Swedish national culture, Brazilian national culture, individualism, collectivism.
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______________________________  ______________________________ 
Maria Behrns      Anette Karphammar
# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION
- BACKGROUND 7
- PROBLEM 7
- RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES 9
- PURPOSE 9

## FRAME OF REFERENCE
- COMMUNICATION 10
- ADVERTISING AS COMMUNICATION 10
- NATIONAL CULTURE 10
- DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE 11
  - HALL’S CONTEXT THEORY 11
  - INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM 13
- SWEDEN & BRAZIL 14
  - BRAZIL 14
  - SWEDEN 16
- DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COUNTRIES 17

## CULTURE AND ADVERTISING
- GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL IMPERIALISM 17
- ADVERTISING IN TELEVISION 18
- CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH AND LOW CONTEXT ADVERTISEMENTS 19

## METHODOLOGY
- SCIENTIFIC APPROACH 20
  - WHAT IS CONTENT ANALYSIS? 21
  - WHY CONTENT ANALYSIS? 21
- LITERARY REVIEW 22
- EMPIRICAL STUDY 22
- COLLECTION OF DATA 22
- TIME FRAME 22
- SAMPLING PROCESS 22
- SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION 23
- CODING 23
- DATA ANALYSIS 24

## CREDIBILITY
- VALIDITY 25
- RELIABILITY 25

## RESULTS
- RESEARCH QUESTION 25
- HYPOTHESIS 1 26
- HYPOTHESIS 2 27
- HYPOTHESIS 3 AND 4 28

## SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION 29

## ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

## RESULT SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS 30
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPLANATION OF RESULTS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINANCIAL INFLUENCES</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION PROCESS</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOBALISATION</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTACHMENTS</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

FIGURES

FIGURE 1 – HALL CONTEXT THEORY 12

TABLES

TABLE 1 – LOW CONTEXT MESSAGES 26
TABLE 2 – PRODUCT MESSAGES 27
TABLE 3 – HIGH CONTEXT MESSAGES 27
TABLE 4 – HIGH CONTEXT - OTHER 28
TABLE 5 – MESSAGE DIRECTION 28
TABLE 6 – PRODUCT CATEGORY 29
TABLE 7 – NATIONALITY 29
TABLE 8 – AD LENGTH 30

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1 – DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY 43
ATTACHMENT 2 – CODING SHEET TEMPLATE 44
Introduction

Background
As the world grows smaller and interactions across borders increase there is a growing need for intercultural research. Advances in technology are enabling people from different parts of the world to interact more easily and have enabled ordinary individuals to organize themselves towards common interest, goals and cause. The global population continues to grow and fewer and fewer people live in only one city, region or country throughout their lives. As people's most significant values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours is all influenced by culture it is important to understand differences to be able to conduct business and everyday life tasks (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, Korac-Kakabadse & Savery, 2001; Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013). It is today no longer just a polite gesture to have cross-cultural awareness but imperative for success. Failure to adapt into new cultures or negligence to learn other ways can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretation, confusion and embarrassment. This in turn can have serious consequences such as lost confidence, lost customers, lost business and lost opportunities (Prince & Hoppe, 2000). Advertising is considered being a window to culture since it is based on language and communication tools that are deeply rooted in cultural values (Schutte & Ciarlante 1998) and advertising messages tend to be reflective of culture in its idealized form (Pollay, 1983; Hsu, 2002).

However, this mentioned increased globalization that creates the need of further studies also influences the initial cultural differences. Some scholars hypothesize that globalization can result in loss of cultural diversity through an increasing cultural homogeneity and “westernization” through exportation of western commodities, values, priorities and ways of life, mainly originating in the U.S. (Barker & Jane, 2016). Cultural imperialism is stated to have been specifically strong in developing countries using mass media and advertising as a tool for cultural dominance. Sandro Maciel da Silva states that the U.S clearly have had a power influence of Brazilian advertising development, even though no actual proof of cultural imperialism was found (Maciel da Silva, 2006) and Michael Griffin states in his essay from 2000 that current studies of international communication are not adequate as they do not take the complications of globalization, cultural imperialism and transnational marketing in account and that “...we need to find out more about what is happening in the specific communities as global commercial culture becomes an increasingly prominent part of social life” (p. 17).

Globalization of marketing includes widespread multinational marketing strategies that strive towards standardisation and homogenization of the market through similarity, integration, concentration, synchronization and dependence (Svensson, 2002).

Comparing nations culturally have been common practise for a long time. Most studies present dimensions on an ongoing scale to be able to classify what is considered hard to classify. The purpose of these comparisons is partly to help in cross-cultural communication for businesses and private life, by getting an understanding of differences and similarities between countries. This study is using specifically Edward T Hall's concept of high and low context communication to classify cultural differences. One of the tools used for examining cultural differences is Geert Hofstede's dimension of individualism and collectivism, due to the fact that this dimension is connected to the main theory of high- and low context and is regarded to be particularly reflective in communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). Many studies have already been made comparing high and low context cultures, since first introduced in 1976 (Hall, 1976), however these studies generally occur between the United States of America and an East Asian
counterpart such as Korea, China or Japan (Kim, 2012; Bai, 2016; Hsu, 2002; Kaynek, Kara & Chow, 2013). Relatively few studies have been made including Sweden or Brazil and almost none exists between the two countries exclusively.

During the last 20 years trade between northern Europe and South America has increased and Sweden is today one of the ten biggest investors in the Brazilian industry. Swedish, or Swedish-related companies have a turnover of 130 billion SEK per year and have 60 thousand employees present in the country. Brazil is the most important trade partner in South America for Sweden and Swedish industry companies are today well-established within the Brazilian market (Swedish Embassy in Brazil, 2017; Bjurshagen, Rauofi & Lindevall, 2010). These strong trade relations call for further research in cultural differences in order to help ease cross-cultural transitions. As will be shown in the review of national culture in this study’s frame of reference the two countries are vastly different in many ways including of course size and climate but also culture, communication and conduct. Swedish culture generally falls within E.T. Hall’s definition of low context, while Brazil is considered as one of the high context countries (Lustig & Koester, 1998). These cultural differences create barriers for expanding companies, investors and international communication over the borders. In an attempt to ease these barriers this study investigates cultural differences in contextual communication focusing on television advertising.

Problem

The high context communication described in the review of Brazilian culture is very different from that described within the review of Swedish culture. If business relations between the two countries are to be conducted this need to be taken into consideration to avoid mistakes. The question looked at in this study is if these values also are reflective in advertising culture and conduct. By researching content in advertising in both countries a determination will be able to be made whether or not the written theorized culture is mirrored in actual advertisements in the 21st century.

The literature review in this study shows that Sweden in theory is a low context culture dominated by individualistic messages and that Brazil is a high context culture with a predominance of collectivistic communication. Since advertising is considered to be reflective by culture (Pollay, 1983; Hsu, 2002) these theories should be congruent in reality as well and this research would theoretically show a higher frequency of high context messages in Brazil and lower in Sweden. However, due to increased globalisation and the threat of cultural imperialism this might not be the case. As consumers generally respond better to advertising messages that are consistent to their own values and reflective of the home culture (Zhang & Gelb, 1996; Zhang & Neelankavli, 1996) this is an important area of research. This study will investigate if theories are reflected in reality through the medium of television advertising. Television reaches more people in developing nations than any other type of information or communications tool. It is regarded to be playing a critical role in expressing national identity, fostering local content as well as providing news and information (Baker & Jane, 2016). Advertising on television was chosen for this study because it is such a broad medium, reflective of home culture and excludes the influences of specific target groups more than other media (Kotler, Armstrong, Harris & Piercy, 2013; Baker & Jane, 2016). If online marketing, such as pop-ups, video clips or banners, instead would have been chosen these would have been tailored made to fit personal preferences through cookies and targeted advertising.
Research question and hypotheses

Many previous studies have been made comparing nations culturally through advertising within Hall’s high and low context theory (Bai, 2016; Hsu, 2002; Kim, 2012). However, most of these studies have been made between the United states of America and a counterpart from the east Asian countries (Kim, 2012; Bai, 2016; Hsu, 2002; Kaynek, Kara & Chow, 2013). Also, most content analysis in general have been made in the context of USA or comparing USA cross-culturally with other countries (Srivastava, et al, 2017). They are very few cross-cultural studies made researching high and low context attributes and none between Sweden and Brazil specifically. A gap has therefore been identified in this area and cross-cultural research made for high and low context attributes between Sweden and Brazil.

To be able to categorize the two nations within the theory and decide whether the theories indeed are reflected in reality, cultural differences have been examined in this study and the question; “What are the differences in advertising context in television commercials between Sweden and Brazil? Are there statistically significant differences?” have been asked. To be able to do this the study need to answer; What is the relative usage of high- and low context messages in Brazilian versus Swedish television advertisements? The classifications of Hofstede’s dimensions (1980) are used as a tool to categorize nations but these studies were made over 35 years ago, in organizations rather than private life and mainly through male employees at these organizations (Lustig & Koester, 1998). Similarly, Hall’s context theory was founded in 1967 - over 50 years ago! Due to increased globalization and proposed threats of cultural imperialism it is therefore relevant to ask the question; Does the theories match the reality? Does Brazilian television advertisements really contain more high context messages than Swedish? And does Swedish television advertisements contain more low context messages than Brazilian? Further, the study will include an investigation of the specific category of individualism and collectivism in message direction, as it has been identified as an important characteristic of high or low context communication (Liang, Runyan & Fu, 2011; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997), and ask the question; What is the message distribution of individualism and collectivism between these two countries?

