

COMMUNICATION ADAPTATION DECISIONS CONSIDERING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

This article sought analyzing the adaptation decisions of companies when communicating with distinct markets. Thus, the institutional communication executed by McDonald's in Brazil and in the United States of America was analyzed in order to describe the macro environmental variables that exert influence over the brand management, as well as, identifying, in light of Hofstede's Theory, the adaptation decisions under the aspects of individualism *versus* collectivism, masculinity *versus* femininity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Regarding the method, the research is characterized as qualitative and exploratory, using the content analysis approach of the commercials in both countries of the sample. As the results, it was observed that the company McDonald's adapts its communication compound to the Brazilian culture both in the macro environmental aspects and in the subjective aspects mapped by Hofstede's Theory. Future studies could expand the universe of the sample to other countries and companies, as well as studies could be conducted with consumer groups allowing them to formalize their perceptions regarding the communication executed by these companies and the approach to local cultural values.

Keywords: International Marketing. Cultural Adaptation. Communication.

1 INTRODUCTION

After the 80's, with the increasing academic discussion regarding the globalization of markets, two theories gained space concerning the orientation for the ideal commercial approach to be employed by the organizations willing to insert their brands in new territories: (i) standardization theory and (ii) adaptation theory.

For the standardization theory (i), the tendency for markets is to converge to global similarity, which implies the standardization of all the products and, consequently, of the other marketing mix activities. This theory has been criticized by scholars for being overly focused on the product orientation, thereby neglecting consumers and their singularities (Levitt, 1983; Poulis and Poulis, 2013). Yet for the adaptation theory (ii), the insertion in distinct territorial markets must have as one of its principles the environmental sensitivity, that is, it must recognize that there are specific cultural needs for specific markets which cause companies to systematically plan activities in order to meet the preferences of the consumers (Cavusgil and Zou, 1994; Keegan and Green, 2003). Nevertheless, to be effective, adaptation requires understanding the local market in a deep and embedded form (Poulis and Poulis, 2013). Accordingly, global marketing is characterized by the supply customization in the face of macro and micro environmental regional characteristics (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2001).

In this article, the scope of analysis centers on the adaptation theory, and it has as the focus of analysis the adaptation performed by McDonald's in its communication actions. The study is justified by the inherent need to develop and deepen the specific knowledge concerning marketing communication in markets distinct to the ones native to the company according to Albers-Miller (apud Baker, 2000) and to Churchill (2010). Furthermore, the food sector is in constant expansion and has a revenue performance of R\$ 484,7 billion in 2013 (ABIA, 2014) which indicates the entry prospect of other global brands, as well as, its importance to Brazil's economy.

Initially, this article presents a literature review, in which the main issues concerning the execution of this study are described. Afterwards, the methodology employed for the objectives' achievement is described. Then, the analysis of the data is presented followed by the final considerations.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing Moderating Variables

Accepting culture as an influential factor in the marketing decisions, Motta (2004) states that companies are not self-sufficient, thus, every company needs to interact with the environment within which it is inserted, in this way, they need a systemic vision of the surrounding environment. The author states that it is common to divide such marketing environment into two: the competitive environment (i) and the macro environment (ii).

The (i) competitive environment involves the variables that can be manipulated by the company, such as the suppliers, the consumers and the direct and indirect competitors (including the threat of substitute products or potential entrants). As to the (ii) macro environment, it is characterized by the variables that are not controlled by the company and are equally important in the decision-making process. The six variables that make up the macro environment, according to

Kotler and Keller (2013) are: demographic (i); economic (ii); natural (iii); technological (iv); political (v); and sociocultural (vi).

The demographic variable (i) includes indicators such as growth rate, predominant ethnicities, gender, age and income. The economic variable (ii) involves factors as inflation, purchasing power, interest rates and unemployment rates. The natural variable (iii) involves issues related to the preservation of the ecosystems, the scarcity of raw material, pollution and governmental actions. The technological variable (iv) concerns the technological innovations and their impact on people's daily lives. Yet the political variable (v) includes, fundamentally, laws and policies determined by the governments. Finally, the sociocultural variable (vi) involves cultural values that define attitudes and behaviors.

