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Global marketing advertising with cultural differences

How can global companies better address cultural differences in marketing
advertising in the Middle East?

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Abstract

The thesis topic is decided based upon the preference, experience, interest and background of the authors. The authors realized the importance of being flexible in cultural values in the current environment of today's economy. This environment is called 'globalization' that has become an interesting topic in the academic world. Beyond the different challenges, the most important challenge regarding to the thesis topic is the cultural challenge. The authors have combined these elements and wanted to investigate how these factors influence marketing advertising in the Middle East.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to reach an understanding about how cultural differences in global marketing advertising can be handled by global companies in the Middle East.

Methodology

Qualitative research have been conducted in order to gather the information to support the theoretical findings. The collection of empirical data was done through semi-structured interviews from various global companies and advertising agencies in the Middle East, and case studies based on previously conducted cases.

Conclusion

The question of how global companies can better address cultural differences in marketing advertising in the Middle East is by first understanding and respecting the culture and religion of the region, following the regulations and guidelines for advertising in every specific country, cooperating with local agencies and adapting the marketing advertising strategy with a global 'think global, act local' approach.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The introduction chapter will describe the background section, the problem statement and the purpose of the thesis and delimitations for this study.

1.1 Background section

While deciding a suitable topic for this paper several aspects such as the preference, experience, interest and background of the authors have been taken into account. Both authors originate from the Netherlands, which counts over 190 different nationalities. Additionally, studying at Jönköping International Business School in Sweden has given the authors the opportunity to meet many international students. By being in the middle of such a diverse and multicultural environment in the Netherlands and also during their study in Sweden, the authors realized the importance of being flexible in cultural values in the current environment of today's economy. Experiences in such multicultural environments have furthermore portrayed the challenges of cultural differences that people and companies might face while being abroad.

Today's infrastructure enables an easy access to people and places all around the world along with products, services and technologies that can move easily across national borders. Companies today have increased opportunities to enter foreign markets and it is common that they operate in international environments (Albaum and Duerr, 2008). This environment is also called 'globalization' that has become an interesting topic in the academic world. The meaning of globalization according to Friedman (1999, p.7-8) is as following: "The inexorable integration of markets, nation states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before- in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than before, the spread of free-market capitalism to virtually every country in the world." To illustrate this statement, (Gillespie, Jeanett, Hennessey, 2004) mention that the combined value of world exports (in the form of physical goods or merchandise) reached \$6 trillion in 2001. For the period 1990-2000, world merchandise exports grew 4 percent or more in most years, exceeding world gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

Going towards globalization and internationalization provides, at the same time, both opportunities and challenges for companies (Hudea and Papuc, 2009). The companies operate in more than one country, which gives them time to develop their production, so the knowledge and the impact of the company increase. The company can exploit financial advantages because it can develop its turnover and economies of scale while developing its activities (Kotler, 2008). At the same time, these companies are also facing serious challenges concerning marketing (Keegan and Schlegelmich, 2001). Beyond the different challenges, the most important challenge regarding to our thesis topic is the cultural challenge.

Hofstede (1980, p. 87) defines culture as following: "Culture is complex, but it is not chaotic; there are clearly defined patterns to be considered. Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another". The following elements are usually included in the concept of culture according to Hollensen (2001): language, manners and customs, technology and material culture, social institutions, education, values and attitudes, aesthetics, religion.

To achieve sustainable growth and competitive advantage in markets that are constantly becoming more global, it is essential for companies to understand the complexity and diversity

of international marketing. Successfully facing this challenge and getting competitive advantage is difficult.

The marketing approach of globalized companies has had to learn how to come to terms with the realities of cultural and other differences in the markets around the world (Sinclair and Wilken, 2009). However, companies have also faced blunders, which occur due to cultural differences when they operate abroad. Verhage (2010, p. 721) illustrates some examples of cultural disregard in international business that resulted in negative consequences:

- An after shave commercial presented a romantic scene between a man and a woman that also showed the man's dog. It failed in Middle Eastern countries where dogs are considered unclean.
- A United States telephone company attempted to promote its products and services in Saudi Arabia. Its commercial portrayed an executive talking on the phone with his feet propped up on the desk, showing the soles of his shoes – a serious insult in that country.
- Procter and Gamble used a television commercial in Japan that had been popular in Europe. The advertisement showed a woman bathing, her husband entering the bathroom and touching her. The Japanese considered this advertisement an invasion of privacy, inappropriate behavior, and in very poor taste.

Consumers are different in each country. These differences arise from discrepancies in spending, values, attitudes and tastes among cultures (Usunier, 1993). Cultural values have long been recognized in the marketing literature as a strong influence on consumer motivation, lifestyle and product choices. Indeed, cultural values are often expressed through consumption behavior (Tse and Wong, 1988). Cultural influences what is purchased as well as why, how, when, where and by whom a product is purchased (Ricks, 1983). Therefore, it can be assumed that "culture impacts every aspects of marketing strategy" (Jain, 1989, p. 73).

The marketer who does not understand foreign cultures, or is insensitive to the differences that distinguish each nation, might fail on the global market. The cultural factors such as peoples' traditions, customs, beliefs and attitudes are affecting their needs and wants and how they are satisfied. The culture shapes the way people behave in a certain society. Some global companies work closely with related market research companies and marketing communication agencies that provide valuable insight into the similarities and differences among consumers in different nations (Verhage, 2010). Advertising is based largely on language and images, it is mostly influenced by the socio-cultural behavior of consumers in different countries (Hollensen, 2010).

The authors are related with the Middle East region, since the parents of the authors are Turkish. They are raised with Turkish and Islamic cultural values in the Netherlands. The authors have specified the topic by concentrating on the Middle Eastern region. Turkey might also be considered as a European country, but it still has common values with some Middle Eastern countries, due to the Islamic religion.

The Middle East includes 16 countries according to Keegan and Green (2011, p. 130): Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Turkey is not considered as a Middle Eastern country. Also, even though Egypt is part of the North-African area, the culture is very similar to the Middle East. The majority of the population is Arabian, a large percentage is Persian, and a small percentage is Jewish. The population of the region is 95% Muslim and 5%

Christian and Jewish. Despite this apparent homogeneity, many differences exist among the countries. In the Middle Eastern countries there is no single societal type with a typical belief, behavior, and tradition. The social groups can be differentiated on the basis of religion, social class, education, and degree of wealth (Keegan and Green, 2011).

According to Elbashier and Nicholls (1993) there has been a considerable growth of interest in Islamic countries, because of their growing importance as markets. There are major cultural differences between Arab countries and the Western developed nations. However, many marketing concepts are developed with reference to Western cultures.

Since the 1980s, many changes took place in the Middle Eastern oil producing countries. According to Elbashier and Nicholls (1993) the changes include fast growth in the non-oil sectors, continued growth in imports, increased education and sophistication of consumers, increased market competition, and modernization of distribution systems and marketing services. The main implication is the emergence of a marketing era, as opposed to a selling era, in which companies tailor their offerings to consumer needs. This would mean that only companies which thoroughly understand the consumers and their requirements will survive profitably in this region. Global organizations that are active, or want to become active, in the Middle East need an understanding of the differences in language, religion, attitude and values.

Another reason for selecting Arab nations is that they offer significant opportunities because of their potential to become significant markets for numerous goods and services (Ali, 1999). Kalliny, Saran, Ghanem, and Fisher (2011) state that due the globalization, the Arab world is opened for foreign products. The market offers great potential for foreign products.

This is the foundation of why this thesis will be about cultural differences in the Middle East related to global marketing advertising.

1.2 Problem statement

Hofstede (1980, p. 163) stresses the fact that “business is a different game with different rules in each country”. Hence, to solve the cultural challenge companies might use two strategies; they need to decide whether to have a homogeneous or a heterogeneous strategy (Lee & Chen, 2003). Homogeneous strategy is referring to standardization. This strategy is an international marketing strategy that uses basically the same marketing strategy and mix in all the company’s international markets (Armstrong & Kotler, 2008). The second strategy, heterogeneous, is referring to adaptation. This strategy is an international marketing strategy for adjusting the marketing strategy and mixes elements to each international target market, bearing more costs but hoping for a larger market share and return (Armstrong & Kotler, 2008). Therefore, since globalized companies operate in countries that have different cultures, it needs to choose whether to standardize or adapt the global marketing and advertising strategy. The questions of whether to standardize or to adapt the international marketing have received great attention, both options presenting positive arguments as well as serious limitations.

Understanding of different cultures and the quality of intercultural communication can make the difference between the success or failure of an international marketing effort in the multicultural world in which we currently live in (Wilhelms, Shaki, Hsiao, 2009). Culture is generally accepted as one of the host country factors influencing the degree to which a firm can standardize marketing strategy (Donnelly, 1970, Boote 1982, Ricks, 1983, Jain, 1989, Usunier, 1993). Some cultures might not be suitable by the same Western marketing approach

of global companies. To effectively reach different cultures, marketers need to develop marketing campaigns that embrace and understand the culture. The marketers need to know which factors influence the global marketing and advertising that are targeted in countries with a different culture. Buzzel (1968) has shown how cultural factors influence all aspects of the marketing mix. Advertising and promotion are mainly affected by language, literacy and symbolism.

According to the study of Elbashier and Nicholls (1993) advertising decisions were the most culturally adapted of all the marketing decisions, thus confirming what would have been expected from the academic literature. All companies made at least some modifications. So this would mean for the Middle Eastern market that the minimum is to translate advertisements into Arabic, or selecting suitable advertisements from a range of global campaigns.

Albers-Miller (1999) mention that appealing to consumers in different cultures has been a challenge for international marketers. This challenge is growing due to the globalization and the global marketing and advertising strategies. Hetsroni (2000) suggest that appeals are related to values and, while values appear in the advertisements, appeals are carefully selected and included by the advertiser. Therefore, advertising appeals are definitely not culture free, because cultural values and norms are embedded in them (Zhang and Gelb, 1996). Albers-Miller (1999) concluded that the culture of the country is influencing the type of appeal used in advertising. Depending on the cultural values, different cultures will use different appeals in their advertising.

Combining the different courses taken during this master studies and the authors' interests for the global marketing and advertising topic, the research question is defined as follow:

How can global companies better address cultural differences in marketing advertising in the Middle-East?

1.3 Purpose

The authors aim to get more in-depth knowledge about how to handle the phenomenon of cultural differences in global marketing advertising with a focus on the Middle East. Based on the descriptions in the background section and problem statement, the purpose of this thesis is; *To reach an understanding about how cultural differences in global marketing and advertising can be handled by global companies in the Middle East.*

1.4 Delimitations

The authors faced some limitations while writing and conducting this research. Due to the limited time and resources, the authors were only able to conduct eight interviews that did not cover all of the Middle East. Contacting and interviewing employees from global companies that are involved in marketing practices was very difficult. Therefore, conducting more interviews and analyzing the results can increase the validity and reliability of the study. However, the interviews that are conducted illustrated similarities whereby the data could be analyzed thoroughly. The thesis focuses mainly on advertising in general and the focus on the use of social media in the Middle East was for example not described in detail. There are differences among the countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia that has strict regulations regarding use of women in advertising and Egypt that is more liberal in the rules. The results and conclusions therefore do not cover in detail the entire Middle East.