In accordance with the theories and based on the research questions four hypothesis have been decided upon;

\[ H1: \text{ Swedish television advertisement will contain low context messages more frequently than high context messages.} \]
\[ H2: \text{ Brazilian television advertisement will contain high context messages more frequently than low context messages } \]
\[ H3: \text{ Swedish television advertisement will contain more individualistic messages than Brazilian advertisements.} \]
\[ H4: \text{ Brazilian television advertisement will contain more collectivistic messages than Swedish advertisements.} \]

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to further the frame of reference within E. T Hall’s high- and low context theory. The intention of this study is to show if the theories match reality or if globalization has had an impact on culture congruence, and if the theories therefore might be in need of updating. The purpose also includes comparing the two countries in regards to advertising messages in order to assist in the business to consumer communication process for expanding businesses or investors across the borders as well as scientifically for future research.
The study will also test if Swedish advertisement communication use a more individualistic approach than Brazilian advertisement and if Brazilian advertisement communication take use of a more collectivistic approach than Swedish advertisement communication. This in order to understand the connection between the theories and if needed re-categorize the countries within the spectrum.

Frame of reference

Communication

Communication is a process that takes place between people, with some kind of content that makes it common (Jansson, 2009). Communication can be deconstructed into 8 basic components of activity that is conducted by two counterparts; source, encoding, message, channel, receiver, decoding, feedback and noise. The source is the person who has an idea, feeling or experience to send. This person encodes his thought by using specific words, expressions and symbols as an internal activity into a message either written, pictorial or verbal as an external activity through channels such as text, video, audio messages or directly face-to-face. The receiver then receives the message either as the intended counterpart or unintentionally by accidental factors. A decoding process takes place internally within the receiver who uses his own personality and experiences to convert the external stimuli into meaningful interpretations. This process usually generates a response as a form of feedback either direct, indirect or even in the form of silence or absence. This whole process is constantly interrupted by noise from the multitude of competing stimuli such as other messages and interruptions (Samovar et al, 2013). Communication can just as well happen non-verbally as verbally. When communicating with a counterpart much of what is meant is relayed with images, symbols, body language and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, hand gestures, eye contact, tone of voice, proximity or even silence. What these cues means to the receiver depends on cultural background and can be interpreted very differently (Prince & Hoppe, 2000).

Advertising as communication

Advertising is a form of communication with deliberate and consciously articulated messages. A great deal of thought, research, planning and money goes into advertising communication. There is however, as in all types of communication, parts of “unconsciousness” to the creative process of advertisements, where the creator (or sender) of the message takes parts of the communication process for grated, assuming that the audience (or receiver) will understand the intended message, due to shared culture and frame of reference. The advertiser creates a message with help from language, images, ideas and values drawn from culture and then feed this message back into the system, in turn influencing its source (Dyer, 1982).

National culture

In the last 30 years studies has been conducted all over the world in attempt to explain and categorize cultures. Although widely researched, culture is explained to be a complex construct with many facets and difficult to capture in a few dimensions (Zhang & Neelankavli, 1995; Steenkamp, 2001). A dominant culture exists in every society but is not always exclusive. Many smaller co-cultures and specialized cultures can exist within the same national borders (Samovar et al., 2013). Therefore, national culture is also not always excluded to the country
which in it resides. National borders do not always coincide with those of the culturally homogenous society and country and culture are not always the same. There are however enough aspects of within-country commonality that makes it worth studying on a national level (Steenkamp, 2001). Within nations there are strong forces present that affect national culture for long periods of time such as language, national defence, political systems, national sports with strong emotional and symbolic connections, as well as national markets for trade (Hofstede, 2011).

It is said that culture is a socially constructed concept with a shared view of certain characteristics such as patterns, values, symbols, meanings, beliefs, assumptions, attitudes and expectations (Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2001; McDaniel, 2000). Being fostered by a specific culture have an impact on the inhabitants understanding, perception and recall of information, (Kim 2012, Kaynak & Mitchell 1981) since data is collected, organized and communicated within a context of that culture (Machlup & Mansfield, 1983). Ihator (2001) states that understanding of cultural patterns can be had through a collection of pragmatic theories from disciplines such as anthropology, ethnography, folklore, sociology and social psychology, and is useful as a frame of reference in interacting with various societies. Cultural identity is a form of group identity, where people from the same region or nationality share similar values and beliefs (Hofstede, 2011).

Geert Hofstede formed an extensive framework of cultural studies in the early 90s, describing culture as a “software of the mind”, that is programed in to the inhabitants, based on a pattern of thoughts, feelings and possible ways of acting in different situations. These patterns are learned throughout life from early childhood and derives from various social environments and previous experiences. In his research Hofstede presented variation of culture through four dimensions; individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Edward T Hall (1976) stated that culture affect every person on every level. How a person speaks, moves, walk and think is all a result of the culture. According to Hall, it is not possible to avoid being impacted by the culture one is a part of and it is not just the people who are affected, the entire society is a product of the national culture. The assumption is that members of a specific culture, subculture or marketing segment all behave in a uniform and predictable way (Markin, 1974). Hall identified two opposites in cultural variations connected to context; high context or low context societies (Hall, 1967).

Dimensions of culture

Many scholars have tried to categorize culture in order to better understand its implications on people’s attitudes and behaviour. But when it comes to cross-cultural advertising research it has been found that those theories that study cultural dimensions are specifically useful and that Hofstede’s individualism/collectivism and Hall’s high-context/low-context are most frequently used (Hsu, 2002).

Hall’s context theory

The American anthropologist Edward T Hall founded the concept of high and low context communication as a way to explain the relationship between culture and communication. He organized cultures on a continuum by the amount of information that is provided by the setting or context of communication itself, regardless of the specific words that are spoken (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). The meaning of the indented message is transmitted through information in low context cultures and trough context in high context cultures. According to Hall it is very
important to take the differences between high and low context cultures in consideration while communicating across borders and not to do so could give serious consequences (Hall, 1967).

High context cultures
High context cultures are predominantly situated within the East Asian, African American and Latino communities (Lustig & Koester, 1998). In high context cultures, it is important to be well informed, loyalty is always of great weight, and isn’t taken lightly. According to Hall, if a relationship has been established the bound is not to be questioned and he even states in his book “Beyond Culture” that in a high context culture a person needs to belong to a group or community to have an identity at all (Hall, 1967). It is easy to determine who is part of the group in a high context community, since so much of the meanings are transmitted through shared meanings, rules and rituals. The commitment and responsibility between people are usually very strong. Orientation to time is specific and in high context cultures time is perceived as more open, flexible and less structured (Lustig & Koester, 1998).

Communication in high context cultures
According to Hall, high context cultures prefer to use high context messages in their communication (Hall, 1967). High context communication is ambiguous and indirect (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Samovar et al, 2013). Most of the meaning in this type of communication is provided through the individual's presumed internal beliefs, values and norms or implied by the physical setting and not delivered through the exact words and explicit transmitted part of the message (Hall, 1967; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Lustig & Koester, 1998). High context communication is connotative, meaning that most of the information is not expressed directly through words (Bai, 2016). Instead most of the communication happens through facial expressions, actions, body language and a general assumption that the person you are talking to understands what you say by reading between the lines. A reason for this is a similitude among the population in these types of cultures. Often, it is not what is said that is
important, but *how* it is said. Sometimes the meaning and content is even said in silence. The actual information is not essential to make a point or to deliver a message (Samovar et al., 2007). A person in a high context culture who is informing another person usually does not think that specification is necessary. The person who is receiving the information is expected to understand, read between the lines (Hall, 1967) and the responsibility of understanding the message lies on the receiver. Telling the truth and being open with personal information is not common in high context communication. Instead group-based information is more common (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997).

**Low context cultures**

Low context cultures include Germany, Swedish, European American and English communities (Lustig & Koester, 1998). Within these communities people tend to be more independent and individualistic (Gudykunst & Kim, 1998) and the bond between people is often more fragile. Long-term relationships between people and social groups are less frequent and their involvement in each other’s lives are less. Time is regarded as structured and highly organized (Lustig & Koester, 1998). There is typically large population diversity in low context cultures which leads to a lack of common sets of shared meanings, rules and rituals (Samovar et al., 2013).

**Communication in low context cultures**

Low context cultures use low context messages in their communication (Hall, 1967) and opposite to high context cultures these are instead unambiguous and direct (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). Low context communication is denotative (Bai, 2016) meaning that the sender expresses the explicit and direct meaning of the intended idea (Dictionary.com) and that what is communicated is what is intended to be received. This type of communication uses detailed background information where the message contains most of the information provided. Very little is expected to be coded by the sender or interpreted by the receiver (Samovar et al., 2013). Hall describes it as; “*the mass of information is vested in the explicit code***” (Hall, 1967, p. 70). Because of this the responsibility of the understanding of the message is shifted to the sender instead of the receiver. The sender is expected to tell the truth, be relevant, be open with others, deliver precise messages, use direct communication, behave well and not give more or less information than necessary (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). In low context communities “yes” means “yes”, “no” means “no” and “now” generally means “within the next couple of minutes”. High-context cultures communicate differently where “yes” could just as well mean “maybe” or “no” and “now” could mean “later” or “not at all” (Alexander, 2008). As such communication in high-context cultures are based on background, rituals and traditions while communication in low-context cultures are more straightforward (Smyth, 2015).

**Individualism and collectivism**

Geert Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist that in 1980 and 1983 presented a large-scale study on international corporations studying international cultural variability. He divided these up into six dimensions; *individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation and indulgence*. This study will take use of Hofstede’s individualism vs. collectivism scale since a strong connection have been found between this classification and Hall’s context theory. Cultures that are rated as individualistic are often also low context, and cultures that are collectivistic are often also high context cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). Individualism vs. collectivism is the most commonly used dimension in cultural research and provides a powerful explanatory framework for understanding cultural differences connected to communication (Smyth, 2015; Gudykunst &
Findings have shown that high context advertisements appear more often in collectivistic cultures and that low context advertisements appear more often in individualistic cultures, as well as that contextualized advertisements are better received in collectivistic cultures than individualistic cultures (Liang, et al., 2011).