These variables, both in the competitive environment and in the macro environment, determine the practices and tools to be adopted by the marketing professionals when the company has to opt for adaptive or standardizing strategies in the marketing compound, analyzing their applicability in different marketplaces. Leo *et al* (2005) state that the success of an organization in a different marketplace may be greatly influenced by how decision-makers are able to understand and absorb consumers' buying behaviors, along with, how well they are able to use that knowledge to structure their marketing plans and strategies.

2.2 Culture

Consumers are molded by their environment as they live and constantly interact with it. These influences, mainly the culture, the ethnicity, social class, personal influence, family and domestic influence, do not act separately on individuals. On the contrary, they manifest themselves jointly depending on the trade relationships established between the members of a society.

Regarding the culture and ethnicity, Blackwell *et al.* (2011) highlight that culture has a profound effect on the reasons why people buy, in addition to being passed from one generation to another, mainly by means of institutions like the family, religion and school. Culture, in the authors' view, evolves and supplies people with a sense of identity and a comprehension of the suitable behaviors within the society.

Authors related to the consumer behavior field comment that it is not possible to comprehend people's choices without considering the context in which they were made. This context comprises knowledge, beliefs, customs, laws and any other habits and capabilities acquired by the individuals as beings that participate in society (HAWKINS *et al*, 2007). As a matter of fact, a series of researches indicates that human behavior is determined and regulated by a wide range of cultural influences that are transmitted from one generation to another and help individuals communicate and interpret and evaluate other members of the same society in a similar way.

Solomon (2008) highlights that culture involves the accumulation of significances, rituals and traditions shared amongst individuals of the same organization or society, that enables one to determine one's priorities regarding life and, it is also able to determine the success or failure of a product. In the same way, Laraia (2006) adds that culture, more than genetic inheritance, determines individuals' behaviors and justifies their realizations. According to the author, people act according to their cultural patterns, which are socially transmitted and include technologies, methods of economic organization, establishment of social and political grouping patterns, religious practices and beliefs, among others.

Hofstede (1983) states that culture works as mental programming shared by a community and it is, per se, durable and engraved in the realizations and in the institutions of a certain group, enabling the distinction of different groups of persons. Moreover, it supports the classic theory proposed by McGrae that states that the members of a particular culture internalize group-like characteristics and, thus, develop their personality corresponding to that culture (MCGRAE apud MIGLIORE, 2011). In this way, because cultural studies have their origin in the social anthropology, they have been widely used by marketing researchers in comprehending consumer behavior once that, according to Migliore (2011) a form of behavior in one culture can have a dissimilar psychological significance in another culture. Hofstede's theory will be used in the data analysis of this article, which is explained in depth in item 2.2.1.

2.2.1 Hofstede's Theory

In his research, Hofstede developed a theory to describe culture, based on data collected in fifty countries with more than a hundred and sixteen thousand questionnaires, thus, unifying the theory of cultures and creating terminologies based on researches and no longer on impressions or false superficial generalizations. (HOFSTEDE, 1983; MINKOV; HOFSTEDE, 2011) By means of the research, it was possible to identify that four dimensions, highly independent among themselves, describe national cultures, which are presented below:

- i. Individualism *versus* Collectivism: in this dimension the author states that individualism happens when the ties between individuals are loose. In collectivist cultures, people are born inside social groups, which can be family groups, their tribes or their villages.
- ii. Power Distance: the main topic here, according to the author, concerns "how society deals with the fact that people are unequal [...] in their physical and intellectual capabilities."
- iii. Uncertainty Avoidance: the main issue involved in this dimension concerns the way society deals with the fact that time runs only one way.
- iv. Masculinity *versus* Femininity: since, according to the author, the only activities that are strictly determined by the sex of a person are those related to procreation (biological sexual division). This dimension is limited to the division of roles in society (social sex roles).