Chapter 2. The theoretical framework

In this chapter the literature about globalization, culture and examples of influence on global marketing strategy will be discussed. The chapter starts with a brief introduction about globalization of today's environment. It will continue with whether organizations should use global standardization or local adaptation in their marketing strategy and regulations in international marketing. After, the cultural differences will be further explained by mentioning the elements of culture and the cultural frameworks. Finally, findings of previous studies conducted about advertising in the Middle East will be given with examples concerning the global marketing advertising strategy.

2.1 Globalization

The globalization of business activities and the term global strategy emerged in the early 1980s according to Andersson and Svensson (2009). Mooij (1998, p. 6) defines globalization in a broad sense as “the crystallization of the entire world as a single place.” The term globalization is used to cover the global flow of capital, technology, and media, as well as changes in human behavior that are expected to result from globalization forces. The growth of world trade with a wider range of goods and services is higher than ever before (Mooij, 1998).

Sheth (1986) points to three possible reasons for the emerging globalization of business activities in the early 1980s:

- The access to foreign markets;
- The increasing degree of international standardization of products and standards;
- The increasing number of worldwide mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures.

The term “global” is frequently used interchangeably with the terms “international” and “multinational”, although distinction has been made between these terms (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989, Adler and Bartholomew, 1992). However, the term global is more than just a replacement for international or multinational. It is a combination of a new perspective on the world and a series of new strategic concepts that enhance the competitiveness of global marketing strategies. Global marketing strategies and the globalization of marketing activities have been popular topics in literature and among practitioners since the late 19th century. The topics have been used and applied by executives in international and multinational corporations, as well as in literature in the field of international business and international marketing (Andersson and Svensson, 2009).

2.1.1 The development of global marketing

The development of global marketing went through several stages during the last decade according to Gillespie, *et al.* (2004, p. 4-6). These are listed below:

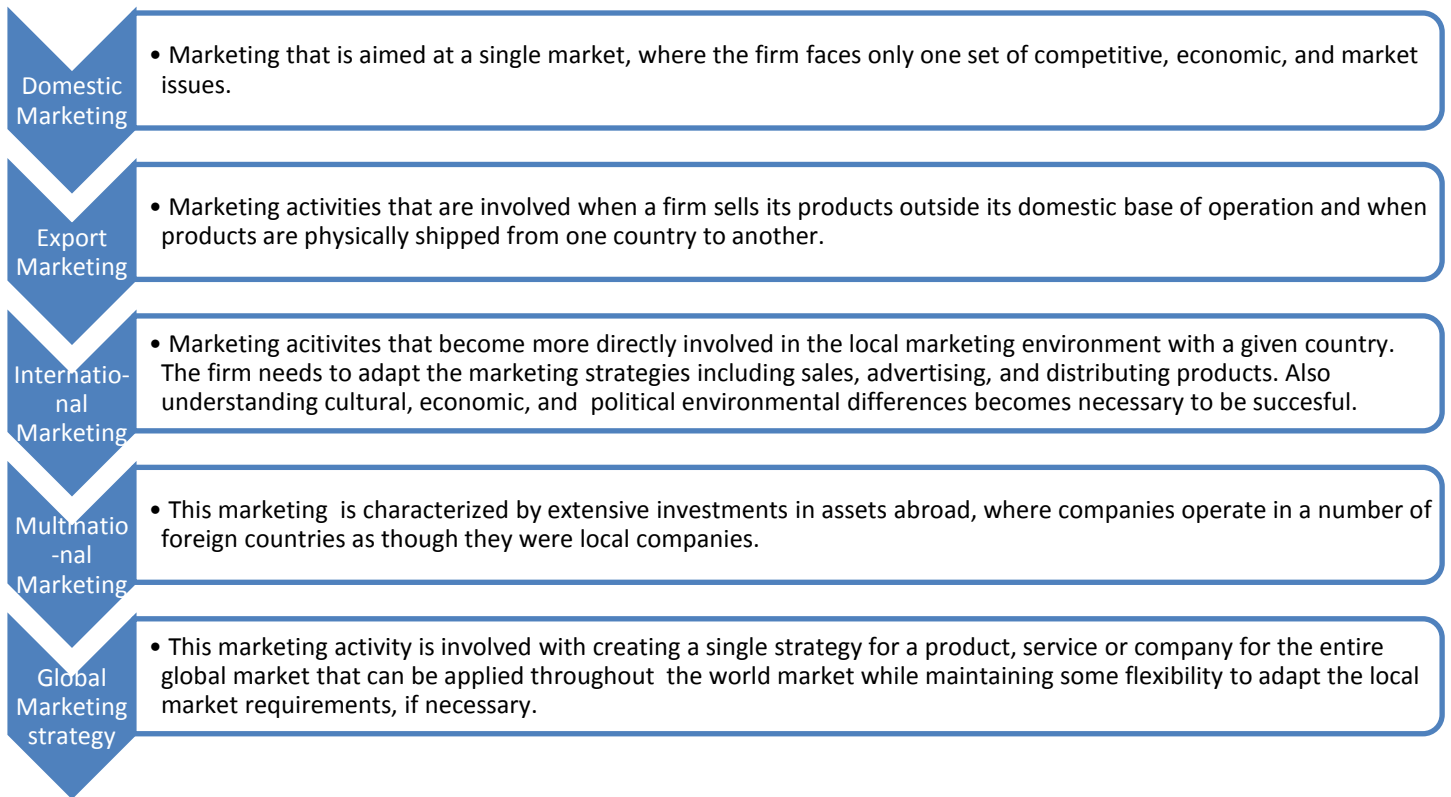


Figure 1: The development of global marketing (Gillespie, *et al.*, 2004) (figure compiled by the authors)

2.1.2 Standardization or local adaptation of global marketing strategy

Today, global marketing is much on the minds of academics and practitioners. It has been argued that the worldwide marketplace has become so homogenized that multinational corporations can market standardized products and services all over the world, by identical strategies, with resultant lower costs and higher margins (Subash, 1989). This standardization strategy in the homogenized marketplace was supported firstly by Levitt (1983) with his article in the *Harvard Business Review*. Levitt argued that marketers were confronted with a 'homogeneous global village'. He recommended organizations to develop standardized, high-quality world products and market them around the globe by using standardized advertising, pricing, and distribution. Also, by means of standardization companies could reap the benefits of economies of scale in procurement, logistics, production, and marketing. Furthermore they could transfer of management expertise, all of which was eventually supposed to lead to lower prices. Standardization is also said to offer the possibility of building a uniform worldwide corporate image, a world brand or global brand with a global image. With a smaller portfolio of strong global brands, companies might expect to achieve greater marketing effectiveness. Proponents of the Levitt theory spoke of developing powerful advertising that crosses international boundaries, cutting across all lines of culture, nationality, race, religion, values, and customs.

The success of global brands has led some writers to predict an inevitable colonization of world cultures by international corporate brands that would lead to the demise of local cultures. However, according to Mooij (1998) there is a strong evidence that social relationships and values in local cultures are relatively resistant to the assumed erosive effect of globalization. On one hand globalization is expected to destroy local cultures, but on the other hand it is the reason for the revival of local culture identities in different parts of the world. Mooij (1998) suggest that globalization has not produced globally uniform consumers. Although there is a worldwide convergence of technology, media, and financial systems, the desires and behaviors of consumers are not converging. Thinking and behavior are equally influenced by culture which means that the way people think and perceive is guided by the framework of their own culture. Sheth (1986) is supporting this idea by mentioning that the increase of companies doing business in foreign markets is not directly related to an emerging universality of consumer needs and wants. This means that the consumer needs and wants are not becoming standardized and therefore can differ in each country.

Nowadays, many companies have learned that the standardized approach is not effective. Some consumer needs may be universal, but attitudes, motivations, and expressions of needs vary. The consumer behavior is not converging on global scale what makes a global marketing strategy as Levitt recommended highly questionable. For example, Carl Spielvogel, chairman and CEO of the Backer Spielvogel Bates Worldwide advertising agency disputed Levitt's view by saying: "Theodore Levitt's comment about the world becoming homogenized is bunk. There are about two products that lend themselves to global marketing – and one of them is Coca-Cola." (Lipman, 1988, p. 1) It is true that global marketing made Coke a worldwide success. However, that success was not based on a total standardization of marketing mix elements (Keegan and Green, 2011). The CEO of the Coca-Cola Company concludes (Daft, 2000, p. 20): "...we must remember we do not do business in markets; we do business in societies.. In our future, we will succeed because we will also understand and appeal to local differences. The 21st century demands nothing less..". Douglas Daft also mentioned: "The world had changed, and we had not. The world was demanding greater flexibility, responsiveness and local sensitivity, while we were further consolidating decision making and standardizing our practices. The next big evolutionary step of 'going global' now has to be 'going local'." (Ball, 2003, p. 478).

Globalization has brought about profound changes in the society and a central theme of globalization for international companies is the discussing of having a globalization strategy with more standardized component of the marketing process or a local adaptation strategy (Bathia and Bhargave, 2008). On one hand, standardizing processes and products across markets can yield economies of scale in marketing, production, and research & development. On the other hand, firms need to appreciate the differences among foreign markets and adapt their practices and offerings to suit consumers' needs and wants (Mooij, 1998).

Wind (1986) introduces an approach that encourages companies to '*think globally and act locally*'. It suggests that the overall design follows a worldwide perspective, but that every detail of the strategy takes country characteristics and cultural differences into account. Champy (1997) challenges companies to value cultural and ethnic diversity and maintains that this is a pragmatic necessity for any company wanting to sell globally.

In the globalized world, markets might have common characteristics, but they often have important differences. Therefore, a company's marketing strategy will fail if it indicates that the same strategy that works in one country must also work in another. The key issue to

succeed in the global market is a thorough understanding of why consumers want to buy a product in each of the different markets. Mooij (1998) states that global marketing and advertising contain a number of paradoxes. The values are found within cultures and between cultures. Every culture has its opposing values. Markets are people, not products. While there may be global products, there are no global people. Similarly, there may be global brands but there are no global motivations for buying those brands. Thinking and acting are influenced by culture. Someone who thinks globally is still a product of his or her culture. For example, the global thinking of a person from one culture may be interpreted quite differently by someone from another. Therefore, the consumers' needs, wants and requirements based upon the culture have to be understood by marketers.

The most important key discussion regarding global marketing success is about to what extent advertising across national borders should be standardized across markets or localized specific to each market, or a mixture of these strategies. A global product, via its advertising, can be loaded with local values to add local significance.

A local strategy approach recognizes the necessity to consider locally related issues in the performance of business activities in the marketplace. In most areas the application of a genuine or true global strategy would be unsuitable, since local adaptations of business activities usually have to be taken into consideration in the marketplace (Andersson and Svensson, 2009).

Glocal marketing differs from the global marketing concept in that it explicitly recognizes the importance of locally and domestically related issues in the marketplace of marketing activities. Andersson and Svensson (2009, p. 38) defines the concept of glocal marketing as follows: "Glocal marketing strives to optimize the balance and harmony of the company's marketing activities on operative, tactic, and strategic levels in terms of standardization versus adaptation, similarity versus difference, and synchronization versus flexibility." In addition, according to Friedman (1999, p. 236) globalization can be defined as: "the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich the culture, to resist those things that are truly alien, and to compartmentalize those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different".