Individualism characterizes societies by weak connections and ties between individuals. Within an individualistic culture inhabitants are expected to look after only themselves and their closest family members. Collectivism is quite the opposite, with strong bonds between individuals. In societies that are more collectivistic people are born into groups and are integrated from the start. This gives them a strong cohesion which gives a sense of protection in exchange of unconditional loyalty. Inhabitants in collectivistic cultures learn to put the we in front of me, meaning that they are more likely to prioritise the best for the group they belong to instead of what might be best for a single individual. Family groups tend to consist of more than just mother, father and children, but also often include grandparents, cousins and further relatives. The family become the children's first group as a part of the collective and network. Within individualistic cultures people instead tend to put the me in front of the we, and prioritize what is best for the individual instead of the group. Independence is encouraged and individual achievements rewarded. Children that grow up within individualistic conditions soon learn to think in an I-perspective (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2012). Education and independency is also more important within individualistic cultures. In countries that are more collectivistic the primary and most reliable source of information is people that are known through social networks, while people in individualistic countries instead tend to use media as their primary source (Samovar et al 2013).

**Sweden & Brazil**

Prince and Hoppe (2000) states in their book “communicating across cultures” that the first thing someone has to do when participating in cross-cultural interactions is to examine their own. Only after knowing one’s own culture can studies in the new environment take place, followed by identifying cultural differences and avoiding mistakes. To be able to assist trade between Sweden and Brazil this study therefore examines both cultures and can be used in either direction.

**Brazil**

Brazil is not like any other country. It is one of the world’s most important countries when it comes to size, natural resources, economy and culture (Retsö, 2011). Brazil is the fifth biggest country in the world, both size and population considered with 207 million inhabitants today (World Bank, 2017). It borders to all of South America's other countries except Ecuador and Chile and inhabits a third of South America's total population. Brazil is divided into several geographic regions which are states. Most of the population are living in the cities and along the cost, with the countryside-population of the north and center-west regions only making up 13 percent of the inhabitants (Meade, 2003; Meyer, 2010). Brazil is a growing market with a steady developing economy and the country is today one of the most attractive economies to invest in. (Bjurshagen et al, 2010) Gross national product per capita for Brazil in 2016, based on power purchasing parity was $14,180 (World Bank, 2018).

**Culture and history**

Brazil is very diverse with cultural influences from all over the world. Most of the population has descendants from the colonial era of 1700’s when Brazil was first colonized by Portugal
(Meyer, 2010) and have ancestors from countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany as well as Africa and native indigenous. Most commonly the inhabitants state that their religion is Roman Catholic but African culture have had a strong influence on religion, music, dance, literature, food and customs. Brazilian culture is also influenced by the rough past from colonization, independence fighting and military dictatorship to the democracy it is today. Popular culture today is strongly influenced by samba and Carnaval, futebol or soccer and telenovelas on TV (Meade, 2003; Meyer, 2010). There are big differences between rich and poor in Brazil (Samovar et al, 2013) and the Brazilian society is strongly influenced by the relatively high corruption which limits the possibility of economic and national development (Lundvall, 2017). Advertising in Brazil started with American companies wanting to expand in the early 1920’s. Since then they have been a dominant force and had an impact on both culture and advertising conduct (Da Silva, 2006).

People
The Brazilian people are considered to be warm, open, friendly, emotionally sensitive and generous people that are receptive towards foreigners (Samovar et al, 2013). They are also a flexible people that do not easily give up. It is crucial to have a good network of relationships with local people in Brazil (Mello, 2012), and Brazilians have great respect for hierarchy, status in society and life experience (IOR world, 2017). It is important to show respect towards the elderly and status symbols of power are very influential in order to show social positions (Hofstede Insights, 2017). Business knowledge and personal contacts are crucial for success on the Brazilian marketplace (Bjurshagen et al, 2010). According to commiceo-global.com (2017) it is not unusual for Brazilians to be late to different types of social events. It is accepted to be half an hour late to a dinner and about an hour late to parties. Brazilians have a great need for rules and structure in their life. However, the individual’s need to follow these rules are weak (Hofstede Insights, 2017). Typical behaviour in the country can crudely be stereotyped by the expression jeitinho brasileiro which means “the Brazilian way of doing things”. This is a type of formalism defined as a process for someone to reach something in spite of contrary determinations such as laws, orders, rules, etc. This means that regardless of the rules in place, there is always a way to go around it. This formalism has influenced people, institutions, companies, policies and even legislation. Due to the heavy bureaucracy, it is considered hard to live in Brazil without bending the rules and honesty have become a synonym to naivety. Many international businesses fail due to not being familiar with the jeitinho brasileiro unless they are willing to adapt themselves, become personal friends with their counterparts and base their relationships on favours (Mello, 2012).

Communication theory
Within Hofstede’s dimension of individualism vs. collectivism Brazil is considered a collectivistic country that value family bonds highly and strongly (Commisceo Global, 2017; IOR world, 2017; Hofstede Insights, 2017; Samovar et al, 2013). Family extends beyond the immediate family and has been the primary institution in the formation of Brazilian society. Loyalty to family is considered to be the most important value along with community, collectivism, procreation and hierarchical society (Samovar et al, 2013). A big part of communication in Brazil consists of gestures and physical touch. Personal space is not important and it is not uncommon for people to stand very close to each other while conversing (IOR world, 2017). The communication in Brazil is rich in context, with elaborate writing and profuse speaking. Brazilians are a passionate people that show their emotions clearly with speech and body language (Hofstede Insights, 2017).
Sweden

Sweden is a Scandinavian country situated in northern Europe and is one of the world's northernmost countries. 86 percent of the Swedish people live in cities and the population has boomed during the last 100 years to the double. In comparison to Brazil’s 200 million people it is a small country with a population that reaches just under 10 million inhabitants. Sweden is an old country, that has been an independent state since 1523 and has experienced long periods of peace, as the nation has not been to war since 1814 (Sweden.se). The standard of living in Sweden is high and it has transformed from one of Europe's poorest nations to one of the richest in the world in just over 100 years. It is a socialist capitalist country that have many well-known multinational companies (Phillips-Martinsson, 1992). In 2016 the gross national income per capita in Sweden was rated at $50,000.00. (World Bank 2018; Trading Economics, 2018).

Culture and history

Other nations of the world as it is constituted today have previously been included within the Swedish empire of 15th century, such as Germany, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Estonia and Finland (Svensson, 2006). This empirical era has influenced Swedish culture strongly by early on creating the need of national structure and giving emphasis to trade opportunities. It was during this time the demand for rules, regulations and professionalism was created (Larsdotter, 2006). Norse mythology has influenced Swedish culture and many of the old stories from the Viking age are today being read and reflected in popular culture. The country became Christian in the middle of 12th century, which also has had a strong influence over people's lives. However, many tales from the old beliefs of trolls, fairies and beings of the woods stayed in stories and traditions after the introduction of Christianity (Svensson, 2006). Swedish traditions include celebrations such as midsummer, Lucia and crayfish parties and are often influenced by the changing of the seasons or linked to the farming year. Many of the traditions are so old that they have lost their origin while new contributions keep influencing people, trends and modes of expressions from all over the world. Today a balance between the old and the new have been established (Tidholm & Lilja, 2014).

People

Swedes generally have an equal view of people. They don't have problems taking orders but are expecting an open dialogue and the possibility to question their origin (Lander & Thörnwall, 2013). Equality is a central question in Sweden and everyone is considered to have the same rights and obligations. No matter who you are, everyone has the right to an opinion and express it regardless of gender, social status or ethnicity. (IOR, 2017) Formalities are seldom used and the society is considered to be classless, where public manifestations of wealth are frowned upon. Swedes can be perceived as being shy, reserved, drawn back, stiff and uninterested in talking to others. Silence is a common trait and is not perceived uncomfortable, since it on the contrary is considered to be demonstrative of respect, empathy and intuition. Swedes in this sense would rather listen than speak (Daun, 1998; Phillips-Martinsson, 1992).

In Sweden cooperation and conflict resolution are important (Lander & Thörnwall, 2013). Swedish norms are based on conformity. The typical Swede wants to do everything just right, or “lagom”, which means “just enough” or “with moderation” (Berlin, 2000; Hofstede Insights, 2017). Most studies describing Swedish culture stress the point of conflict avoidance (Daun, 1998; Berlin, 2000; Phillips-Martinsson, 1992). Swedish people don't like to talk about things that are emotionally charged, they are not aggressive people and reject displays of violence. Swedes regard themselves as honest, but are sometimes instead perceived as naive by others, as they are overly principle bound with an inability to see things as they truly are. They dislike
bribes, flattery or exaggeration and think of it as lies or falseness. Just as themselves Swedes expect people to tell the truth at all times. Swedes does not use a lot of body language and such communication is often lost on them. They dislike swearing and racism is not accepted (Daun, 1998). Swedish people always pay their part as they dislike being in debt to others. They often believe that something given for free might be perceived as an obligation at a later time (Berlin, 2000). Independence is an important issue and many Swedes has a great need for being left alone, where private life is sacred. Normally Swedes are not dependent on their neighbours, family or friends. (Daun, 1998)

Communication theory
Within Hofstede’s dimensions Sweden falls into the individualistic category as a culture that generally emphasize; independence, achievement, freedom, high levels of competition and pleasure. Communication is polite and straightforward, however confrontation is best to be avoided. To express feelings in public, both positive and negative, are seen as immature (Daun, 1998). The verbal communication of Swedish messages is often low context with a straightforward message describing the meaning of the message clearly. The words that are said is what is intended to be delivered. On the other hand, the body language might not always follow the message communicated. Not because of frequent overreacting or big gestures but quite the opposite. A common expression in daily life is “nu är jag jätte arg”, meaning “now I am very angry” which a lot of times are not followed by storming out of the room, angry expressions or banging the fist into the table, but will most likely be delivered in a calm and collected manner and an expressionless face (Alexander, 2008).

Differences between countries
Differences between Swedish and Brazilian cultures are vast (Bjurshagen et al, 2010) and in many ways they are each other's opposites. As mentioned, these differences can have severe consequences in business situations if not taken in consideration. Within Brazilian culture it is socially expected to talk loudly and expressively with grand gestures (Hofstede Insights, 2017), where in Swedish culture it is considered pretentious, boastful and rude to talk to loud (Daun, 1998) and silence is instead seen as more comfortable (Phillips-Martinsson, 1995). Brazilians are highly emotional and open with their feelings where Swedes instead prefer to avoid conflict and public demonstrations of emotions are generally frowned upon. Honesty is a virtue within the Swedish culture where people dislike lying and are careful not to exaggerate (Daun, 1998). In contrast to this Brazilian culture promotes bending the rules and relate honesty with naivety (Mello, 2012). Collectivism and family values are promoted within Brazilian culture, where in contrast Swedes emphasize individualism and independence. The differences also include economic factors. GNI per capita in Brazil was 2016 calculated to $18,140, while in Sweden is was set at $50,000. (World Bank, 2018; Trading Economics 2018) This concludes a major difference in purchasing power between the everyday citizens in each country.