In this way, Hofstede's research found that the Brazilian society has relatively high scores in the dimensions of power distance (ii) and uncertainty avoidance (iii), which reflect a society that believes in the hierarchical structure, as well as a society that requires laws and rules, the research also found that the differences between people are accepted in the country. On the other hand, in the individualism *versus* collectivism (i), Brazil is ranked as a very collectivist society, that means people tend to be included into strong social groups. Regarding the masculinity *versus* femininity dimension (iv), Brazilian society is classified in an intermediate score, which means both the masculinity and the femininity values can be found in the society.

Concerning the United States, Hofstede's theory assessed that the dimensions of individualism *versus* collectivism (i) and masculinity *versus* femininity (iv) received high scores, which indicate a society with very individualistic habits and culture where such values as competition, achievement and success are cultivated. Regarding the uncertainty avoidance (iii)

aspect, the American society scored rather highly indicating that new ideas and products are more accepted by this society, and rules are not strongly required. Lastly, in the power distance (ii) aspect the American society presented higher scores when compared to the Brazilian society, implying that, in the former, inequalities among people are more present and accepted.

Below, a figure is presented showing the scores of the countries of the sample in the four dimensions of Hofstede's Theory.

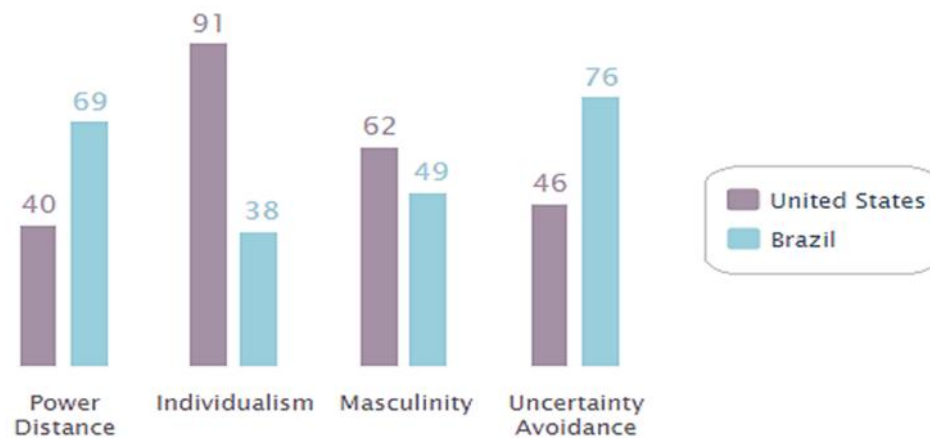


Figure 1 - Hofstede's theory scores compared between Brazil and the USA

2.3 Marketing Communication

In order to convey value through communication, the company should be aware that communication is defined as each and every interaction the brand has with its consumers, conveying an impression that can strengthen or weaken the consumers' view about the company, and it has to be aligned to the company's strategic positioning all together, that is, the company's marketing mix has to be fully integrated, in order to convey a message that is coherent with the position predefined in the strategic and in the tactical plan (KOTLER and KELLER, 2013).

Regarding global marketing, communication implies understanding that there are differences between the markets of each country, which can be: differences in language, differences of culture and population, local and legal restrictions of the target markets. According to Churchill (2010), in order to reduce these inconsistencies, companies acting in the global market (also known as global players) must use coherent strategies. The author also states that some global companies rely on advertising agencies, whose experience is not limited to one country solely. Another strategy adopted by the global players is to hire local advertising agencies, once that these agencies have knowledge of the local market, when they choose this strategy, they are resorting to a multinational strategy.