2.1.3 The impact of regulations on International advertising

In many instances, the particular regulations of a country prevent firms from using standardized approaches to advertising even when these would appear desirable. Similarly, differing national rules govern the advertising of pharmaceuticals, alcohol, tobacco, and financial services. Advertising for alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco products, advertisements showing women in sleeveless dresses, the use of superlative adjectives is strictly regulated in many countries. Thus, global marketers are recommended to check the local regulations carefully before launching any type of advertising campaign (Gillespie *et al.*, 2004).

2.2 Cultural differences

This section will describe the meaning of culture, following with the elements of culture and the cultural frameworks.

2.2.1 What is culture?

The purpose of marketing is to make revenues from the satisfaction of human wants and needs. With the aim of understanding and persuading consumers' wants and needs, an

understanding of their culture is necessary (Gillespie *et al.*, 2004). However, culture is a complex and universal concept that is actually quite difficult to define. To give an idea of this, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) counted 164 different definitions of cultures within their research. Yet, the most well-known definition among management scholars is perhaps the definition of Hofstede (1980, p. 21): “Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another...Culture, in this sense, includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture”. Svend Hollensen (2011, p. 234) describes, with a more detailed view, that: “Culture encompasses virtually every religion, education, family and reference groups. Further, it is also influenced by legal, economic, political and technological forces.” Hence, understanding the importance of culture is of essence for international marketers. In handling markets where buyers speak different languages and/or follow different religions, amongst others, international marketers can plan in advance to manage certain points of difference. However, a greater problem that marketers truly need to understand is the underlying attitudes and values of the buyers in different countries.

Huntington (1996) identifies the cultures of the world as Western (the United States, Western Europe, Australia), Orthodox (the former Soviet Republics, Central Europe), Confucian (China, Southeast Asia), Islamic (the Middle East), Buddhist (Thailand), Hindu (India), Latin American, African and Japanese. Huntington argues that an encounter in the post-cold-war period will happen among the major cultures of the world rather than amongst countries. However, Fukuyama (1996) disagrees with Huntington that the cultural differences necessarily will be the reason of conflict. In its place, he predicts an accumulative interaction amid the cultures that will lead to cross-simulation and innovative change.

Hollensen (2011) mentions that there are three characteristics that are commonly agreed among authors;

- Culture is learned, not inherent
- It is interrelated
- It is shared by a group of people

Selfridge and Sokolik (1975) discuss that culture exists of visible- and invisible parts. They describe that the tangible parts of a culture (things that can be seen, smelled, heard, tasted or touched) are artifacts or indicators of underlying values and assumptions that a group of persons share. They illustrate this as an iceberg that is divided in three levels, where daily behavior (i.e. Body language, clothing, lifestyle, and drinking and eating habits) are visible whereas the invisible behavior exist of values and morals (i.e. family values, sex roles, friendship patterns) and basic cultural assumptions (i.e. national identity, ethnic culture, religion.) (Selfridge & Sokolik, 1975). The ones underneath the surface are the ones that cannot be seen and thus make it harder for international marketers to assume.

2.2.2 Elements of culture

There are also studies that illustrate how culture affects human behavior. Gillespie *et al.* (2004) mentions that such elements consist of religion, language, history, and education. They further state that “these aspects of the society send direct and indirect messages to consumers regarding the selection of goods and services.” (Gillespie *et al.*, 2004, p. 49) Svend Hollensen (2011) has listed 8 of these elements that are commonly included in the perception of culture. The impact of these elements on international marketing is:

- Language: A country's key to its culture is the language and can be described as a reflection of the culture. Hence, if a company would work on a long-term with another culture, it is advisable to learn the language. Language can then be divided into two major elements:
 - Verbal language: This form of language has several roles in global marketing; it is important in information-gathering and evaluation efforts, it provides access to local societies, it is becoming ever more important in company communications and lastly it provides more than the ability to communicate.
 - Non-verbal language: This, differing from country to country, can also be an important and powerful mean of communication.
- Manners and customs: This element should be carefully monitored as in what exactly is different among the cultures. An example of this element is where in so-called right-hand cultures (Middle East, amongst others) the left hand is the 'toilet hand' and using it to eat, for example, is considered impolite.
- Technology and material culture: This element results from technology and is directly linked in what way a society structures its economic activity. Technological progression moves toward cultural convergence. Hence, an example is how black-and-white televisions in the US had a much higher market share compared with Europe and Japan, which took them almost a decade to reach the same level of market share. This however had changed during the color television, where the 'lag' was reduced to five years.
- Social institutions: Business, political, family or class related influence the behavior of consumers and the ways in which they relate to each other. Especially in Latin and in the Middle East, a manager who gives special treatment to a relative is considered to be fulfilling an obligation.
- Education: This element includes the procedure of transferring skills, ideas and attitudes, as well as training in particular disciplines. One purpose of education is the transmission of the existing culture and traditions to the new generation.
- Values and attitudes: These elements help determine what people think is right or suitable, what is vital and what is desirable. Relating it to international marketing, the more imbedded the values and attitudes are in central beliefs (i.e. religion), the more thoughtful the global marketing manager has to be.
- Aesthetics: This element refers towards beauty and good taste in the art, music, folklore and drama of a culture. This element of a particular culture can be important in the interpretation of symbolic meanings of various artistic expressions. Hence, what is and what is not acceptable may vary dramatically even in otherwise highly similar markets (i.e. sex in advertising).
- Religion: The main religions that are shared by a number of national countries are; Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism. The religion that is practiced most in the Middle East is Islam. Religion can provide the basis for transcultural similarities under shared beliefs. In various countries religion is of utmost importance. Religion can also influence the global marketing strategy directly in several ways such as; Religious holidays vary greatly among the countries (i.e. in the Middle East the employee production has a decrease during the month of Ramadan, where Muslims fast from sunrise until sunset), consumption patterns may be influenced by religious requirements or prohibitions (i.e. pork restriction occurs in Israel as well as in Islamic countries in the Middle East), Islamic worshippers pray facing the holy city of Mecca five times each day (i.e. in some countries in the Middle East it is not unusual for managers and workers to pray several times during the day), and finally the role of

women in advertising and gender roles varies from culture to culture, and religious beliefs are a main cause.

However, sometimes the influence of religion on the marketing environment is ignored. Gillespie *et al.* (2004) mention that religion can have a profound impact on societies. Religion helps societies determine attitudes toward social structure and economic development. The traditions and rules are dictating what goods and services are purchased, when they are purchased, and by whom. Also, according to Fam, Waller and Erdogan (2004) religion influences social behavior. This is therefore strongly related with consumer buying behavior and marketing. Also, they mention that the impact of religion on consumption patterns often relates to the restriction of certain foods and beverages, for example, Jews and Muslims do not eat pork, Hindus do not eat beef, and drinking alcohol is forbidden by Islam and strict Protestants. According to Fam *et al* (2004) global marketers are recommended to understand religious beliefs upon entering a new market, especially where Islam is the faith of the majority.

2.2.3 Cultural frameworks

There are two well-known approaches to analyze cultural influence that will be presented:

- **High- and low-context cultural framework.**

This framework has been introduced by Edward T. Hall (1960) as a way of understanding the differences in cultural placement among societies. Further, this framework is important due to its focus on communication, which is an important aspect of marketing advertising.

Low-context cultures depend on spoken and written language for meaning. Senders of messages encode their messages, expecting that the receivers will accurately decode the words used to gain a good understanding of the intended message. (Svend Hollensen, 2011).

High-context cultures use and interpret more of the elements surrounding the message to develop their understanding of the message. In high-context cultures, the social importance and knowledge of the person and social setting add extra information, and will be perceived by the message-receiver. (Svend Hollensen, 2011).

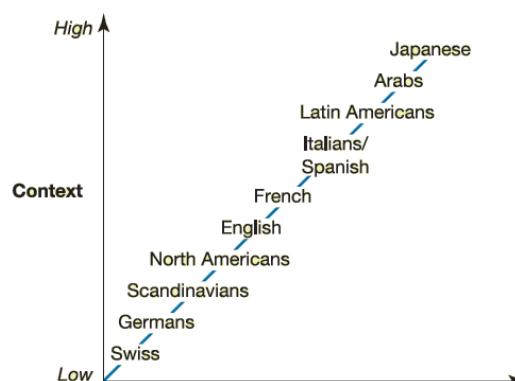


Figure 2: Contextual scale of differing cultures (Usunier, 2000)

Figure 2 shows an illustration from Usunier (2000) contextual scale of differing cultures.

Solberg (2002) has found in an analysis of industrial behavior in the Middle East that building reliance with partners willing to approve one's products takes more time in such countries than is accustomed in the West. Furthermore he found that networking (using the connection of other partners) plays an important role in the Middle East. Hence, he mentions that in the Middle East, the position of an agent and his prominent families can be crucial for a company to succeed (Solberg, 2002). A detailed view on contextual differences among the Middle Eastern countries and the US and Western Europe can be found in the appendix 1.

- **Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (the 4+1 model)**

Another useful framework that provides a better understanding of the Middle Eastern culture is Geert Hofstede’s dimension. This model is a useful tool that can be guidance for this paper (which is also still used by many companies). Hofstede (1983) tried to come up with a description for the fact that some concepts of motivation did not work in a similar way in different countries. Between 1967 and 1973, Hofstede (1983) did a research based on 116,000 questionnaires on IBM employees in 72 countries and 20 languages. Hofstede mentions that the way people in different countries perceive and interpret their world vary along 5 dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity and time perspective (Hofstede, 2012). The Arab world will be described according to the dimensions. Hofstede made a difference between the Arab world including the countries Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya and Saudi Arabia) and the United Arab Emirates. Hence, these two dimensions will be compared with each other.

1. Power distance: This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal – it expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities amongst us. Power distance is defined as *the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally*.

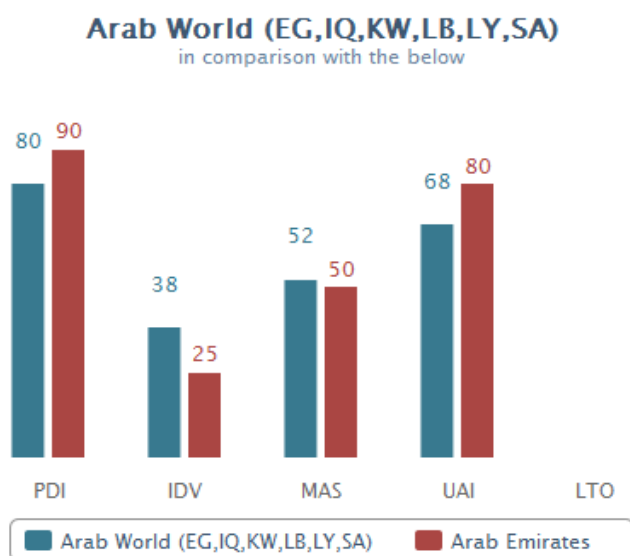


Figure 3: Graph of comparison Arab World and Arab Emirates, Geert Hofstede (2012)

The Arab world scores 80 on the power distance and the Arab Emirates 90, meaning that people accept a hierarchical order in which everyone has a place and which does not need any further justification. This type of hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inequalities, a centralization approach, and subordinates that expect to be told what to do.