Culture and Advertising
Advertising is considered being a window to culture since it is based on language and communication tools that are deeply rooted in cultural values (Schutte & Ciarlante,1998; Bai, 2016). In advertising research, cultural values are considered to be an important variable for communication variation and advertising as such is considered to be a particularly persuasive proponent of conveying these values. An advertising message tend to be reflective of culture in an idealized form (Pollay, 1983; Hsu, 2002) and in turn, is an important part of and significant component in forming that very culture (Bai, 2016). Advertising influence some of the general
values and beliefs of society, as well as affects other forms of communication such as literature, art and language (Dyer, 1982).

Studies has shown that consumers generally respond better to advertising messages that are consistent to their own values and reflective of the home culture (Zhang & Gelb, 1996; Zhang & Neelankavli, 1996). According to Zhang & Neelankavli (1995) it is necessary for successful advertising communication to understand cultural differences, since consumers become accustomed to the home country's value systems, beliefs and perception and reflect this subjective knowledge into their own choices. Consumers act in a way that is congruent to their cultural values and norms. Their study shows that culturally-congruent appeals in advertising is more effective than non-congruent. In international advertising one message may be interpreted and received totally different dependent on the cultural nationality of the receiver (Bai, 2016), since consumers from different cultural backgrounds perceive and recall messages differently (Kaynak & Mitchell, 1981). It is therefore imperative to understand how each message is decoded by the inhabitants, and how it impact and relates to people's lives (Bai, 2016).

Globalization and cultural imperialism

Global economy, immigration, ease of foreign travel and online communication are some factors of increased globalization in the world. This leads to mixing of cultures and multiple cultural identities (Samovar et al, 2013). As an example, some research states that the new generation's view on culture may have shifted and differ from their parents’ generation, through stimulation from the internet and an increasingly more global world (Rettie & Brewer 2000). Web users are today part of a virtual community across cultural lines and national borders (Johnston & Parminder, 1999). The discussion regarding whether globalization is affecting national culture are vast and uncertain. Some claims that access to new technology that “makes the world smaller” such as telephones or the internet will inevitably impose western culture on the less developed world or homogenize culture into one big global village without cultural differences, in which all inhabitants behave the same way. Other research however claim the exact opposite, showing that access to new technology enhances cultural differences. As an example; deep-freezers are more common in cold climates, where freezing food in the snow was already common practice before introduction. Similarly, mobile phones were adapted the fastest in communities that were already further developed within the telecommunications infrastructure and after that they were most successful in cultures where verbal, interpersonal communications were more important than written, textual communications. This way of thinking claims that the internet has not changed people, but instead reinforced existing habits and making them more accessible. (De Mooij, 2005)

In the 1970 and 1980 cultural imperialism was a topic of great debate, where the advertising industry was singled out as one of the key mechanisms. The critique was of a “one-way flow” of media in the form of advertising, television, film and news from developed nations to the developing world. This in turn was considered to have an “imperializing” influence on culture (Sinclair, 2009). Some state that today’s consumption of goods has become more and more commercialized and that transnational consumerism is making international behaviour more homogenous as it is being influenced by world-wide corporate branding. This transnational expansion of corporate chains is a facet of globalization, which have had an impact on national culture and affect local everyday life. This in turn influence social interactions and cultural identities (Griffin, 2000). Advertising is instrumental in globalization through media development and international reach in consumer markets. The advertising industry is sometimes considered to be leading nations of the developing parts of the world, such as Latin
America, into cultural globalization. Others argue that the issue of cultural imperialism is more complicated than first thought as it has become more dynamic and might not have direct impact or inflict “domination” on developing countries anymore (Tomlinson, 1991). Some state that cultural imperialism today has been replaced by a new form transnational advertising that instead integrates the host culture (Silk & Andrews, 2001) and arguments include that cultural values does not flow in a one-way direction, that the flow is not a dominating force and that globalization is not a simple process of homogenization but of cultural diversification (Baker & Jane, 2016; Samovar et al, 2013). Michael Griffin state in his essay from 2000 that current studies of international communication are not adequate as they do not take the complications of globalization, cultural imperialism and transnational marketing in account and that “...we need to find out more about what is happening in the specific communities as global commercial culture becomes an increasingly prominent part of social life” (Griffin, 2000, p.17).

Advertising in television

Television advertising is a form of mass marketing which reaches a bigger audience, with less audience selectivity than advertising through newspapers, internet, direct mail, magazines, outdoor or radio advertising (Kotler et al., 2013). Mass marketing does not aim to speak to the individual or a specific customer category, but regards all customers equally (Dotevall, 1997; Cannon, McCarthy & Perreault, 2009). Television advertising combines sight, sound and motions and therefore appeal to the senses of the potential consumer (Kotler et al., 2013). Television reaches more people in developing nations than any other type of information or communications tool. It is regarded to be playing a critical role in expressing national identity, fostering local content as well as providing news and information (Baker & Jane, 2016). Research have found that advertising have a higher persuasion effect on consumers in low context communication cultures than in high context communication cultures (Shao, Bao & Gray, 2004).

Characteristics of high and low context advertisements

A few characteristics have been identified as typical high or low context attributes when examining advertising content. These can be used when conducting research within the subject. Marieke de Mooij (2005) has presented a framework for categorizing high and low context advertisements; Main differences include the amount of information given. Firstly, presentation of facts presented differs, more facts are presented in low context advertisements and less in high context advertisements. Low context advertisements contain more factual information about the product, often accompanied by a visual presentation or explanation of facts about the product or brand, called product messages. The message often includes ingredients, price, availability, discounts, sales, locations and news about the product (De Mooij, 2005). The message needs to be clear, unambiguous, direct and denotative, in low context advertisements meaning that the message is not open to more than one interpretation and what is said is what is meant to be delivered (Samovar et al, 2007). In other words, it should not be common to tell one story to deliver another in these commercials, such as far-fetched stories with a twist ending or open to interpretations. Presentations of facts and arguments meant to lecture the audience is common. These types of advertisements state, explain, show and demonstrate in order to convince or persuade the potential consumer. Often a presenter is present either in just voice or even in person to do the explaining or demonstrating of the product. These types of messages are called lessons (De Mooij, 2005). High context advertisements use more entertainment than low context advertisements, such as theatrical drama, comedy, musicals, shows, humour, horror or satire. Dramatical plays of interactions between people, such as “slice-of-life” advertising is more common in high context cultures. These plays are normally portrayed as
everyday situations and events, keeping the product as an important factor for a successful ending. The viewer is not addressed directly but are instead just observers in a slice-of-life advertising. Advertisements in low context cultures are more likely to present a *task oriented emotional reward*, whereas within high context cultures they are more likely to present a *relationship oriented emotional reward*. In low context cultures it is more effective to use *expert testimonial* advertising, where *celebrity endorsement* is instead more common in high context cultures. Two types of association transfers can be identified to be specific depending on high or low context cultures - *metaphor and metonymy*. A metaphor is used to transfer an idea, feeling or characteristic of an object to a product and be either verbal or visual. Visual metaphors are typical to high context cultures and verbal to low context cultures. Similarly, a metonymy transforms the meaning of an object to the product or brand, such as fruit turning in to jam or a zipper turning in to a railway. Metonymy is more typical of a high-context advertising (De Mooij, 2005). Research have shown that in low context advertisements individualistic messages are more common, where the public is addressed in a direct and personal way. Words like “you” or “I” are often used as well as imperatives such as “treat yourself!” or “make a wish!”: High context messages put more value in the group and collective, where words like “we”, “companionship”, “group”, “all” and “everyone” would be more successful (Bai, 2016).

**Product categories**

Another important distinction to make when conducting a content analysis of product attributes is to determine which type of products are represented, as products are different in many ways and in what they mean to the consumers. The benefit of owning a camera, as an example, is different from that of owning a toothbrush and therefore the same appeals cannot be applied to all products. Since a toothbrush is simply individual, there would likely not be appropriate to use collectivistic cues in such advertising (Zhang & Neelankavil, 1996). Durable goods are defined by Nkwocha (2000) as “*physical products that are used over an extended period of time*” (s.13), just as non-durables are “*physical products that are used for a short period of time*” (s.13). In her study, she found that durable goods have been found to engage people more in the point of purchase situation as they are high-involvement products and that non-durable products instead were classified as low-involvement product types. This due to the fact that durable goods are often more expensive and purchased less frequently than non-durable goods (Nkwocha, 2000). Baker & Lutz (2000) found that due to this difference high-involvement products (durables) have been found to be subject of significant information searches by consumers and a need of containing more rational appeals, providing extensive details and comparative information about the product have been found. Low-involvement products does not require the same range of information and are instead loaded with emotional appeals and focused on branding (Srivastava, et al, 2017). It has also been found that spending on durable products are highly connected to national GDP growth, as durable goods provide a range of utility over time, in contrast to non-durable products that get consumed directly (Black & Cusbert, 2010).

**Methodology**

**Scientific approach**

This study is using the approach of comparative content analysis, since two countries are studied separately to later be compared for the results. The research has been made through a
deductive approach, meaning that the collection of data started after the gathering of previous studies and relative theories (Söderbom & Ulvenblad, 2016). The frame of reference in this study was completed before the collection of data commenced. This method was chosen because of the purpose of the study, which is to further the frame of reference and to see if the theories match reality. To do this and to see if culture is reflected in television advertisements, the first step was to research existing theories to determine the starting point for the study. From the information gathered four hypotheses was then formed to be tested through a quantitative study. The choice to do a quantitative study was made because it is believed that this approach gives a more general overview of how the culture is being reflected in television advertisements in comparison to analysing only a few key commercials deeply. It also gives a more objective result than interviews. (Weber, 1990) A quantitative approach is used for empirical research that aims to map, analyse or explain variables and quantitative relationships. (Befring, 1994). The point of view is positivistic since this study aims to be objective and is made through systematic collection and categorisation of data (Söderbom & Ulvenblad, 2016). To be able to answer the research question whether culture is reflective in context of advertising messages in real life, such as described in theory, the most fitting method was to do a content analysis of television advertisements in both Sweden and Brazil.