On the other hand, according to Kotler and Keller (2013), the companies that operate in the global market must take more factors into consideration when developing their communication programs. These companies, according to the authors, need to decide if the product is appropriate to the country, if the segment is legal or common to the population, if the product promotion is coherent and, then, it must proceed to opt for local or global communication. Still, according to the authors, communication can be adapted in one of the four possible levels, shown in figure 2.

Level One	The company uses a single message for all the places. It only modifies the language, names and colors.
Level Two	The same theme is used globally; however, the advertisements are adapted to every local market.
Level Three	In this stage, a group of advertisements is created among which every country can choose the advertisement that is more appropriate to its reality.
Level Four	Sales promotion is attributed to the brand's local management once that the use of the media also requires international adaptation and its availability varies from one country to another.

Figure 2 - Communication Adaptation Levels

Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2013)

According to Albers-Miller (apud BAKER, 2000), adaptation of communication is necessary in order to mitigate differences between countries concerning the effects of culture on global communication and its nuances. In order to justify the adaptation, the importance of marketing studies in target markets and the use of the tools previously mentioned is reiterated, as well as the use of Marketing Information Systems, which, as mentioned above, will support the decision for adaptation with data and information.

3 METHODOLOGY

Regarding the research technical procedure, this study is characterized as a case study, for it seeks analyzing a limited number of objects aiming to know its characteristics in details. Still, in order to assess the decisions of communication adaptation of American food companies when entering the Brazilian market, this research's approach to the problem was exploratory and qualitative. Exploratory researches that use the qualitative approach enable: the conception of hypothesis, the analysis of the interaction of certain variables, the comprehension and classification of processes (MALHOTRA, 2001).

Concerning the study's sample definition, it was composed of electronic commercials advertised in the Brazilian market and in the American market from March 2011 to May 2014. It is important to emphasize that the sample was composed of institutional and promotional commercials. Still, it is highlighted that this sampling is characterized as judgmental once that the criteria of period and message type were defined by the authors.

The analysis road map for the electronic advertisements was elaborated based on the researched theory exposed throughout item 2 of this article. It is emphasized, nevertheless, that the main variables, herein, focused on the theory described by Hofstede. Still, regarding the analysis procedures, the methodology proposed by Bardin (2011) was used. According to the author, this methodology contemplates a set of techniques for the interpretation of contents, by means of systematic procedures, which enable the inference of knowledge associated with the production conditions. Thus, operationally, the analysis was developed through the following steps:

- i. Pre-analysis: in this step the choice of the material to be analyzed occurred, as well as the formulation of hypotheses and the elaboration of indicators that support the final interpretation.
- ii. Material exploration: in this step, the systematic administration of categories and variables occurred, that is, the advertisements underwent cuts observing and stabilishing

frequencies, mainly, of the use of stereotypes related to the dimensions described in Hofstede's Theory. Another factor taken into consideration in this stage was the advertising period, to enable the association between the type of message and the context of the macro environmental scenario of that period.

- iii. Processing and interpretation of the results: in this stage the results were operated, enabling the inference and the interpretation concerning the goals previously set. The relationship between the categorized variables in the previous step and the singularities of the external and cultural environment were analyzed, as well as their consequences to the communication management.

4 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This item is structured with reference to the general objective of this article and it is divided into four blocks: macro environmental contextualization (4.1), allowing a diagnostic of the external scenarios of the two markets being analyzed; analysis of the commercials based on Hofstede's Theory (4.2), in this step the variables presented in the advertisements sampled are quantified and it is possible to infer the general values of both the Brazilian and the American cultures in the advertisements; systemic analysis of the macro environment and the cultural adaptation (4.3), where the commercials are individually analyzed using, as the fundamental parameter, the environmental scenario of the advertising period; and communication adaptation level (4.4), where the authors define, referring back to the theory described by Kotler and Keller (2013), at which level the company operates marketing communication.