2. Individualism: The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is *the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members*. It has to do with whether people’s self-image is defined in terms of “I” or “We”.

The Arab culture scores 38 on the individualism and the Arab Emirates 25, and is therefore a collectivistic society. This means that loyalty is vital and stands above most of the other societal rules and regulations. The society foresees strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for their close members of their group. Offence would lead to disgrace and humiliation, and the relationship of employer and employee is perceived in moral terms (i.e. family).

3. Masculinity / Femininity: A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner / best in field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organizational behavior. A low score (feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. *The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine).*

On the masculinity and femininity dimension, the Arab world scores 52 and the Arab Emirates 50, which means that this is more a masculine society. In such countries, managers are expected to be self-confident and able to make decisions, there is an emphasis on equity, things such as competition, performance and/or conflicts are set by fighting them out and people tend to “live in order to work”.

4. Uncertainty avoidance: The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. *The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these is reflected in the UAI score.*

The final dimension is the uncertainty avoidance index, and the Arab culture scores 68 and the Arab Emirates 80. This means that the Arab culture exhibits are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas, and fixed code of belief and behavior. There is a need for rules on an emotional level, time is seen as precious, the people tend to have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision is the norm, innovations may be repelled and security is an important element. This can be related also to the religious belief in these countries.

5. Long term orientation: The long term orientation dimension is closely related to the teachings of Confucius and can be interpreted as dealing with society’s search for virtue, *the extent to which a society shows a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view.*

There is no information available on this dimension for the Arab world and the UAE.

2.3 Previous studies: Marketing advertising in the Middle East

Many of the studies mention that little has been researched upon advertising decisions or strategies in the Middle Eastern region. However, as Melewar *et al.* (2000) mentions this has been changing since the 1990s with a sharp rise in investment from global companies to also take advantage of the growing opportunities in this region. Melewar *et al.* (2000) for example conducted a survey among 110 companies who claimed to be actively advertising in the Middle East (where 94 of them were usable responses). The main businesses of these companies were in consumer durable, non-consumer durable and service industries, and their headquarters were located in either Europe, the United States, Japan, or the Middle Eastern region.

The results of Melewar *et al.* (2000) indicated that 44% of the respondents made use of joint process in making advertising objectives. Also, decisions such as positioning and the theme of the advertising were decided by the headquarters. However 40% of the respondents stated that decisions such as target segment, creative execution and media strategy were done by the local companies. Furthermore, the results point toward a standardized approach by the global companies since this enables the companies to have better control over quality and facilitated cost reduction. They believe that standardization will become more intensified in the future since companies perceive the advantages of standardization more than the disadvantages. Other main findings can be found in figure 3 from Melewar *et al.* (2000) on the right.

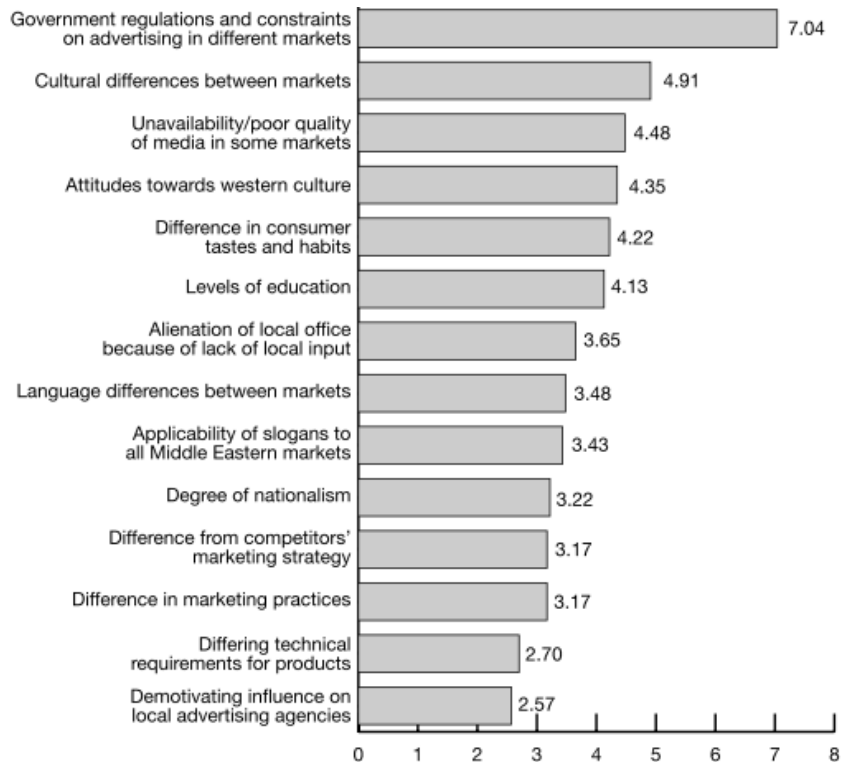


Figure 4: Perceived disadvantages of a standardised approach to advertising in the Middle East (0=Very low, 10=Very high) (Melewar *et al.*, 2000, p. 539)

As can be seen, a majority of these companies state that they face difficulties in the level of

government regulations and other constraints. This is interesting since the respondents have noted the difficulties in cultural differences after the government regulations. Since this thesis focuses on the cultural difference aspect, the other issues will not be further explained. Melewar *et al.* (2000) believe that companies view the Middle East as a single region that share similar cultures and beliefs and do not see the differences among the various countries. However, one final important note is that the companies that Melewar *et al.* (2000) surveyed, had over five years' experience. Hence, this could mean that for new entrants the cultural

differences might be perceived as a higher disadvantage, whereas more experienced companies in this region do no longer see such differences as barriers.

Another study that was done by Harris and Attour (2000) focused on identifying differences between print advertisements for the same brand, among Europe and the Middle East, by building upon the model of Whitelock and Chung (1989). The reason of Harris and Attour to conduct the analysis on these two regions was because Europe has prior studies that indicate that global companies are more likely to practice advertising standardization, and the Middle East because this is an area that has been neglected in international advertising studies, despite being an important economic region in today's world. The markets were considered based upon sufficiently being homogeneous in terms of religion, culture, the economic development and usage of media tools.

The study was done on monthly women's publications, as this allowed to establish a comprehensible target group with similar characteristics and accessibility. The elements that have been analyzed by Harris and Attour (2000) can be found in the appendix 2. The sample size was 15,000 advertisements and eventually the focus was on fifty-one companies that advertised in six or more of the sampled countries of Harris and Attour's study. These companies were clearly driven by international advertising decisions who spent considerable amounts of money on advertising.

Their findings implied that 77 % of these global companies were using regional standardization, however the advertisements among the two regions were noticeably different. Especially the headline, subhead, body text and slogan were modified, however other elements remained the same. Their findings showed that regional standardization was found to be more common than regional modifications with these companies. Hence, Harris and Attour (2000) were able to obtain a precise understanding of the forms of standardization with this study in the two regions.

The study of Elbashier and Nicholls (1993) did a research on companies who were exclusively or primarily concerned with marketing goods in the oil producing countries in the Arab world. They wanted to research the perception of company export executives in regard to the importance of cultural differences in the Middle East. Like the previous researchers, they as well are surprised about the fact that academics have not gone further and made an effort to examine the effect of cultural differences in the Middle East on marketing. Elbashier and Nicholls conducted case studies on ten companies (from the United States and United Kingdom) which they found in the consumer goods field.

The findings showed that nine out of ten from the export management that were interviewed said that cultural factors are fairly, or very important. At the same time economic factors, and even in many cases, political factors were also regarded as even more important factors. The results furthermore showed that even though the companies have a high cultural awareness, they do not adopt a systematic approach to analyzing cultural differences as described in marketing literature, but base it more on personal observation and experience. Among some other differences that they noted in the business practices in general, the advertising choices that are closely followed by product related choices are thought to be most culturally sensitive. Furthermore, Elbashier and Nicholls (2000, p.79) study also managed to emerge a general picture of the Arab consumer. They describe the Arab consumers as: "less sophisticated, less rational, less individualistic, highly price oriented consumers who were rather conservative and somewhat suspicious of locally made products." There is somewhat a confusion about the roles of males and females in the Arab family buying decisions. The

personal involvement and importance of family relationship also came out of their study. Lastly, they came with the following solutions to tackle the cultural problems:

1. Adapting all- or partly of the marketing, especially the advertising and product.
2. Business and consultation with local distributors by careful selecting them.
3. Selecting culturally sensitive personnel and/or appointing local nationals on at least a supervisory level.
4. Attempt to monitor and feedback information regarding the local environment by mainly keeping track of personal observation.

2.4 Examples of global marketing strategy

There are several examples that the authors would like to emphasize. These case examples are related with the global marketing strategy, advertising in the Middle East and adapting the local market and understanding the cultural differences.

Proctor & Gamble's initial strategy for Pringles

Gremmen (2003) gives an example of Procter & Gamble's (P&G) strategy for Pringles, an originally American brand of potato chips. While it attempted to penetrate the European market, the company first tried to sell its product by centralized marketing. However sales were not good and P&G decided to localize the brand, develop local flavors and adopt the advertising campaigns. Also, a study was made to find out when consumers tend to eat potato chips in different countries and was implemented accordingly in the advertising campaigns. Thanks to this glocal marketing strategy, P&G succeeded in increasing Pringles sales more than fivefold.

Yum! Brands: international flavors for foreign markets

Adamy (2008) gives an example of Yum!, which is the world's largest restaurant company and has more than 15,000 restaurants in 110 countries outside the United States. Recently Yum! has opened its first location of Taco Bell in the Middle East in Dubai. Homi Bhabha, an international marketing expert, mentions that it is crucial for companies to understand that basic translation of names, packaging and ads is not enough. Instead, a company should be willing to also modify its brand to meet the cultural norms, rituals and anthropology in order to become successful in an international location. This is how Yum! established its Taco Bell in Dubai, by tweaking their recipes and modes of operation to mesh with local tastes and cultures.

McDonald's: going 'glocal'

Gumbel (2008) gives an example how McDonald's first managed to grow internationally by simply applying a standardized approach outside the United States. However, at a sudden point in time, McDonald's noticed that its brand was starting to falter badly and losing an image battle. It was even doing badly in the United States. Its new strategy was to give regional and national McDonald's more leeway to make their own decisions. McDonald's realized through this situation that running a successful company requires significant changes in corporate behavior as well. Going 'glocal' requires a balance between managing a brand on a consistent global basis and appealing to different consumer tastes throughout local markets.

IKEA Catalogue: Are there any cultural differences?

Ikea (2012) mentions on its own site that it publishes each summer in 47 different editions, in 24 languages for 32 countries the Ikea catalogue, consuming 70 percent of the company's

annual marketing budget. There are about 12,000 products in the total IKEA product range. Each store carries a selection of these 12,000 products depending on store size. The core range is the same worldwide, but there are differences in how the IEKA catalogue displays its products in the different national editions.

Marketing Barbie in the Middle East

Iwata (2006), Barbaro (2006) and Al-Jadda (2005) describe how Barbie have faced opposition on political, religious, and cultural grounds. This arises due to the cultural gap that exists among an average Arab girl and a doll like Barbie. Barbie also faced competition from new and local competitors such as Sara and Dara, which have only been created to compete with Barbie. These local dolls also feature traditional clothing and headscarves and are available with family members. Hence, making it difficult for the Barbie doll.