What is Content Analysis?

It is common practice to use content analysis within communications research (Krippendorff, 1989) especially within the categories of research about international differences, cultural patterns, media comparison and trend descriptions (Weber, 1990). The method is useful for those who wish to analyse messages between sender and receiver, and have the added ability to analyse underlying meanings and context of data (Krippendorff, 1989). One particular advantage of conducting a content analysis instead of a qualitative method, such as interviews, is that content analysis allows for unobtrusive research through observation and analysis of both sender and receiver via the message, all without either part being aware of the analysis (Weber, 1990). Content analysis is defined as; “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 1989, p.403) which includes both the content within the communication and the context of the message. Content analysis is one of the most important methods when it comes to social science (Krippendorff, 1989). Data for content analysis usually comes from mass media sources, such as newspapers, radio, books and television. A content analysis is divided into three stages; conceptualisation, research design and execution. In the first step of conceptualisation the research question and hypothesis is formed and a model for coding is made. In the second stage of research design, sample groups are determined and data is collected. The last step of execution then includes coding the data and analysing through statistical tools (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994; Zhang, 2004).

Why Content Analysis?

The approach of content analysis was chosen due to it being an approach which involves less bias than other methods, is non-invasive on outcome results, is an initiator for new research and provides accurate insight, as it is focused on validity and reliability (Wang, 2011). Krippendorff (2004) states in his book Content analysis, that this technique provides new insight, increases understanding of a particular phenomenon or informs practical actions, and is useful for all kinds of data including verbal, pictorial, symbolic and communication. This method has been used in a variety of disciplines including; communication and journalism, marketing, education, psychology, anthropology, and other social science subjects (Wang, 2011). The method of content analysis is often used to test hypotheses of message characteristics, compare media content and studies of media effects (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994; Zhang, 2004). Since this
study focus on the message that is being sent, not the mind of sender or receiver, it was believed that content analysis would be the best alternative for research, with the least amount of bias.

**Literary review**

The secondary data presented in this study’s frame of reference has been collected from articles, books and websites relevant to the chosen field. The foundation was built on theories founded by Edward T Hall and Geert Hofstede’s books; *Beyond culture* (1976) and *Culture’ consequences* (1980). To narrow it down information was collected from articles by authors who have developed and researched these theories further, mainly focusing on advertising and communication rather than organizational culture. Searches have been done using the databases ABI Inform Global, Emerald, Jstore, Google Scholar, Google Books and Diva, as well as both public and university library in Halmstad, Sweden. When searching for articles in databases the search words have been directly connected to the chosen theories and field. Main search words were; high context, low context, high context advertising, high and low context, high context communication, content analysis advertising, national culture, Swedish culture, Brazilian culture, television advertising, content analysis. A few key articles were identified from which further references could be found. The basic knowledge of high and low context culture was acquired before this study started, but a deeper knowledge was needed which is why Hall’s book was specifically chosen and a natural starting point.

**Empirical study**

The choice to study advertising on television was made due to its generalizability as a broad medium and as it excludes the influences of specific target groups more than other media (Kotler et al., 2013). Television advertising is specifically reflective of the home culture and national identity (Baker & Jane, 2016) and does not aim to speak to the individual or a specific customer category, but regards all customers equally (Dotevall, 1997; Cannon, McCarthy & Perreault, 2009). If the choice instead would have been made to study online marketing such as pop-up ads, video clips or banners, these would have been tailored to fit personal preferences through cookies and targeted advertising, which would not have been unbiased. Television is also the most common medium to study when conducting content analysis of advertising (Wang, 2011).

**Collection of data**

**Time frame**

The collection of data was made during a two-and-a-half-month period between 15 February - 1 May 2018. Commercials were gathered during different parts of the day and during different days of the week. This period of time is right after the festival *Carnaval* ended and were chosen because of its lack of major holidays and celebrations, in order to not influence the results with cultural differences only present in one country. Collection during different parts of the day and different days of the week were decided as to not receive commercials only targeted to one specific target group, such as kids on Saturday mornings or Friday night block-busters.

**Sampling process**

The commercials were filmed during the time of gathering to later be analysed and counted for attributes on replay. The commercials have been collected from live television from the three
biggest commercial channels in Brazil and Sweden. These channels were chosen because they are broadcasted nationally and not regional, in order to reflect the overall culture as well as possible in each country. In Brazil these are Rede Globo, Rede Record and Sistema Brasíliero de Televisão (SBT) (Puin, 2012), and in Sweden it is TV4, TV3 and Kanal 5 (statista.com, 2016). The biggest (SVT1) and the third biggest (SVT2) overall channels in Sweden have been excluded in this equation due to the fact that they are not commercial channels.

Sample distribution
60 commercials were filmed from each country, giving a total of 120 advertisements. Advertisements included in the gathering process had to meet some specific criteria;
- each commercial had to be for a product
- each product had to have a price
- each company had to be working for profit
- each company had to have a brand
These exclusions were made in order to give a fair representation of the study, as a commercial without these criteria would give a faulty score on the calculations. As such commercials for government and institutions were excluded from the study, as well as any non-profit companies, monopolies and products without price. The product advertised were to be available freely on the market with free competition. A commercial for the ministry of defence for example would not be able to show the price in the commercial, resulting in a 0 score on price for that sample. This would not be a decision the advertisers had made, but simply not available, ending up in a wrongful result.

Coding
Each commercial was coded individually in two main tests; high context attributes and low context attributes. Within each test there were categories following De Mooij’s (2005) classifications of high and low context attributes in advertisements; product messages, enhancements, lessons and other for the low context data and lack of message, entertainment and other for the high context data. A total of 36 items were filled in for each commercial, 30 of which were attributes. Firstly, some basic information about the commercial; company name, product type, national or international brand, length of commercial and product category was filled in. This information was gathered to make sure an accurate and equal representation was made for each country and to be able to determine whether other differences could affect the end results. As an example, the products advertised were categorized in to groups from the consumer goods theory from microeconomics dividing products into three subgroups; durables, non-durables and services. In this study two more categories were added; services for durable goods and services for non-durable goods. These mainly referred to stores selling durable or non-durable products and were added since the store selling the product and buying the advertisements is considered a service, while the product that is being advertised is a tangible product and therefore considered durable or non-durable.

In the low context test of the category product messages each commercial was firstly counted on the amount of times the product, price, discount, contact details, brand logo and ingredients/descriptions were present. Second category focused on the enhancements of the message, such as whether the message was delivered by voice only or including text, highlights and/or a presenter. Each commercial was given a score between 0 - 4 in this category. The third category of lessons looked at the amount of times a commercial presented a demonstration, explanation, visual presenter and/or expert testimonial. The count was made on a yes or no basis, if present or not, and could therefore score a minimum of 0 and maximum of 4. The last
low context category other studied whether the commercial presented a verbal metaphor, individualistic message, task oriented reward and/or a call to action. Within the high context test each commercial was studied whether or not they presented a message with no speech, no product visible, and/or relaying of a feeling instead of product, as well as entertainment in form of drama, comedy/satire, musical/show and/or horror. Lastly commercials were counted on whether or not they presented visual metaphors, metonymy’s, symbols of tradition, collectivistic message, relationship oriented rewards, a message meant for reading between the lines, slice-of-life advertising and/or if they included celebrity endorsement. Each high context attribute was only counted once, concluding a maximum score of 16. No maximum score was possible for the low context test as the category product messages were open ended. The coding sheet is available in Attachment 2.

The coding was executed by the authors themselves. Wang (2011) states that most content analysis in advertising research were coded by two persons and that these were most commonly students or the authors themselves. A decision was made in this research to execute the coding process without external influence, as it was believed that six months extensive deep study in this specific field is hard to compare and mediate to an external part, and that the specific categories looked at within the coding requires this deep knowledge, in particular when it comes to the categories of individualistic or collectivistic message, relationship or task oriented rewards, métonymes, visual or verbal metaphors and testimonials.

Data analysis

The attributes between the high and low context tests are not mutually exclusive, so the commercials are therefore not meant to be categorized as either high or low context advertisements, but only compared between scores for each country, deducting weather one context is more common in one country. Therefore, each country was scored independently from each other and later compared for means. To determine if the differences were accurate and not a result of chance the results were then tested through a one tailed independent t-test for each context score as well as for each group category. A significance level of 95% was used to determine significance, through a p-value of 0.05. The t-test compares two sample averages to be able to tell if they are different from each other or simple just a result of chance. A test with a p-value of 0.05 means that there is a 5% probability that the result happened by chance and is commonly accepted as a valid result. The lower p-value the test results in the more support is given to the counter hypotheses (Körner & Wahlgren, 2006; StatisticsHowTo, 2018). As our hypotheses included to determine whether one score was larger than the other a one tailed test were chosen. When using a one tailed t-test the result will show if the mean is significantly higher or lower than the other group, but not both. A one-tailed t-test provides more power to detect an effect in one direction than a two-tailed test (UCLA, 2017). It is an independent sample as the two sample groups are not affected by each other. The t-test was possible for this analysis as the data for each product category and total attribute distribution was ratio data, meaning that it has an absolute point 0 as well as measurable intervals. When analysing the results for each product attribute, product classification and nationalit a Chi 2 test were instead used as this data was nominal and ordinal and therefore better suited for a Chi 2 test. A Chi 2 test aims to compare the actual distribution of variables with a theoretical distribution of variables in order to determine if the results are statistically significant. If the test reaches a higher p-level than desired the conclusion of discarding the hypothesis is made (Befring, 1994). The coding, comparison and testing were all conducted in Microsoft Excel, using the formula =TTEST(mean1,mean2,tails,type) and =CHITEST(mean1,mean2).
Credibility

Validity

To reach high validity in a research, focus lies on making sure that what is intended to be measured is what have actually been measured (Söderbom & Ulvenblad, 2016). This study intends to measure the differences between high and low context advertising communication in Sweden and Brazil, which have been done through measurements of high and low context attributes in television advertisements. The goal with the statistic testing in this research was to measure what differences exist between Sweden and Brazil in terms of context attributes. This has been done through a content analysis, counting attributes in each commercial. Significance has been measured through one tailed, independent t-test and Chi 2-test, making sure that the results are not a result of chance and that differences exists. These are suitable tests to use in this specific study as the results helps to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses (Statistics how to, 2018; Sundell, 2016).