4.1 Macro Environmental Contextualization

The macro environment is composed of six main variables, which are: demographic (i); economic (ii); environmental (iii); technological (iv); political (v); and social cultural (vi). In this way, and referring back to the main objective of this article, the authors decided to start the analysis by mapping the contingencies that surround the Brazilian and the American market. In table 1, the synthesis of the macro environments focused on in this article are presented.

TABLE 1 – Synthesis of Macro Environmental Data

Demographic Variable		
	Brazil	United States
Population (in 2014)	202.033.670	322.583.006
Ethnic Groups (in 2010)	White: 48%	White: 72,41%
	Black: 7,61%	Black: 7,93%
	Mixed-race ¹ : 43%	Asian: 4,75%
	Other ethnic groups: 1,38%	Other ethnic groups:: 14,91%
Gender (in 2012)	Man: 97.555 million in 2012 (49,18% of the total).	Man: 156.002 million in 2012 (49,4% of the total).
	Women: 100.806 million in	Women: 159.788 million in 2012

¹ Due to the inexistence of a literal translation to the Portuguese term *pardo*, the authors decided to use the term *mixed-race*, for it is the closest in definition to the Portuguese term.

	2012 (50,82% of the total).	(50,6% of the total).
Income (in 2010)	Average income: R\$ 1.202,00.	Average income: US\$ 3.472,82.
Economic Variable		
	Brazil	United States
Total GDP (in 2012)	US\$ 2.254 trillion	US\$ 16.244 trillion
GDP/capita (in 2012)	US\$ 11.347	US\$ 51.163
Inflation (in 2012)	6,513%	1,992%
Natural Variable		
	Brazil	United States
Territory under environmental protection (in 2010)	26%	13,66%
Areas of Permanent Grazing (in 2010)	23,17%	27,17%
CO ₂ Emission (in 2010)	419,754 kg/tons	5.433,057 kg/tons
Technological Variable		
	Brazil	United States
Number of personal computers (in 2009)	32,29 per 100 households	73,63 per 100 households
Users with internet access (in 2013)	51,60 per 100 inhabitants	84,20 per 100 inhabitants
Government expenditure on research and development (from 2008 to 2010)	1,16 % of the Gross Domestic Product	2,90% of the Gross Domestic Product
Political Variable		
	Brazil	United States
Tax burden paid pre-tax (for companies with profits of up to US\$ 100 million)	US\$ 340.000,00 in corporative taxes, or, 34% of the pre-tax profit.	US\$ 340.000,00 in corporative taxes, or, 34% of the pre-tax profit.
Extra labor costs (with salary up to US\$ 30 mil) to the employer	US\$ 17.267, or 57,57% more, in extra labor costs.	US\$ 2.652, or 8,84% more, in extra labor costs.
Social Cultural Variable		
	Brazil	United States
Average Daily Calorie Intake	3.230 kcal/day	3.650 kcal/day
Human Development Index – HDI (in 2013)	0,744	0,914
Global HDI position	79	5
Government spending on education (in 2009)	US\$ 92.349.417.938, or, 5,7% of the GDP of that year, which was of US\$ 1,620,165,226,994	US\$ 778.566.600.000, or, 5,4% of the GDP of that year, which was of US\$ 14,417,900,000,000

Source: Developed by the authors, 2015.

4.2 Analysis of the Commercials based on Hofstede's Theory

By means of the methods described in the methodology chapter, seven McDonald's campaigns advertised in Brazil and seven campaigns advertised in the United States were selected. The links for the campaigns are listed in this article's Appendix A. The analysis was,

initially, done in an individual way in order to, afterwards, by means of Hofstede's Theory, gather the variables observed in the advertisements of the countries of the sample in the categories determined by the author, below presented

- **Individualism versus Collectivism:**
 - Brazil: it was possible to perceive the use of social groups, family groups and groups of friends, much more than the use of characters in solitary scenes, even though it occurred. It is important to highlight the use of scenes in which families have their meals together. Still, groups of friends appear with great frequency eating in the restaurants.
 - United States: Despite being ranked as an extremely individualist society according to Hofstede's research, the commercials analyzed presented a large frequency of groups of friends consuming the product, what may suggest the brand's encouragement.