Supermodel Gisele censored for the Middle East H&M

Rawi (2011) gives an example of an H&M campaign where the supermodel Gisele Bündchen was starring. The photo-shoot of the supermodel had been digitally altered, where a t-shirt or vest was added under the clothes, to cater for ads running in Dubai. Even though there are no dress codes enforced on women in Dubai, this was done since it is considered etiquette to wear modest clothes in public.



Figure 5: Example of digitally altered advertisements where on the second and fourth picture a white shirt is added (Rawi, 2011)

Chapter 3. Methodology

In this chapter the method of research is going to be discussed. This will include the description of the study, discussing the research approach and the design chosen to conduct the research.

Many of the research books describe the process of marketing research in six broad steps. Malhotra and Birks (2006) describe that these six steps exist out of problem definition, research approach development, research design formulation, fieldwork or data collection, data preparation and analysis, and report preparation and presentation.

Based on the 'research-process onion' of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), this part of the thesis will focus and describe the development of the research approach and the formulation of the research design as following: Philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices and time horizons. The last part will discuss the techniques and procedures of this chapter.

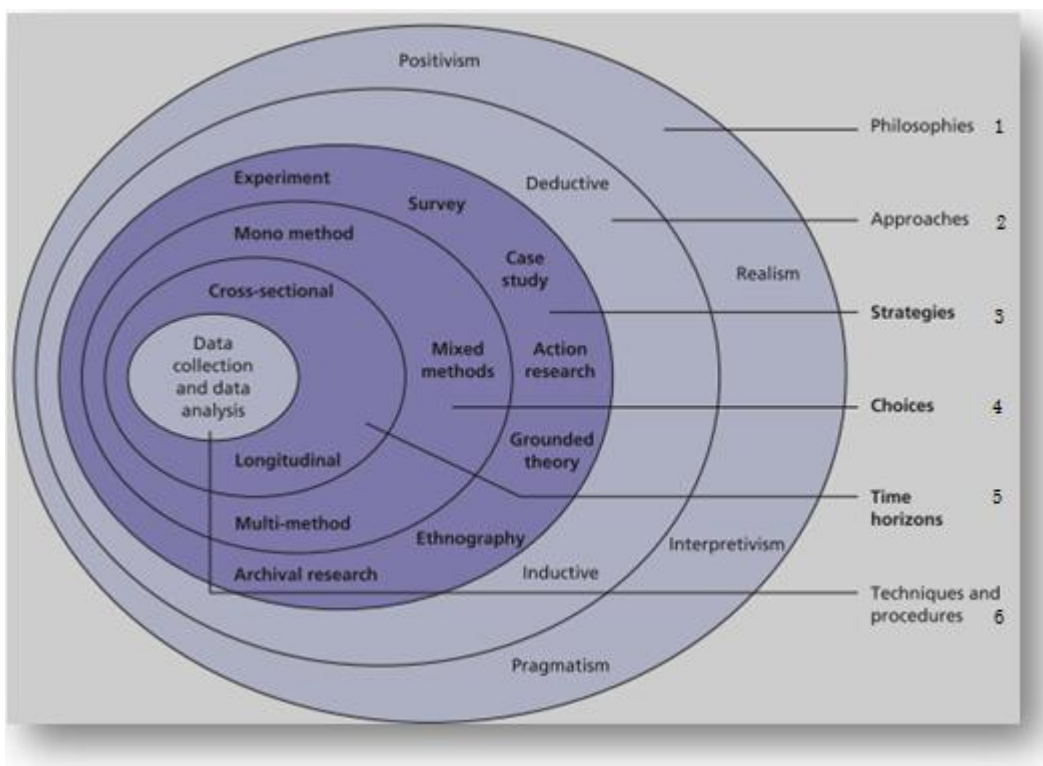


Figure 6: Research-process onion (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p. 189)

3.2 Philosophies

Saunders *et al.* (2009) describes the research philosophy as something that contains important assumptions about the way in which the world is being viewed by. An example is that if a researcher is mostly concerned with facts, it is most likely going to have a different point of view of researching compared to a researcher that is mostly concerned with feelings and attitudes in a certain research.

Saunders *et al.* (2009) mention four different philosophies in their process;

- 'Positivism is related to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist. This entails working with an observable social reality and the end product can be law-like generalizations similar to those in the physical and natural sciences.' (p. 128)
- 'Essence of realism is that what the senses show us is reality, is the truth: that objects have an existence independent of the human mind.' (p. 128)
- 'Interpretivism is an epistemology (*researchers view of what is regarded as acceptable knowledge*) that advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand the differences between humans in our role as social actors.' (p. 128)
- Pragmatism is the 'external, multiple, view chosen to best enable answering of research question' (p. 119)

Since this thesis is focusing on finding out how global companies can better address cultural differences in marketing advertising in the Middle-East, the authors find the realism philosophy the most appropriate to this study.

3.3 Deductive and inductive approaches

Deduction and induction are mentioned by Saunders *et al.* (2009) and Malhotra and Birks (2006), among many other researchers, as the most common research approaches. The deductive approach develops a theory and hypothesis(-eses) and also a strategy that is designed to test this hypothesis. Inductive approach on the other hand collects data and develops a theory as a result of the data that has been analyzed (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). There is however also a possibility to do a combination of the two approaches.

The authors will have a deductive approach that will also include some elements of inductive. This approach will help the authors with implementing the theoretical part with the empirical part and to have a structured approach.

The main reason for choosing the deductive approach derives from Yin (2003) and Saunders *et al.* (2009) who share the thought that inductive approach may be a difficult approach to follow and is also not advised for inexperienced researchers. Further, they also claim that it is a lengthy process of time and resource intensive if a researcher wants to make it successful (Yin, 2003) and (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

There are three studies mentioned by Saunders *et al.* (2009) to approach a research: explanatory, descriptive or exploratory.

- Exploratory study: Saunders *et al.* (2009) mention that it is in particular useful if a researcher wants to understand a problem (i.e. if there is an uncertainty of the nature of a problem). Furthermore, Saunders *et al.* (2009) mention that this approach has a main advantage since it is flexible and adaptable to change due to the large amount of data that the researcher is gathering. Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991) agree with this matter by mentioning that while the focus in the beginning is broad, it becomes gradually narrowed down as the research advances.
- Descriptive study: Saunders *et al.* (2009) furthermore describes that this approach can be an extension to-, or a part of explanatory research. Hence, in this approach it is important to have a clear understanding of the phenomena that a researcher wants to collect data from, before actually collecting this data.

- Explanatory studies: The final approach involves on studying a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationships between variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

The most appropriate approach for this study is according to the authors a combination between exploratory and descriptive. This is due to the belief that there is a great number of information that can be found on the chosen topic (being exploratory), but at the same time it will be a structured research that has set its goal to describe the approach how to better address cultural differences in an accurate and conclusive way.

3.4 Strategies, Choices and Time horizons

There are several research strategies that can be used along with the research studies. Saunders *et al.* (2009) describe the following seven which are mentioned below:

- Experiment
- Survey
- Case study
- Action research
- Grounded theory
- Ethnography
- Archival research

The authors will focus on the case study strategy for this study as it enables them to gather sources of evidence in a real life context with the involvement of empirical investigation of the cultural differences within the Middle-East. Hence, this will mean that only one strategy will be used making it a mono method (a single data collection technique).

There are two time horizons that can be applied for the research; the cross-sectional studies and the longitudinal studies. Cross-sectional focuses on a short-time span whereas longitudinal for a longer period of time (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Due to the time constraint the authors have decided to make this study a cross-sectional study where the focus will be on finding companies that are operating in the Middle-East and how they are operating in the present time.

3.5 Data collection: Qualitative vs Quantitative

There are two types of research data that can be conducted in order to attain data: Qualitative and quantitative. Malhotra & Birks (2006) describe both research data as following: ‘Qualitative research is an unstructured, primarily exploratory design based on small samples, intended to provide insight and understanding, Quantitative research are research techniques that seek to quantify data and, typically, apply some form of statistical analysis.’ (p. 132). Saunder *et al.* (2009) highlights the main differences between both data as following:

Quantitative data	Qualitative data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on meanings derived from numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on meanings expressed through words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection results in numerical and standardised data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation

Figure 7: Comparison Quantitative data vs Qualitative Data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p. 482)

Based on the earlier research processes, the authors have decided that the qualitative data is the most appropriate one for this study. Amongst several qualitative data methods such as, focus groups, mood boards, observations etc., the authors have decided upon conducting interviews.

According to Gorden (1987) interviewing is a valuable method to use for getting information about people. Interviewing can be defined as a formal discussion between two parties in which information is exchanged. Interviewing is most valuable when researchers are interested in knowing people's beliefs, attitudes, values, knowledge, or any other subjective orientations or mental content regarding a certain topic.

In order to collect the data for the empirical material, semi-structured telephone and video calls will take place through Skype or phone. In semi-structured interviews the interviewer has the flexibility to develop follow-up questions if necessary. In this type of qualitative data collection it is possible to ask questions in different orders. This method is chosen, because the data collection of the empirical material should gain valuable, deep and detailing answers. Furthermore, the reasoning for using telephone- and video calls is because the authors want to collect data from marketing managers and advertising agencies that are in the Middle East. Since it will be impractical and expensive to go there, the fastest, easiest, and cheapest way is thus to have telephone- and video calls.

Regarding the content of the interviews, the authors have prepared a questionnaire that contains a total of twelve questions that can be found in appendix 3. The interview will start with thanking the interviewee for participating in the interview in order to establish a personal contact and also to put the interviewee on ease. The purpose of the interview will again be explained briefly before the interview will start. Further, the interviewee will be asked for permission to record the interview. The first question starts with asking the job function and responsibilities of the interviewee within the company, followed by the main questions. Other factors on which the authors need to pay attention to during the interviews are to use appropriate language and to test and summarize what the interviewee will say. The questions are related to the opinions of the interviewee concerning advertising in the Middle East and the challenges, the debate of standardization and adaptation of marketing advertising strategy, the influence and the role of the Islamic religion and finally, the recommendations and future expectations.

3.6 Criteria for qualitative research

There are criteria's for measuring the conducted qualitative research. Reliability and validity are terms that are often used to measure the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is one of the most important research criteria's and it describes whether the study measures what it intends to measure (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with decision-makers and/or influencers in marketing practices related to advertising in the Middle Eastern market of global companies. The interview respondents' perspectives and opinions will be compared with each other to analyze differences and similarities in the answers.

The validity of the study can be improved by having more interviews with marketing managers from different global companies that are active in different markets. Moreover, the differences

and similarities from the collected interviews could be analyzed specifically. The results could be more clarified and the study will measure what it intends to measure, because of the amount of collected data. However, due the time limit only eight interviews will be hold with marketing managers from global companies.

The quality of the analysis and validity depends on the quality of the interviews. In order to increase the validity of the interviews several things will be taken into account. The questions will be send to the interviewees before the interview in order to get the possibility to prepare the answers. This will also prevent misunderstandings of the questions or topic. However, the semi structured interview gives the opportunity to be flexible in asking questions. More questions can asked according to the answer of the interviewee to go in-depth in the analysis. The interview guide increases the validity, since mistakes can be prevented by this tool. Since, the authors will both attend the interview, there is the opportunity to separate the task someone asking the questions and the other taking notes and analyzing at the same time, and also assist in asking questions.