Reliability

While conducting a quantitative study reliability is focused on how trustworthy the measurement is, meaning that the test should be able to be produce repeatable results regardless of tools used and person conducting the study (Söderbom & Ulvenblad, 2016). Content analysis assure that all units of data receive equal treatment and are not subjective to the researcher’s personal thoughts. Researchers usually tend to change perspective as they go deeper in to a specific subject as well as selective towards results that favour their hypothesis. Content analysis therefore allows for a relatively unbiased result in this regard (Krippendorff, 1989). To be able to ensure high reliability, native speaking Brazilians were asked to consult in the coding procedures, in order to minimize the impact of home culture on the study’s results. This due to both coders being native Swedish, with a somewhat limited knowledge of the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture.

Results

Research question

Do the theories match the reality? Does Brazilian television advertisements really contain more high context messages than Swedish? And does Swedish television advertisements contain more low context messages than Brazilian? What is the message distribution of individualism and collectivism between these two countries?

The research questions in this study asks if the theories of Hall’s high and low context messages match reality, through the medium of television advertising. To be able to determine if this is the case this study examined 120 advertisements from two countries through 30 attributes. Attachment 1 shows the data collection summary for all attributes, both high and low context. In this summary, the total count for each attribute is shown, as well as the calculated difference and which country the attribute is most commonly presented in. To be able to determine which
differences are relevant and if these differences are due to chance or not a deeper examination has been made presented below along with each hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1

Swedish advertisement will contain low context messages more frequently than high context messages. The total count of low context messages was much higher than those of the high-context categories in both countries, as previously explained, due to more attributes present. A clear result was achieved that shows that low-context messages are less frequent in Swedish advertisements than Brazilian. The overall score was 888 attributes counted in Brazil and 720 in Sweden, resulting in an overall difference of 168 attributes. The average count for each country ended up at 12 attributes per advertisement for Sweden and 14.8 attributes per advertisement in Brazil, an average difference of 2.8 attributes per commercial. These results presented with a strong p-value of 0.00322 after tested through the independent, one-tailed t-test; indicating a 0.3% chance that the results were due to chance. Divided in to the 4 categories of product messages, enhancements, lessons and other, three out of the four categories showed a similar result of significance with a p-value under the desired 0.05. Especially clear results were given for the category of product messages, with an average difference of 2.78 per commercial and a p-value of 0.00036. However, the category of other were showing opposite results, being more common in Swedish advertising rather than Brazilian. This category included the sub-groups verbal metaphors, individualistic message, task-oriented reward and call to action and were all more commonly represented in Sweden than Brazil. These results are presented in Table 1 and 2 below as well as Attachment 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-context messages</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Brasil</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>category</td>
<td>amount</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>product messages</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhancements</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lessons</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total low context</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. Average count and differences of low-context messages in both countries*

When studying the category of product messages separately it was shown that the subcategories of contact details, brand logo and ingredients/description were most significant. The differences all showed, however, that each subcategory was more commonly represented in Brazilian advertising than Swedish advertisements. The total difference in product messages was 167 attributes, averaging a difference of 2.79 messages per advertisement. Biggest difference between the countries was the frequency of amount of time the brand logo was shown in commercials, where Brazilian advertisements showed the logo an average of 3 times per commercial, in comparison to Swedish 2.23. Most significant difference were between the showing of contact details in advertisements, where Brazilian advertisements scored 52 compared to the Swedish 21 times. Even if the difference only shows an average of 0.52 per advertisement this subcategory got an exceptionally low p-value of 0.00012, proving its significance. The attributes that got a p-value higher than the desired 0.05 were price, product
and *discount*. These three attributes could individually, according to the test, be a product of chance. However, the overall numbers in Table 2 shows that there are differences between the countries, as Brazilian advertisement have a higher score on all attributes in this category and were significant when studied as a group.

### Hypothesis 2

*Brazilian advertisement will contain high context messages more frequently than low context messages*. The collection of data showing amounts and frequency of high context cues in each country was very similar to each other, as shown in Table 3. The end result showed a slightly higher representation of high context messages in the Swedish advertisements in comparison to the Brazilian, with a total count of 189 attributes in Sweden and 148 in Brazil. However, the overall result did not completely pass the t-test, with a p-value of 0.05020. Two out of the three categories within the high context data collection were over the desired level of 0.05 and specifically the category of other, which got a p-value of 0.33512, indicating a 33.5% chance of the result being a product of chance. The only category presenting clear results were lack of message, which presented a p-value of 0.00044 and was more common in Swedish advertisements. Swedish advertisements presented an average of 3.15 high context attributes per commercial and Brazilian advertisements presented an average of 2.47 attributes per commercial. Total difference of high context attributes was 41 attributes with a very small average difference of only 0.68 per commercial.

### Table 2. Average count and differences of product messages in both countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Brasil</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discount</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand logo</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingredients /des</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>449</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.48</strong></td>
<td><strong>616</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.27</strong></td>
<td><strong>167</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Average count and differences of high-context data in both countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Brasil</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of message</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>121</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total high context</strong></td>
<td><strong>189</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.15</strong></td>
<td><strong>146</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.47</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.68</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The category of other did not present clear results as it contained five sub-groups which was more common in Brazil than Sweden and three sub-groups that were more common in Sweden than Brazil, as shown in Attachment 1 as well as Table 4. The subcategories of metonymy, symbols/tradition, collectivistic message, relationship-oriented reward and celebrity endorsement were more common in Brazil and the sub-groups of visual metaphors, reading between the lines and slice of life advertisements were more common in Sweden. Within this category, only the sub-categories of collectivistic message and reading between the lines were proven to be significant, with p-values under 0.05.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High context - other</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>visual metaphors</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>0.19049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metonymy</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.76898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>symbols/tradition</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.18645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collectivistic message</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.00348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship-oriented reward</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.31529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading between the lines</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>0.00259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slice of life</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>0.06661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrity endorsement</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.59121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total other</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0.33512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Average count and differences of sub-category other

**Hypothesis 3 and 4**

Swedish advertisement will contain more individualistic messages than Brazilian advertisements. Brazilian advertisement will contain more collectivistic messages than Swedish advertisements. As shown in Table 5, the study showed that Swedish advertisement messages are 87% individualistic and 10% collectivistic, through a count of 52 individualistic and 6 collectivistic messages counted. Two advertisements were regarded as neither relaying an individualistic or collectivistic message and stands for the remaining 3%. Table 5 also shows the data for message direction for Brazil, showing that 36 of the advertisements (60%) was relaying an individualistic message to the receivers and 19 of the advertisements (32%) was relaying a collectivistic message. Five advertisements (2%) was regarded as neither relaying an individualistic or collectivistic message. The results of message direction were analysed through a Chi2-test and got the p-value of 0.0041802 - proving a significant difference. The results have only a 0.4% probability of being a result of chance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message direction</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>individualistic</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collectivistic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Direction of message of individualistic or collectivistic cues in both countries
Sample Distribution

When looking at sample distribution Table 6 shows that out of the 60 Swedish commercials 12 was in the category durables, 17 non-durables, 17 services, 12 service for durables and 2 service for non-durables. Out of the Brazilian advertisements 6 were durables, 25 non-durables, 15 services, 8 service for durables and 6 for non-durable. When examining these numbers through a Chi2-test it was concluded that this difference is not statistically significant, as it got a p-value of 0.1680 and therefore considered a result of chance. Even so it is clear that Brazil presented with a higher frequency of advertisements for non-durable products and Sweden presented a higher frequency of advertisements for durable products.

![Table 6. Percentage of product categories in each country](image)

The origin of the advertisements was also identified in the beginning of the research, resulting in 35 national advertisements and 25 international advertisements in Sweden, versus 40 national and 20 international advertisements in Brazil. These results are visible in Table 7. When analysing these findings through the Chi2-test it was again found that these numbers would not likely impact the results as they were simply a product of chance with a p-value of 0.3457, and that these numbers were very similar and homogenous.

![Table 7. Percentage of nationality origin for advertisements in each country](image)

Other factors possibly impacting the results of the study was the length of each advertisement. The average advertisement length of commercials shown in Sweden was 19 seconds, while the average advertisement length of commercials shown in Brazil was 22 seconds. This constituted a difference of 3 seconds between the countries, as shown in Table 8. The difference between
these numbers were tested through a Chi2-test and got the p-value 0.0095862, showing a significant difference, potentially influencing the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweden</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time (sec)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8. Average length of advertisements measured in seconds*

In regards to timing and frequency, many more commercial breaks per hour were shown in Sweden, with a much larger number of ads per break. A commercial break in Brazil was shown around once every half hour, lasted for about 2.5 minutes and two or three products were represented per break. On Swedish television, the breaks were instead 3-4 times an hour and each break lasted for around 6 minutes. In that time 18-20 products could be represented. The commercials were much more recurring in Sweden with the same advertisements aired multiple times a day and during the same television program.

**Analysis & Discussion**

**Result summary and analysis**

This study has investigated the differences in communication context between Sweden and Brazil, through the medium of television, in order to further the frame of reference of high and low context communication. The reason for this has been to determine whether the theories are also implicate in reality. In this study, it has been found that low context messages are in general more commonly represented in Brazilian advertising compared to Swedish advertising, which was disproving the basis for Hypothesis 1: Swedish advertisement will contain low context messages more frequently than high context messages. However, Hypothesis 2 of Brazilian advertisement will contain high context messages more frequently than low context messages have not been able to be proved either way, as the results did not meet the desired p-value for significance. The probability of the findings being a result of chance were slightly over the desired limit of 5%. It was however showing a higher rate of high context messages in Swedish advertisements than Brazilian, pointing towards a disproving of Hypothesis 2 as well.