- **Masculinity versus Femininity:**
 - Brazil: In Hofstede's ranking, Brazil was analyzed as a country in an intermediate stage concerning the masculinity factor. Such fact was confirmed when analyzing the commercials, once that, in the majority of the commercials, there is similar appearance of men and women. Regarding the subjectivity of this variable, a more feminine society was perceived, once that values like caring for others, concern for quality of life, cooperation between the characters and modesty were observed.
 - United States: Because the United States has a more masculine graduation than Brazil, there is a constant presence of men, more than women in the commercials, even though some commercials show a similar frequency of both. As to the subjectivity, masculinity was much more frequent than its opposite, which is justified in values such as: statement of personal success and the importance of work. However, in some cases it was possible to identify feminine values as well.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance:**
 - Brazil: Because Brazil is ranked as having relatively high rates in this variable, the need for rules and regulations that reduce the uncertainty avoidance was perceived. Still, it was possible to denote the use of family moments and affective expressions between the characters, factors that are also common for societies with high rates in this variable.
 - United States: Even though American scores in this variable were below the average, it was possible to observe the use of formal rules in the dialogues and in the scenes, as well as displays of affection between the characters. These facts diverge from the stated by Hofstede in his research, although, the authors consider it important to mention that, perhaps, the company uses these scenes to incentive the consumption of the products among friends and family and, also, in order to create affective connections with the consumer.

- **Power Distance:**
 - Brazil: It was observed the use of status symbols and hierarchy in the commercials, by showing people in formal clothing and denotative roles of mother

and father, respectively. It is necessary to highlight that the power distance variable was the less common in the commercials.

- United States: Reiterating what was mentioned in the Brazilian analysis, in the American analysis it was possible to identify the same reduced occurrence of power distance in the commercials. Nonetheless, in the commercials in which this factor appeared, it was presented in the form of hierarchy figures, both the family and the working hierarchy.

4.3 Systemic Analysis of the Macro Environment and of the Cultural Adaptation

In this item, a synthetic joint analysis of the macro environmental variables along with the analysis of the variables proposed by Hofstede is presented. The synthesis of the analysis of both the macro environmental variables and the ones proposed by Hofstede, in Brazil and in the United States are presented, taking into consideration the advertising period of the commercial and the previously presented data.

4.3.1 Individual Analysis of the Commercials Advertised in Brazil

- GPPP8 Simplesmente Inacreditável - Advertisement for the “Pequenos Preços McDonald’s” campaign – March 2011 - In the period the commercial was advertised, Brazil had a majority of white and mixed-race people. The country, then, had ¼ of its territory under environmental protection, though the CO2 emission was high. Collectivism is apparent in groups consuming the product. Masculinity and femininity occur with the same frequency. Emotions and feelings are noticeable by body language. Status symbols are also present in people formally dressed.
- GPPP9 Simplesmente – Advertisement for the “Pequenos Preços McDonald’s” campaign – June 2011 - The macro environmental scenario is the same as in the first commercial, though, it is important to reiterate the feminine predominance, and the share of black people in the statistics, totalizing 7,61% of the population. Collectivism is, once more, highly present, although individualism was still perceived. Objectively, men appear as much as women in the commercial, however, subjective feminine values were present like caring for others. Again, in the uncertainty avoidance variable, the characters use body language and display feelings and emotions.
- Simplesmente Família – Happy Meal Advertisement – August 2011 - In this commercial, it is important to highlight the concern for sustainability through the permanent grazing areas in the natural variable. Still, 1/3 of the population had personal computers in this period. In this commercial it was possible to assess both the predominance of femininity in the objective variable and in the subjective variable by values like quality of life and modesty. The appearance of characters in family groups in the collectivist variable was frequently observed. Concerning the power distance variable, the display of family status (hierarchy) was frequent.
- Escolhas 30’ – Promotion of salad as a side dish – October 2011 - In the last commercial of 2011, the female predominance was identified in the macro environment. Still, the

authors considered relevant the continuous importance given to the environment and to CO2 emission rates, as previously mentioned. In this advertisement, the subjective presence of femininity was observed, in values like cooperation and quality of life.