3.6.2 Reliability

Easterby-Smith (2008) suggests that reliability refers to the extent to which the data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings. It can be assessed by posing the following three questions:

1. Will the measures yield the same results on other occasions?
2. Will similar observations be reached by other observers?
3. Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?

During semi-structured interviews this is very difficult, since according to the interview the questions can be asked in a different structure. However, the interview will be adapted depending on the interviewee.

In order to increase the reliability the interviewee is asked for permission to record the interview. This will make it possible to listen again to the interview in order to do not miss anything important for the analysis of the data. Also, the interview guideline increases the reliability, because this will give the opportunity to have an overview of the interview.

The reliability could increase by having face-to-face interviews, since the answers perhaps could be more detailed and specific. However, the interview could not be done face-to-face, since the distance and to arrange a meeting. Interviews are conducted through Skype and Phone. The specific companies that are chosen are affecting the results of the research. This is influencing also the reliability. The conclusion of the study is also depending on the companies that are chosen.

Robson (2002) mentions threats to reliability. The subject of the participant error is one of the threats. Depending on the mood of the interviewee the answers can maybe differ. Also, because of the subject or participant bias threat, the interviewee will say what it's good for the company. There is also an observer bias, by interpreting the answers differently. The record of the interview and discussion among the authors can solve the problem.

Chapter 4. Empirical findings

In this chapter the empirical data is presented and described. First, there is a list of companies that have participated in the interview. Following with a description about the underlying motivation why these companies were chosen for the interviews. Finally, the information collected from the interviews will be presented.

4.1 The companies that participated in the interviews

In total, there were eight interviews conducted to collect empirical data regarding advertising in the Middle East by global companies. First, the authors have made a list of companies that are interesting and suitable to conduct an interview with. The criteria to collect a list of companies is whether the company is active in the Middle East and also active worldwide. Also, the authors tried to collect companies that are active in different markets. The authors had some difficulties with arranging interviews with global companies that are active in the Middle East. However, the following companies were approached successfully and the contact persons for marketing practices in the Middle East were willing to do an interview. The companies background description and the motivation why these companies are interviewed are presented in appendix 4 .

Company	Interviewee	Function	Date of interview
Turkish Airlines	S. Sirin	Advertising Manager	Thursday, 19 th April, 2012
Heineken Group	M. Abraham	Marketing Manager Africa & Middle East	Friday, 4 th May, 2012
Zed Communications	M. Roeleveld	Account Manager	Tuesday, 24 th April, 2012
La Roche	A. Mouhtar	Marketing and Sales Manager	Monday, 16 th April, 2012
Education First	R. Kadour	Sales Manager	Wednesday, 25 th April, 2012
Vogue Boutique	Anonymous	Retail Manager	Wednesday, 18 th April, 2012
AstraZeneca	W. Hamdy	Marketing and Sales Manager	Monday, 16 th April, 2012
Fortune Promoseven	T. Miknas	CEO	Thursday 17 th May, 2012

Figure 8: List of companies that participated in the interviews (compiled by the authors)

4.2 The interview results

The interview results will be presented in tables according to the questions answered by the interviewees in order to have a total summarized view of the results. After a short introduction where the interviewee describes the job function and responsibilities the authors continued with the main questions for collecting the required data. Additionally, in appendix 5 the entire description of the results from the eight different interviews is presented.

Company	Question: <i>'What do you think about advertising in the Middle East and what are the challenges?'</i>
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising in the Middle East has the same challenge as anywhere else. The countries within the Middle East region differ among each other. • In the Middle East the advertising appeal needs to include luxury and status symbols. • Outdoor advertising is not developed as in Western or Asian countries.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising in the Middle East has a challenge. Since in the Middle East there is a very clear rule where no ATL advertising (Promotional activities carried out through mass media, such as television, radio, out-of-home, magazines, cinema and newspaper, are classed as 'above the line' promotion) is permitted for alcoholic products. The Heineken Group is respecting this regulation and therefore does not spend their marketing budget in ATL Media.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family values in advertisements are used often in the Middle East. In addition, humor in advertising is very important in Egypt. • There are similarities among the countries considering the basic common rules and regulations regarding advertising. • Mainly the restrictions are related to the use of women in advertising.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmaceutical companies in the Middle East are not allowed to use advertising for their products that are not over the counter products (such as vitamins, obesity medications, aspirin, etc.) due the regulations. • The Islamic religion related with the culture is mostly a challenge in the Middle East. I.e., in Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Gulf States the regulations in advertising are very strict regarding using women in advertisements that is almost forbidden. In contrary, Qatar, UAE, Egypt and Lebanon are less strict in their regulations.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Middle Eastern culture is quite similar to each other except for Saudi-Arabia and Iran. • People in Kuwait prefer to have advertising through traditional media tools, such as television and newspapers. • However, the outdoor advertising is starting to grow in the Middle East. For example, in Egypt the importance of outdoor advertising has

	<p>been increasing and many types of advertising is being used. This can be supported by the fact that there is a high competition in the Middle East and the prices for advertising are increasing.</p>
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of print/outdoor advertising is quite poor in terms of converting potential clients in to customers.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A challenge in the Middle East is that all outdoor media needs to have Arabic as a main language, whereas only one secondary language is allowed. • The traditional media is still very alive in this region. • When it comes to more creative advertising one always needs to take the cultural aspect into account, because in this region no alcohol is allowed in any advertising, not even a wine glass. Even when it comes to cultural values and how male and female roles are defined within this region have an impact on advertising creative's.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has the same challenge as anywhere else in the world. Fortune Promoseven try to communicate a message, win brand awareness, knowledge, advocacy and loyalty just like anywhere else.

Company	Question: <i>'What are the main differences between advertising in Europe and the Middle East?'</i>
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main differences in advertising between the regions consist of the use of women in advertising. • The people in the Middle East watch the television more compared to other countries. However, there is a very high demand for online advertising in the Middle East, like in almost every region, and this is increasing rapidly. • The influence of the globalization of the world and the decrease of differences in advertising between these regions. There are several factors that are different in the approach between Middle East and Europe, but it can be assumed that it's becoming more similar to the European approach. The Middle East is now in the stage that Asia was involved 10 years ago, which means that the European and American culture is influencing the lifestyles of people. The government is also aiming on investments of 'Western' companies in this region. Therefore, in a certain way the approach becomes more and more similar as in Europe. The world becomes more global and the Middle East wants to be part of this global world.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main difference is that for alcoholic products ATL is allowed in Europe, whilst this is not so in the Middle East.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is another perception of the women in the Middle East and therefore the use of women is different. This is influenced by the culture and the Islamic religion. • In the advertising the use of family values is very important in the Middle East. This is different than in Europe where there is an

	<p>individualistic society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Middle East advertising by phone (text message, mms, pictures) is very popular in contrary with Europe. Especially in countries such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates. Promoting products by advertisement with phone is starting to get highly used in the Middle East, because of the increase of using iPhones and Smartphones by consumers.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The European market is far more advanced in the e-market, whereas in most of the countries in the Middle East there is less feeling for the technological devices.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation and social media is more developed in the West.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising in Europe has more creativity, and allows more provocative advertising when it comes to ambient media. There are many taboos and restrictions that must be avoided and this can strongly undermine how creative advertising is approached in the Middle East.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The difference in my opinion is that in Europe its less targeted towards traditional media and more focused on social media. While in this region traditional media still accounts for a high stake within company's marketing budget. Also in Europe one can be very creative and more provocative advertising is allowed when it comes to ambient media.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity had never been considered a "serious" business. The Middle East has the same as Europe multiple markets, with local marketing teams. Each market is different and has to be treated differently. This sounds obvious, but from the outside, many people think of Middle East as one market. There are cultural differences. Here you stay as far away from politics as possible. Also, people are more conservative in their traditions. Not a lot of sexual references. You need to be mindful of communication that will run in Saudi Arabia which has very strict rules of engagement, versus Lebanon who are quite open about sexuality. But, this is what makes communication rich. The cultural insights that you can mine brings people and brands closer together, whether it's in Kuwait or Latvia.

Company	Question: 'Are there guidelines that companies needs to follow when making marketing advertisements in the Middle East region?'
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The guidelines mainly based on using women in advertising.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are clear guidelines that we need to follow according to advertising alcoholic products. Heineken Group diligently follows the local rules and regulations on advertising.

Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are regulations, influenced by Islam and the culture, about using women in advertisement in the Middle East. Between the countries in the Middle East the regulations and guidelines differ among each other. Therefore, each country in the Middle East has specific regulations that companies needs to follow when they are advertising. For example, Bahrain and Egypt are less strict compared to other countries in the region.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising alcohol is strictly forbidden in the Middle Eastern countries (unless the advertisement takes place at the location where the alcohol is actually being sold) due the religion.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the regulations in the middle east in general, the pharmaceutical companies are not allowed to use marketing advertising for their products that are prescribed by physicians.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are guidelines set that companies are enforced to follow.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising alcoholic products is forbidden in the entire region. • Companies have to respect the country's local culture and use Arabic as a main language when it comes to outdoor media.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations have to comply with the rules and laws of the country of registration. Which is great, because it means that the advertising industry is getting more and more transparent every day. • In terms of the actual communication, the rules vary. Organizations must comply with all intellectual property rules that other countries comply with. • Typically, a campaign that will run in local markets or pan regional, have to go through the ministry of information to make sure that there is nothing in the communication that goes against the cultural and religious morals of the country. • If you cannot be relevant to your market and you're just doing ads that will make a statement for personal gain, then you are doing a disservice to your client partners and even worse, to the brand.