Even though the overall score of the commercials showed that there are more low context attributes present in Brazilian advertisements than in Swedish, the Brazilian advertisements presented with more of one attribute that is considered highly characteristic for a high context culture; collectivistic messages, and Swedish presented higher frequency of one particular attribute that is typical of low context cultures; individualistic message. This leads us in to Hypothesis 3 and 4: Swedish advertisement will contain more individualistic messages than Brazilian advertisements, and Brazilian advertisement will contain more collectivistic messages than Swedish advertisements. It was shown in this study that individualistic cues are more common in Swedish advertisements proving Hypothesis 3 to be correct and that collectivistic cues are more common in Brazilian advertisements proving Hypothesis 4 to be correct as well, with a 0.4% probability the results being a product of chance.
Explanation of results

As stated previously Sweden is in theory considered a low context culture while Brazil is a high context culture. This knowledge put together with the fact that television commercials are often reflective of the home culture (Zhang & Gelb, 1996; Zhang & Neelankavil, 1996) indicates that commercials aired in Sweden should contain more low context messages in relation to the commercials aired in Brazil. Theories also state that cultures that are rated as individualistic are often also low context, and cultures that are collectivistic are often also high context cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997) What the results from this study shows are that this might not be the case. To sum up; Hypothesis 1 was disproved, Hypothesis 2 was inconclusive, Hypothesis 3 was proved and Hypothesis 4 was proved. So, what does these results mean? Brazilian advertising is more specific in their communication. It is clear that some attributes are more likely to be presented in Brazilian advertising, especially within the categories of; contact details, brand logo and description/ingredients, as well as in a higher frequency. Overall Brazilian advertising are more specific and straightforward in their advertising message, leaving less up for interpretation. This is not what is being taught the theories of Hall’s high and low context communication (1976) and could mean either that these theories are in need of updating and that advertising not are reflective of culture, as previously stated or an indicative shift towards a more homogenous global culture. Brazilian advertising however is more likely than Swedish advertising to use one key characteristic for high context cultures; collectivistic messages, and Swedish advertising are more likely to use individualistic messages, as suggested by Hypothesis 3 and 4. So in this regard the theories of Hofstede’s (1980) dimensions are partly supported, but those connecting high context cultures with collectivistic messages and low context cultures with individualistic messages are not. The inconclusive results and close proximity in frequency outcome of Hypothesis 2 proves that the differences are not significant when it comes to high context communication. Even though the results indicate towards slightly higher frequency of high context messages in Swedish advertising, which is opposite to the theories, the similarity in results proves a high level of homogenization in advertising high context communications.

Discussion of contributing factors

Sample distribution

Description of the sample distribution raises a few questions that might influence the results outcome. Particularly significant in this category is the unit of advertisement length. This study showed that Brazilian advertisements were on average 3 seconds longer than Swedish advertisements. With longer advertising length Brazilian commercials have more space to fill with attributes and this could have affected the study outcome. The collection of primary data also shows that commercials for durable products are broadcasted more often in Sweden than they are in Brazil, as well as non-durable products being broadcasted more often in Brazil than in Sweden. This could be a contributing factor for the results as Zhang & Neelankavil (1996) teaches about the differences in product message for different types of products. In commercials for non-durable products the price is showing more often. It is also often in these commercials more enhancements than in commercials for durable products. A reason for this could be that non-durable products often rates as low involvement purchases that does not demand much planning (Nkwocha, 2000). The price could therefore be an important component of persuasion. When it comes to durable products, a car need to be filled with more values than food since it is a higher engagement purchase (Srivastava, et al, 2017). It could be that a more expensive and long-lasting product needs to have more than just a money value added. Brand identity might also be easier to communicate through high context commercials. A non-durable product could
also be harder to positionate and differentiate on the market apart from pricing, branding and availability, resulting in more descriptive attributes needed. On the other hand, Baker & Lutz (2000) state that since durable products demand more involvement from the consumer, a higher frequency of attributes is needed to aid and persuade the consumer, while non-durable products aim towards more emotional cues (Srivastava, et al. 2017). When testing the differences of product category through a Chi2-test it was concluded that difference was only a result of chance, even so it could still be a contributing factor and have had affected the end result of product attributes counted and the disproving of Hypothesis 1.

Financial influences

Some of the results of the study could be explained by the fact that Sweden is a country with a stronger financial situation than Brazil. The GNI per capita in Sweden was set at $50,000 in 2016, while the same number in Brazil was calculated at $18,140 (World Bank, 2018; Trade Economics, 2018). This difference constitutes a much higher purchasing power for each citizen for a potential consumer in Sweden. Higher purchasing power could lift the weight on the price tag in advertising communications, resulting in lower frequency of product attributes needed. If the consumer has more funds available for purchasing, they become less price sensitive and advertisers might stop pushing those specific cues, such as pricing and discounts. Also in this discussion, the fact of durable or non-durable products could be up for question, as it has been stated that spending on durable goods has been highly correlated with GNI growth (Black & Cusbert, 2010). Higher education might also be affecting the results, which is connected to the better financial status of the country. There are big differences between rich and poor in Brazil (Samovar et al, 2013) and the Brazilian society is strongly influenced by high corruption which limits the possibility of economic and national development (Lundvall, 2017). This in turn affects trust and might result in more assurance needed for the consumer, such as clear pricing, promises of discount, descriptions and expert testimonials - all a part of the low context data collection and connected to Hypothesis 1. The high frequency of brand logos could also be connected to this need of security as brand assurance could provide an indication of quality. Samovar, et al. (2013) mentions loyalty to be one of the most important factors in Brazil, which could contribute to the high brand logo frequency found in the primary data collection, as well as the importance of network (Mello, 2012) and status symbols (Hofstede Insights, 2017).

Education

Even though strong connections have been found between collectivistic and high context cultures, as well as individualistic and low context cultures (Smyth, 2015; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997) this study is not able to support those theories. This because of the disproving of Hypothesis 1, indications towards disproving Hypothesis 2 and the opposite results of proving Hypothesis 3 and 4. Even though findings have shown that high context advertisements usually appear more often in collectivistic cultures and that low context advertisements appear more often in individualistic cultures (Liang, Runyan & Fu, 2011), this study shows the opposite and is not applicable for Sweden and Brazil. Reasons for this might be a culturally stronger connection to the message direction rather than message context, as the encoding process of a message is an internal activity (Samovar et al, 2013) that depends on cultural background (Prince & Hoppe, 2000). The question could be raised that all of this might not be an intentional consequence at all. Different education of the advertisers themselves might be a contributing factor. As stated in Maciel da Silva’s (2006) essay about Brazilian advertising, the business of advertising in Brazil originated from the United States teachings, where communications are notoriously low context. This mixed with the fewer opportunities of progress due to lack of financial growth and an assumed higher frequency of American education, might simply be an
indication of wrongful directions and outdated advertising strategies. The suggestion here would therefore be that message context might be a learned teaching through education while message direction would be more internal within the sender. Dyer (1982) explains this as an unintentional “unconsciousness” of the sender of the message.

Communication process

Also, a discussion could be had whether advertisement in general is specifically reflective of culture when it comes to the point of communicating context. Advertisement is a one-way communication from the sender to receiver, which in itself has consequences. As Samovar et al (2013) describes about the communication process it is a complicated matter with many steps. In a two-way communication, a dialogue, it is easier to show what is meant with expressions and actions, since more responsibility can be put on the receiver. Hand gestures, silence and facial expressions are difficult to communicate within a medium such as television. In advertising, more responsibility is therefore naturally put on the sender to make sure that the message is understood by the receiver and more focus needs to be put on preparing how the receiver could interpret the content, just as in a low context communication process (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). It is not only important for the sender to get understood as in any normal conversation, but it is also more of an uneven distribution of interest as the sender has more to gain from the conversation than the receiver in the case of advertising. The sender is investing huge amounts of time, money, research and energy to get the message to the receiver, (Dyer, 1982) while the receiver might not even want to be listening. In this way, it could be considered wrong to compare advertising communication with person to person communication. Since the responsibility of the conversation is generally placed on the sender in low context communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997) it might be fair to say that advertisements are more low context by nature. This in turn would be affecting the results of Hypothesis 1, as well as explaining the relative high attribute counts presented for both countries.

Media environment

The high frequency of commercial breaks presented in the sample distribution could be a contributing factor to increased noise (Samovar et al, 2013) towards advertisements in Sweden. This in turn might have been countered by the advertisers, creating a drive to make more entertaining commercials to further intrigue the consumer for another minute of their time, and as such raising the bar of high context cues, and affecting the results of Hypothesis 2. The high level of high context cues would be born out of a need to shock, entertain and increase word-of-mouth from the Swedish consumer, but would according to the theories instead be met by confusion and cultural incongruence, as the decoding of the message takes place within the receiver who uses his own personality and experiences to convert the external stimuli into meaningful interpretations (Samovar et al, 2013). Prince & Hoppe (2000) explains this incongruence as a result of cultural background since what cues means to the receiver depends on culture and could be interpreted very differently. Being fostered by a specific culture have an impact on the inhabitants understanding, perception and recall of information (Kim 2012, Kaynak & Mitchell 1981). In Brazil the advertisements seemed to be filling a different role, as information giver. Since the advertisements in this country was such low in context and the theories describe high context as their main source of information, the question there could instead be if these commercials were as effective as a high context advertisement would have been.
Globalisation

As discussed in the start of the study, the reality differing from the theories might be a result of increased globalisation and changing of cultural bases. The main studies of high and low context theory were made by E.T Hall in 1967, and many of the following studies looking at the same questions are grounded in his results. Since these initial studies many years have passed and of course much have changed. It could be that the culture has changed with it. Advertising is an important part of and significant component in forming a nation's culture (Bai, 2016) and the new generation's view on culture may have shifted to differ from their parents’ generation, through stimulation from the internet and an increasingly more global world (Rettie & Brewer 2000). As discussed in the cultural imperialism section of this study's literature review some researchers state that today’s consumption has become more homogenous due to increased influence from the international market. This in turn influence social interactions and cultural identities (Griffin, 2000). The small differences shown in the testing of Hypothesis 2 in this study might be a result of the large number of international advertisements shown in both countries, and could be proof of a shift towards a more homogenous culture. Table 7 showed a high frequency of advertisements for international brands in both countries and that these did not differ significantly from each country. Frequency in numbers were close to half compared to the national products and if the main part of international advertisements use a standardisation approach instead of adapting to the national culture this could be a reason for even more homogenous cultures, as marketing globalisation strive towards an even stronger standardisation and homogenization of the market (Svensson, 2002).