- McD Sempre Especial – Institutional – February 2013 - Lastly, by identifying the subjective variable in the commercial, it is important to mention the Human Development Index, which was of 0,744 in Brazil. The concern with healthy eating habits and the concern with others characterized the feminine subjective variable as the most frequent in this commercial. Yet, concerning the collectivist variable, the use of family groups was constantly perceived.

4.3.2 Commercials advertised in the United States

- McDonald's Lettuce Supplier, Dirk Giannini – Institutional – January 2013 – In the period the commercial was advertised, the United States had a population of 322.583.006. Analyzing the population two years earlier, it was observed that men represented 49,4% of the population. Still, given the commercial's context, it is necessary to highlight that the territory under environmental protection in 2010 was equivalent to 13,66% of all the United States territory. The lack of display of emotional expressions or feelings is evident in the commercial regarding the uncertainty avoidance variable. Besides that, society's masculinity could be assessed through the analysis of the expressions of personal success and the factors of "living for the job," characteristic of societies where masculinity is stronger.
- McDonald's Apple Supplier, Leo Dietrich Sons "Generations" – Institutional – January 2013 - Following the same context of the first commercial, in this item of the sample it is emphasized the CO2 emission index, which in 2010 was of 5.433,057 kg/ton. Power distance was observed in this commercial through the description of the work hierarchy. Yet, regarding the individualism variable, the observed in the commercial differed from Hofstede's research, once that the commercial presents frequent scenes with groups. In the masculinity variable, the virtually exclusive use of male characters was perceived, as well as the statement of personal success. Even though the country's score was not high in the uncertainty avoidance variable, the commercial describes the requirements McDonald's makes and how they must be fulfilled, perhaps, intending to demonstrate the company's concern with the processes and the quality of the products.
- McDonald's: Dollar Menu & More – Hot New Playlist – Promotion of the Dollar Menu & More campaign – April 2014 - Because the commercial shows black people, it is important to reiterate the share of this ethnic group that represented 7,93% of the American population in 2010. Despite Hofstede's research showing the USA as an individualist country, the commercial presents a pair of friends having fun together.
- McDonald's Fish Supplier, Kenny Longaker "The Last Frontier" – Institutional – April 2014 - In the penultimate commercial of the American sample, it is worth mentioning that the Human Development Index of the USA in 2013 was 0,914. Finally, it is necessary to mention the labor costs related to the American legislation, once that the commercial

shows employees at work. In this way, in the United States, a worker costs 8,84% of extra costs to the employer, almost six times less than in Brazil. Concerning the individualism, the main character is alone in most of the commercial and refers back to himself many times throughout the commercial. Nonetheless, the advertisement also presented scenes of collective work, even though in a small proportion.

- McCafé Mornings with Jessica – McCafé Promotion – May 2014 - In the last commercial of the American sample, it is important to mention that the average income of the population in 2010 was US\$ 3.472,82, a high index when compared to Brazil. Still, in the economic variable, the American GDP/capita in 2012 was of US\$ 51.163/year, once again higher than the Brazilian index. Femininity was evident in the commercial through the concerns with quality of life and the use of female characters in the commercial. The predominance of individualism was perceived, once that the character appears alone through most of the commercial. Finally, in the power distance variable, it is possible to denote the clear family hierarchy.