Company	Question: 'What do you think about the standardization and adaptation debate of marketing advertising? Which one occurs more frequent in the Middle East?'
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizations need to consider the local market and adapt the marketing advertising strategy according to the market. Not only within an area such as Europe, Asia or Middle East, but also your strategy needs to be adapted according to the countries within an area. For example, Turkish Airlines is currently creating an advertising strategy with using the theme of the holy Ramadan month for the

	<p>Muslims. Since the majority of the population in the Middle East follows the Islamic religion, the advertising message is related to these values.</p>
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting the global marketing strategy is necessary to meet the needs of the consumers in this region.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation of the marketing advertising strategy is important and necessary. It's not easy to apply the European advertisement to the Middle East. The advertisements between countries in the Middle East is also different. For example, in Dubai women are used in the advertisements, but this is not possible in Saudi Arabia. Every company needs to adapt to the local market to be successful in marketing advertising.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That there is definitely a requirement of global companies to adapt to this part of the world. Even though a company could apply the same strategy that it is doing worldwide, it should adapt its activities such as marketing advertising. In general to a certain extent the advertisement does need to be adapted to the local market in order to cover the needs and mindsets of the local people, even though the strategy of a company has a global focus.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The international campaigns that are used globally can be brought to the Middle East, however they do need to adapt as well if it does not fulfill the requirements. Pepsi-Cola for example might decide to use different celebrities for its advertisement and/or MacDonald's might add or change their menu's according to the market. Hence, Middle-Eastern market does require adaptation as it is not similar to the western market, making the companies think on a global scale and act on a local scale when this is necessary. There is not necessarily a need for adaptation to its advertisements to the local market, since it is a pharmaceutical company. The standardization and adaptation debate depends on the product and market.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It all depends on the scope of your operations and the nature of your business. However, in general, adaptation occurs more often. Since we bring international brands the advertising strategy is standardized, however we consider the local culture.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You cannot standardize your marketing campaign throughout the world. Every region/country had its own cultural values which need to be taken into account when developing an advertising campaign. Of course up to a certain extent a campaign can be standardized, but one always needs to adapt small things to make sure it fits it does not offend anyone within the country/region. Within the Middle East adaptation occurs and larger companies such as Vodafone and Shell adapt their advertising strategy to the local country (while in other parts of the world these larger corporations can easily standardize their advertising campaigns and even product offerings). In the Middle East adaptation needs to happen if companies want to run a successful marketing/advertising campaign. There are different target markets, usually local communities and the expatriate communities, thus either way depending on the target segment the

	marketing mix needs to be adapted.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It does not happen more in the Middle East. There are 2 forces tugging away simultaneously across the globe. One is the commoditization of the product and the other is its extreme opposite, is cracking the local relevance and doing bespoke work for a brand within the cultural context that it is living in. • The first has already been given a more attractive name than commoditization – it's called transcreation. Which means that work produced in a central location is then fed into a company that typically has low cost operating Hubs that translates, re-sizes and adapts a master artwork for a wider geography.

Company	Question: 'What are the important factors that are influencing the marketing advertising strategy in the Middle East?'
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important factors that are influencing the marketing strategy in the Middle East is the use of women in advertising and the cultural values. Besides that there are not many factors that are influencing the advertising strategy.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The factors that we take into account in marketing strategy is brand positioning (which also affect decisions on price and distribution), our portfolio vis a vis competition, beer categories that are dominant (eg lager vs Stout), demographic mix in the markets (income, nationality, legal drinking age etc) and consumer motivations to consume beer.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new technology is one of the most important factors influencing the marketing advertising. The consumers are adapting and using this new technology. Therefore, organizations can use the possibilities within technology in their marketing advertising approach.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all, the agencies. A larger local agent can offer more opportunities for its customer than a smaller one. Hence, it is important for the global companies to find the right agent that will make the best use to promote your product. The second factor is the different tastes between the Western and the Middle Eastern culture. Where it is more common to go for simplicity and something more practical in the Western, the Middle East goes for products that are clumsy and expensive that people can show how rich they are to others. Thus, making it far more complicated in the Middle East compared to the Western. The main factors as religion, culture, different tastes and different lifestyles where it is definitely different from anywhere else.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Besides culture also politics is a influencing factor. Politics influence the marketing strategy by putting more pressure to global

	companies on the corporate social responsibility.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a variety of influencing factors, but mainly being the religious and cultural focus of the Middle East that make out the main deciding factors.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important factors are PR and print, due to the fact that many campaigns within the regions are measured by the amount of press releases and the amount of printed.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The single most important factor is Digital, because it has empowered the next generation by providing them with all the information. It pushes them to challenge convention, yet ironically, strengthens their loyalty to their own tradition and heritage. • The Arab Spring has given this part of the world a heightened respect for the power of the second screen. According to our research, per capita, the Middle East and North Africa region upload more content than any other market. The youth are using social media in our part of the world as a way of changing public opinion. This is in contrary with the US whereby the majority is using it for entertainment.

Company	Question: <i>'How important is the role of religion within marketing advertising in the Middle East?'</i>
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It differs according to the countries in the Middle East region. Basically, Middle East can be separated in two parts. One part is strongly influenced by Islamic values that also affect the advertising. The countries where Islam plays an important role are Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. These countries are becoming more similar with the European market. For example, especially in Saudi Arabia and Iran it is not suitable and allowed to use women in advertising. However, religion is strongly related and influencing the culture and lifestyle of the people.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it does play a role. Respected / Respecting brands & organizations follow the countries rules and regulations on marketing diligently in order to respect the religious sentiment.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising alcohol products and use of women in advertising have restrictions that are due the influence of the Islamic religion. Therefore, Islam plays a certain role within marketing advertising. In some countries it might become similar as European countries. However, there are certain cultural and religious values that are not similar as in Europe.

AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are certain things not allowed due to the religious causes, but also due to cultural causes, such as alcohol. However, these are in general accepted by the people. As an example, in Egypt body parts of women are covered if they are too much uncovered. Also, in Kuwait of the Virgin store had to close, because they were selling certain books that had some different believes compared to the believes that are more common in Kuwait.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religion will keep having an important role in this region.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite the cultural advancements in the recent decade, the role of religion is undeniable. Regardless of a person's (particularly women) taste or personal opinion, there is a certain standard that must be adhered to.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When it comes to creative work certain symbols or objects are not allowed or need to be covered up, otherwise it might offend the local communities. Therefore, to a certain extent religion have influence in the advertising campaigns and you do think about the religious aspect more than for instance in Europe or the US.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religion is engrained in the culture. Even the way of talking will throw in a reference to God even as it is spoken by someone quite secular. No matter what religion is dominant in what country, brands will always want to spread positivity and love.

Company	Question: <i>'Does your company face any difficulties when it advertises in the Middle East?'</i>
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turkish Airlines does not face serious problems in their advertising strategy. Mainly, in the advertising man are used that are practicing sports. Since, Turkish Airlines is sponsoring the popular football clubs. These messages do not create any difficulties. However, Turkish Airlines is also sponsoring the world number one female tennis player, Caroline Wozniacki. This advertisement theme is not suitable for the Middle East region, because of the female tennis player. The advertisement can be published worldwide everywhere, but not in the Middle East. Therefore, Turkish Airlines have to find a different solution for this issue. In advertising there is always another solution, it's important to be creative
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since we do not advertise, we have not faced any issues.

Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The company should keep in mind the regulations of the country and create an advertisement according to that in order not to face any difficulties.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The field in pharmaceuticals are much more different. We can only promote products through the doctor, and conferences, lectures, meetings etc. So it is a different way of advertising these products which are more “under-the-line advertising”.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the US a cardiovascular medication was shown on TV, and that it was even compared to other competitors, this however is not allowed in the Middle East.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The biggest advertising issues are that people do not like to see “revealing” clothing on billboards etc. Further, we have a very specific niche for our brands so this makes advertising ROI very low. We try and work around the difficulties by providing low cost advertising in terms of SMS’s, fashion shows for select people, etc.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is heavily focused on print and outdoor advertising. However, there is a trend where companies move towards different advertising campaigns, such as existing online media channels. Many large local corporations need to be educated when it comes to marketing and advertising. Many companies do not think they need to invest in marketing efforts, because they never have and business is still going strong without it, until competition from abroad arrives and sweeps their market share away.

Company	Question: <i>‘Are organizations often cooperating with local advertising agencies?’</i>
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turkish Airline does have a cooperating with an advertising agency that gets insight of the local culture.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, organizations often cooperate with local advertising agencies to get the necessary support.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education First does not cooperate with advertising agencies, however there are a lot of successful marketing advertising agencies.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor advertising has been increasing in Egypt. Many different types of advertising is nowadays being used in Egypt. High number of competition in middle-east and prices for advertising are increasing, people are becoming more dependent on advertises. Customers in middle east are becoming more aware which advertising to believe and which not. In Gulf there are certain restrictions that are not allowed to be marketed in large scaled, due to the more closed mind set, Egypt more open minded. In terms of ads, Egypt can be more compared to the western market than the gulf states.

La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many organizations as a matter of fact do make use of agents in Kuwait, because most of the advertisements have the logos of the agents that are visible.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising in Bahrain can be quite challenging as people here tend to rely heavily on word of mouth, rather than billboards, flyers, etc. Social media has greatly helped advertising our merchandise but overall, the effectiveness of print/outdoor advertising is quite poor in terms of converting potential clients in to customers.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the companies outsource to local or international agencies.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a preference for local brands to work with local agencies. Organizations would like to work with a big, famous, multinational, award-winning, etc., advertising / communication agency.

Company	Question: <i>'What can you recommend global companies in order to solve cultural differences in advertising within the Middle East?'</i>
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all, the regulations within the country need to be considered.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your consumer – both globally and locally in order to fine tune communication which resonates with them. • Ensure in depth understanding of cultural differences so that there is no communication that is offensive to the consumers.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt the local market and respect the cultural values and regulations. The companies need to adapt the marketing advertising strategy according to the cultural framework of the target group.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will now consider to make one market in the Middle Eastern region, a pilot market where all the communications will be done. Basically the strategies will be handling globally but the pilot market will test which strategies work out for the Middle Eastern market since, besides Saudi Arabia and Iran the other countries are in general the same.
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely on your expertise, and also recruit local experts from the countries that they are operating in. This can be accomplished by, for example, getting in touch with agencies.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The companies should do a thorough study of the region before embarking on any major advertising campaign. The level of modernization varies according to each country in the Middle East. For example, an advertisement might do very well in Dubai but could be potentially a disaster in Qatar.

Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The companies should adapt to the local market(s) and use local advertising agencies who understand the cultural values of the specific region and/or country.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global companies should cooperate with communication agencies in order to be able to improve their brand. Organizations should spend some time in the region. The cultural differences are actually very superficial and as people, there are more similarities as differences. <i>'We all respond to the same emotions. We all want the best for our lives, our families and our futures. We all want to be special and we all need to eat, drink, sleep and use toothpaste. It's just the cultural approach to each of these very human things that differs. Be observant, be curious and it will be very clear to you no matter where you are.'</i>

Company	Question: <i>'What do you think about the advertising approach in the Middle East in the future?'</i>
Turkish Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the future the advertising approach in the Middle East will be very similar as in Western countries. This means that the regulations will be less strict within the region. Perhaps, it will remain the same in Saudi Arabia and Iran, because of the stronger influence of the religion. Also, online advertising will increase rapidly in this region. The use of social media and advertising is new in the Middle East with great opportunities.
Heineken Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising approach in terms of reach, frequency, execution, media choices etc. are becoming congruent with the western approach – still taking into account differences to ensure the budget allocations is done efficiently. In terms of content, the companies still need to take the Middle Eastern consumers and not airing Global / western content. Therefore the advertising should be glocal.
Education First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be a mix between European and Middle Eastern approach in advertising. Some rules such as use of women in advertising will remain important. The Islamic values will also continue playing a role in advertising. The culture is still different and therefore the approach needs to be also different in advertising. The people in the Middle East are influenced by the Western world, however the people are very proud about their culture and religion. They do not want to adapt completely to Western lifestyle. The people are getting more open minded, but are keeping some values from their own culture.
AstraZeneca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it will change certainly in the future. The Middle East will become more open to ideas and the people are quite aware that Europeans and Americans are on a higher level than what they are right now. And the Middle East is also exposed to the Europe due to the

	<p>increasing number of Arabs that go and visit Europe, wishing that their own countries are more similar to the Western. With the pleasure of the society combined together with newer generations that are becoming more exposed and more educated by going abroad, this will have tremendous pressure on the norms and cultures we have right now.</p>
La Roche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of pharmaceutical, it might start advertise also in medication like the United States. Internet is a growing advertising media tool which global companies should keep in mind. Finally as some other interviewees have mentioned in earlier questions, the manager of La Roche thinks that especially outdoor advertising are still in a growing stage for countries such as Bahrain and Kuwait, amongst others.
Vogue boutique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in terms of advertising development, the Middle East can very well see an adaptation of Western standards. However, the material used in adverts would have to be very carefully selected to ensure no offence is given to the cultural beliefs of the region.
Zed Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future for advertising in the Middle East will shift towards new media and become less dependent on traditional media. Specifically in Qatar more companies are starting to use social media as a marketing tool and web banners as a replacement for outdoor media, as this is more cost effective and one can easily measure the ROI from a campaign. Furthermore, it will become similar to Western countries in the near future. However having said this on the long run the Middle East will need to adapt to the Western world and its cultural values. This does not mean that the Middle East will lose it local touch, but it means that that there will be a shift from traditional campaigns towards more innovative campaigns from a creative as well as an innovative point of view.
Fortune Promoseven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Middle East want to be a meaningful part of the world by contributing. • The Middle east has more to share than oil. The governments are already diversifying and putting a great deal of attention into making such a statement.