Summary, Conclusion, Limitations & Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study has been to further the frame of reference within E. T Hall’s high- and low context theory. The intention has been to show if the theories match reality or if globalisation has had an impact on culture congruence, and if the theories therefore might be in need of updating. The purpose also includes comparing the two countries of Sweden and Brazil in regards to advertising messages in order to assist in the business to consumer communication process for expanding businesses or investors across the borders as well as scientifically for future research. The study has been testing if Swedish advertisement communication use more low context cues and take a more individualistic approach than Brazilian advertisement, as well as if Brazilian advertisement communication use more high context cues and take use of a more collectivistic approach than Swedish advertisement. This in order to understand the connection between the theories and if needed re-categorize the countries within the spectrum. To be able to research the subject we asked the questions; What is the relative usage of high- and low context messages in Brazilian versus Swedish television advertisements? Does Brazilian television advertisements really contain more high context messages than Swedish? And does Swedish television advertisements really contain more low context messages than Brazilian? Since it was found that low context advertising was strongly connected to individualistic messages, according to previous research, and that high context messages were strongly connected to collectivistic messages the question; What is the message distribution of individualism and collectivism between these two countries? was also included. To be able to answer the questions asked four hypotheses were formulated, grounded in previous research; (H1) Swedish advertisement will contain low context messages more frequently than high context messages. (H2) Brazilian advertisement will contain high context messages more
frequently than low context messages. (H3) Swedish advertisement will contain more individualistic messages than Brazilian advertisements. (H4) Brazilian advertisement will contain more collectivistic messages than Swedish advertisements. The study's primary data was collected through 120 advertisements in Sweden and Brazil, which investigated 30 attributes within high and low context categories. Results showed that the first two hypotheses could not be proved and that the second two hypotheses were proved.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the theories in fact do not match the reality and that globalization has affected culture in advertising in Sweden and Brazil in two different directions. Swedish advertising communication is presented with equally many high context cues as its Brazilian counterpart even though an individualistic message direction is still dominant. In opposite, Brazilian advertising communication is presented with more low context cues than its Swedish counterpart even though a collectivistic message direction is still dominant. This conduct is not what was described in theories of Swedish and Brazilian communication culture or advertising best-practices. Since people are assumed to respond better to advertisement that reflects their home culture (Zhang & Gelb, 1996; Zhang & Neelankavli, 1996) the results in this study could therefore have important implications. Theories say that advertising is a window to culture since it is based on language and communication tools that are deeply rooted in cultural values (Schutte & Ciarlante, 1998; Bai, 2016) so differences between theory and reality in advertising could indicate a shift towards a more globalized culture. According to the theories about Swedish culture, Swedish people normally take use of a very direct communication using words that relay exact meaning. Normally Swedes do not communicate through contextualized messages and should in theory not understand that kind of communication very well (Daun, 1998). This would mean that this type of communication should not be included in their advertising communication. Also, according to theories, commercials shown in high context cultures should not include many attributes. The meaning and messages should instead be given through facial expression, environment, symbols and internalized meaning (Samovar et al, 2007) as according to theories advertising is specifically reflective of national culture (Pollay, 1983; Hsu, 2002). Despite this, this study shows the opposite for Sweden and Brazil. Implications of the disproving of this study's first hypothesis and the indications towards disproving the second hypothesis could therefore be a more globalised community and a more homogenous world-wide culture. When commencing new business relations or conducting advertising communications between these countries businesses might today therefore take use of wrongful conduct deriving from outdated information.

According to Hall it is very important to take differences between high and low context cultures in consideration while communicating and not to do so could have serious consequences (Hall, 1967) and according to Zhang & Neelankavli (1995) culturally-congruent appeals in advertising is generally more effective than non-congruent. Effectiveness of, and attitude towards the advertisements could therefore also be impacted by the findings in this study. This is important information for any marketer, company or investor that are planning to communicate across cultural borders, as the global population continues to grow and fewer and fewer people live in only one city, region or country throughout their lives (Samovar et al, 2013). Failure to adapt into new cultures or negligence to learn other ways can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretation, confusion and embarrassment. This in turn can have serious consequences such as lost confidence, lost customers, lost business and lost opportunities (Prince & Hoppe, 2000).
Differences between Swedish and Brazilian cultures are vast (Bjurshagen et al, 2010) and in many ways, they are each other's opposites. Brazil is a growing market with a steady developing economy and the country is today one of the most attractive economies to invest in (Bjurshagen et al, 2010). During the last 20 years trade between northern Europe and South America has increased and Sweden is today one of the ten biggest investors in the Brazilian industry. Swedish, or Swedish-related companies have a turnover of 130 billion SEK per year and have 60 thousand employees present in the country. Brazil is the most important trade partner in South America for Sweden and Swedish industry companies are today well-established within the Brazilian market (Swedish Embassy in Brazil, 2017; Bjurshagen, Rauofi & Lindevall, 2010). According to Zhang & Neelankavli (1995) it is necessary for successful advertising communicators to understand cultural differences, since consumers become accustomed to the home country's value systems, beliefs and perception and reflect this subjective knowledge into their own choices. And as global commercial culture becomes an increasingly prominent part of social life (Griffin, 2000), it becomes even more important to conduct this type of research. This study and the conclusions in it therefore answers Griffin’s call for further studies of globalisation in the specific communities and aims to help in these business relations, as a guide for companies wishing to advertise across the borders, as well as further the frame of reference for future research.

Limitations of the study

This research is focused on the content in television advertisement and how high and low context attributes permeates the message in Sweden versus Brazil. It is focused specifically on advertising communication on television, not any other type of advertising communication or communication between people. Therefore, this study's results only apply to this context. It does not provide results or support for studies of person to person communication or any two-way dialogue. Similarly, the results are only applicable in comparisons between Sweden and Brazil specifically, not in the context of any other country or culture. This since the study’s result is reached through comparison between frequency of context messages in these two nations and through specific conditions, as described in the methodology chapter. This study is done using a quantitative method on a large scale instead of qualitative with deep diving interviews. As such, this study does not investigate consumers attitude towards the content in advertisements, perception, performance or effectiveness of any given advertising communication, nor advertising best-practice. Therefore, this study does not include if or how the content in different cultures affect sales numbers or profitability. Neither does it determine which is the best alternative for a company to use in a given situation.

When it comes to the review of cultures in the study frame of reference it is important to note that Brazil is a very large country with many different cultures within the nation (Meyer, 2010). A dominant culture exists in every society but is not always exclusive. Many smaller co-cultures and specialized cultures can exist within the same national borders (Samovar et al., 2013). In this study when referring to Brazilian culture it is specifically popular culture within large cities where most advertisements and business is being conducted that is referred to, and not the cultural variations of the smaller societies around the nation and throughout the countryside. Sweden is a smaller country than Brazil and even if the differences in culture within the country are not as vast, they do exist as well. Similarly, to Brazilian culture, when referring to Swedish culture it is popular culture that is referred to.
Everyone belongs to a culture and so does of course the authors of this study. While trying to be as unbiased and true to the cause as possible the “unconsciousness” described by Dyer (1982) could have influenced the study results through home culture of the authors as well. Looking for high context cues in a culture in which one does not belong could be problematic, even if external help from native speakers is sought, as they might not have the same insights or knowledge. In knowing this the attribute category result of reading between the lines was analysed with extra care and a “pinch of salt” as language barrier most likely affected the outcome.

Recommendations for future research

With help from the results and conclusion from this study, further research could be made with the purpose of comparing consumer attitudes towards high or low context advertisements in Sweden and Brazil. It would be very interesting to investigate how these differences and potential cultural incongruence affect perception, effectiveness and performance of brands, as well as study the profitability, attitudes towards or effectiveness of advertisements that take predominant use of high or low context cues.

Many of the international advertisements included in this study are from brands that are available in both countries. The same product is often advertised with different strategies. It would have been interesting to see how these commercials differ between the two countries. Research could be made focusing on difference in high or low context cues between these commercials, with help from the results from this study. Alternatively, focus could be put on businesses that advertise across the borders into Sweden and Brazil specifically, to be able to determine which adaptation approach is taken, what the attitudes to these are with the national population and if this lines up with the results found in this study. By doing this research it could be determined whether the theories are in fact wrongly written or advertisements wrongly executed.

This study is using a quantitative approach through a content analysis. An alternative to this could be to deduct a qualitative research, investigating the mind of the advertiser and the decision process. This approach would focus on the sender instead of the receiver of the message. Why are the decisions that are being made, made? What is the thought process around frequency in product attributes in advertising? How are the decisions regarding cultural adaptation across borders taking high and low context communication in consideration? are just a few of the questions that could be asked.
References


Bai, H. (2016) *A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Advertisements from High-Context Cultures and Low-Context Cultures*. Published by Canadian Centre of Science and Education.


Hsu, C. (2002) *Advertising content and cultural consequences A cross-cultural comparison of Taiwanese and United States magazine advertisements.* The University of Utah, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing


Johnston, K., & Parminder, J. (1999) *The Internet as a “virtual cultural region”: are extant cultural classification schemes appropriate?* Internet Research, Vol. 9 Issue: 3, pp.178-186.


## Attachments

### Attachment 1. Data collection summary - high and low context attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Sweden Amount</th>
<th>Brasil Amount</th>
<th>Difference Amount</th>
<th>Country</th>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
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## Commercial X

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Anette Karphammar

Maria Behrns