4.4 Communication Adaptation Level

Based on the content analysis developed in the study, as well as on the samples analyzed in the light of the adaptation theory and its four-possibility division, according to Kotler and Keller (2013), the authors assessed that McDonald's fulfills the requirements to fit in the fourth level of communication adaptation, that is, the company attributes the decisions regarding the brand's publicity to the brand's local management, given the subjectivity of each nation and their preferences.

Reiterating the communication adaptation levels proposed by Kotler and Keller (2013), in the first level there is the minimum adaptation, in this way only the language, the colors and product names are adapted to the target country. Subsequently, in the second level, the companies use the same theme globally, the commercials are adapted, though; McDonald's does not fit in this adaptation level once that the products are adapted and the theme is not, necessarily, standardized. In the third level, every country has the possibility of choosing the most appropriate commercials within a limited number of options made available by the company. Finally, in the fourth level of adaptation, and the one used by McDonald's, the variability of media and the variability of the perspectives regarding patterns and concepts is perceived, in other words, while in some countries it is possible to advertise certain commercials, in others, the same commercials would be considered offensive or degrading.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

With the exponential growth of the food sector in Brazil, especially the fast food sector, along with the new consumption habits of the Brazilian population, the fast food sector displays great attractiveness. In this context, multinational fast food companies focus on attracting consumers' attention to their brands, investing on marketing communication.

Thus, it is relevant to identify communication adaptation decisions of McDonald's concerning its approach to the Brazilian and to the American markets. Observing the results obtained through the analysis, it is understood that, despite being considered a global brand, McDonald's adapts the brand to the Brazilian culture in both the macro environmental aspects

and in the subjective aspects mapped by means of Hofstede's Theory. Thus, considering the International Operations theories, it is perceived that the brand, in which this study focused, comprehends that the regional differences have to be incorporated within the strategy, which enables obtaining a higher sales success rate and a higher added-value to the brand.

Finally, despite reaching the objectives set, the research was limited to two countries in its sample and one company, thus, for further researches, it is suggested that more countries be added to the sample, as well as the replication of the analyses to more companies of the same sector. Still, future studies could assess the consumer perception regarding the commercials, enabling the validation on the hypothesis described in the theories that support the qualitative analysis developed in this article.

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ANNEX A – Commercials and corresponding links

Commercials advertised in Brazil

Commercial – Release Date	Link to the commercial
GPPP8 <i>Simplesmente Inacreditável</i> – March 2011	http://youtu.be/xApqIP4RaTk
GPPP9 <i>Simplesmente</i> – June 2011	http://youtu.be/4-H8yvNn0qk
<i>Simplesmente Família</i> – August 2011	http://youtu.be/DVsYsfgBm6Q
<i>Escolhas 30'</i> – October 2011	http://youtu.be/xf-2vLOmT6I
Kids – <i>Bailarina 30'</i> – January 2012	http://youtu.be/J037RiIX_kE
Kids – <i>Capa 30'</i> – January 2012	http://youtu.be/CssBqTjUT5w
<i>McD Sempre Especial</i> - February 2013	http://youtu.be/UVNRA9c7MuY

Commercials advertised in United States of America

Commercial – Release Date	Link to the commercial
McDonald's Lettuce Supplier, Dirk Giannini – January 2013	http://youtu.be/058E2W21W10
McDonald's Apple Supplier, Leo Dietrich Sons “Generations” – January 2013	http://youtu.be/EKZIHMECww
McDonald's Dollar Menu & More – November 2013	http://youtu.be/1AqTLvRkUZs
McDonald's: Dollar Menu & More – Hot New Playlist – April 2014	http://youtu.be/mmJAsw0Llpc
McDonald's: Dollar Menu & More – Symmetry – April 2014	http://youtu.be/NsU0qxnrdYo
McDonald's Fish Supplier, Kenny Longaker “The Last Frontier” – April 2014	http://youtu.be/058E2W21W10
McCafé Mornings with Jessica – May 2014	http://youtu.be/KaoyAZwHlCU