Chapter 5. Data analysis

In this section the empirical data received from the interviews will be analyzed. Parallels are drawn between the empirical data and the theoretical framework.

The results coming from Turkish Airlines, Heineken Group, Zed Communications, La Roche, Education First, Vogue Boutique, AstraZeneca and Fortune Promoseven interviews give more insight in: advertising and differences, regulations, the role of religion, standardization or adaptation, influencing factors and difficulties in advertising, the future of advertising for global companies, cooperation with local advertising agencies and recommendations - in the Middle East. Many of previous studies mention that little has been researched upon advertising decisions or strategies in the Middle Eastern region. However, as Melewar *et al.* (2000) mention this has been changing since the 1990s where a rise in investment from global companies to also take advantage of the growing opportunities in the Middle East.

The Middle East

Advertising in the Middle East has the same challenges as anywhere else in the world. The results coming from Turkish Airlines, Heineken Group, Zed Communications, La Roche, Education First, Vogue Boutique, AstraZeneca and Fortune Promoseven interviews show that even among the countries in the Middle East there are differences. Also, Keegan and Green (2011) stated that there are many differences among the countries in the Middle East even though of the apparent homogeneity, since the majority of the population is Arab and follows the Islamic religion. Melewar *et al.* (2000) believes that companies view the Middle East as a single region that share similar cultures and beliefs and do not see the differences among the various countries. This is in contrary with the results from the interviews. The authors agree on the fact that there are similarities among the countries within Middle East, compared with Europe. However, even between the Middle Eastern countries there are differences. For example, Saudi Arabia and Egypt differ strongly regarding regulations in advertising. Also, between the countries in the Middle East the regulations and guidelines differ among each other.

Regulations

There are regulations, influenced by Islam and the culture, regarding advertising in the Middle East. The companies need to follow the specific regulation of each country in the Middle East when they are advertising. This is supported by Gillespie *et al.* (2004) which suggest that global marketers are recommended to check the local regulations carefully before launching any type of advertising campaign.

The regulations are mainly related with using women in advertising. For example, in Saudi Arabia and Iran the regulations in advertising are very strict in that using women in advertisements are almost forbidden. The people in this region are not likely to see 'revealing' clothing in outdoor advertising, etc. As an illustration, Rawi (2011) gives an example of an H&M campaign where the supermodel Gisele Bündchen was starring. *'The photo-shoot of the supermodel had been digitally altered, where a t-shirt or vest was added under the clothes, to cater for ads running in Dubai. Even though there are no dress codes enforced on women in Dubai, this was done since it is considered etiquette to wear modest clothes in public.'* Another example is of Turkish Airlines, which is sponsoring the world number one female tennis player, Caroline Wozniacki. However, this advertisement theme is not suitable for the Middle East, because of the female tennis player. The advertisement can be published worldwide everywhere, but not in the Middle East due the regulations. Another strict regulation is

advertising alcoholic products. This is strictly forbidden in the Middle Eastern countries (unless the advertisement takes place at the location where the alcohol is actually being sold due to the religion). The Middle East has a very clear rule where no ATL advertising (Promotional activities carried out through mass media, such as television, radio, out-of-home, magazines, cinema and newspaper, are classed as 'above the line' promotion) is permitted for alcoholic products. Heineken faces many difficulties since its products consist of alcoholic drinks.

From the study of Melewar *et al.* (2000) it can be seen that a majority of the companies state that they face difficulties in the level of government regulations and other constraints. This is interesting since the respondents have noted the difficulties in cultural differences after the government regulations. This means that following the regulations is important for global companies that are active in the Middle East.

Religion

The Islamic religion is a challenge for global companies. According to all of the eight interviews, Islam plays an important role in the Middle East, since advertising alcoholic products and use of women in advertising have restrictions that are due to the influence of the Islamic religion. This can be further supported by Fam, Waller and Erdogan (2004) that explained how religion can also influence social behavior and basically also the buying behavior and marketing. The religion plays especially an important role in Saudi Arabia and Iran compared with the other Middle Eastern countries. This is supported by Gillespie *et al.* (2004, p.49). He states that religion can have a profound impact on societies. Religion helps societies determine attitudes toward social structure and economic development. The traditions and rules are dictating what goods and services are purchased, when they are purchased, and by whom. Additionally, according to Fam *et al.* (2004) religion influences social behavior. This is therefore strongly related with consumer buying behavior and marketing. According to Fam *et al.* (2004) global marketers are recommended to understand religious beliefs upon entering a new market, especially where Islam is the faith of the majority. For example, Iwata (2006), Barbaro (2006) and Al-Jadda (2005) describe how Barbie have faced opposition on political, religious, and cultural grounds. *'This arises due to the cultural gap that exists among an average Arab girl and a doll like Barbie.'*

Europe and the Middle East

Due to these regulations and guidelines, advertisements in the Middle East are considered as less creative compared with Europe. The main difference in advertising between Europe and the Middle East consists of the use of women in advertising. The traditional media is very alive in the Middle East. People prefer to have advertising through traditional media tools, such as television and newspapers. Also, the people watch the television more compared to Europe. The results mention that outdoor advertising is not developed as European countries and that the effectiveness of print/outdoor advertising is quite poor in terms of converting potential clients into customers. However, the outdoor advertising is growing in the Middle East which is supported due to the fact that there is a high competition and the prices for advertising are increasing. The social media, for example, is more developed in Europe, but the demand for online advertising is increasing rapidly in the Middle East. The new technology is one of the most important factors influencing the marketing advertising in this region. Advertising by phone is very popular and promoting products by advertisements with phone is starting to get highly used in the Middle East, because of the increase of using iPhones and Smartphones by consumers.

Standardization or adaptation

The results of all of the eight interviews indicate that the organizations should choose for the adaptation strategy instead of the standardization. First of all, outdoor media need to have Arabic as a main language, whereas only one secondary language is allowed. The companies need to consider the local market and adapt the marketing advertising strategy. The strategy needs to be adapted even according to the countries within the Middle East. It is not easy to apply the European advertisement to the Middle East, because of the different culture and the regulations. Therefore, adaptation of the marketing advertising strategy is important and necessary to be successful in marketing advertising. For example, Turkish Airlines is currently creating an advertising strategy with using the theme of the holy Ramadan month for the Muslims. Since the majority of the population in the Middle East follows the Islamic religion, the advertising message is related to these values. The example of Procter & Gamble's initial strategy for Pringles supports this. *"sales in Europe never took off after Pringles' introduction in Europe, most likely because the company had centralized all of its marketing efforts and forgot about local marketing. (Gremmen, 2003)"* There was only one type of package and the same advertising for all countries. The main reason not to standardize is because of the cultural differences across the world that enables consumer behavior converging on global scale. Therefore, understanding the local culture is one of the most important steps for global companies when deciding a global marketing strategy. *'Then, Procter & Gamble decided to invest in the brand and develop local flavors. It developed Salt & Vinegar for the British market (in response to their fondness for fish & chips), Sour Cream Onion for Sweden, low salt Pringles for Japan and Oranjekaas ('orange cheese') for the Dutch market. Some of these have since become standard flavors in various countries, while others were temporarily offered as 'Limited Edition', identified by the hat worn by Mr Pringles on the package. The advertising campaigns were also adapted for each country.'* (Gremmen, 2003)

The standardized approach as Levitt (1983) mentioned is not supported by the interviewees, since the Middle East has certainly a different culture that need a different approach. The example of Yum! Brands: international flavors for foreign markets support this: *'Yum! has now postured itself to expand Taco Bell and opened its first location in the Middle East recently inside a shopping mall in Dubai. In order to market successfully in international locations, Yum! and other quick-service restaurant companies have tweaked their recipes and modes of operation to mesh with local tastes and cultures. In Dubai, for instance, Taco Bell's entire menu consists of Halal foods. Homi Bhabha, an international marketing expert and writer for Harvard magazine, emphasizes, 'In business studies, when you look at a market, you have to know something about its anthropology and its cultural rituals.'* (Adamy, 2008)

Therefore, the approach 'think globally and act locally' that Wind (1986) introduced is more encouraging global companies in their global marketing strategy for the Middle East. Andersson and Svensson (2009) have also mentioned that marketing activities have to be adapted to the local conditions, characteristics and circumstances of the marketplace. The locally-related issues in the Middle East of the marketing activities have to be taken into account by global companies. The example of McDonald's: going 'glocal' shows the importance and success of global companies. *'Yet, as McDonald's has been discovering, running a successful global company requires some pretty significant changes in corporate behavior. Going 'glocal', as management consultants like to call it, requires striking a balance between*

managing a brand on a consistent global basis and appealing to differing consumer tastes in dozens of local markets (Gumbel, 2008).

The results of the study conducted by Melewar *et al.* (2000) point toward a standardized approach by the global companies since this enables the companies to have better control over quality and facilitated cost reduction. They believe that standardization will become more intensified in the future since companies perceive the advantages of standardization more than the disadvantages. In addition, the findings of the study conducted by Harris and Attour (2000) implied that 77 % of the global companies were using regional standardization. However, the advertisements among the two regions were noticeably different. Especially the headline, subhead, body text and slogan were modified, while other elements remained the same. Their findings showed that regional standardization was found to be more common than regional modifications with these companies. The two studies are in contrary with the interview results. The authors do not support the results from this study, since standardization of the marketing advertising strategy might facilitate cost reduction, but is difficult due the different culture and regulations of the Middle East. However, the authors agree that within the Arab world there are some similarities whereby regional standardization can be applied.

The future of advertising in the Middle East

The results show that the future of advertising in the Middle East will become more similar to Western countries. However, religious and cultural values will continue playing a role in advertising. Therefore, there will be a mix between European and Middle Eastern approach. The people will not completely adapt to Western lifestyle. Due to the influence of globalization, advertising has in a certain way become more Western. The Middle East is now in a stage that Asia was 10 years ago, which means that the European and American culture is influencing the lifestyle of people. Also, the government is aiming on investments of 'Western' companies in this region. The world becomes more global and the Middle East wants to be part of this global world. However, there are certain cultural and religious values that people are keeping that are not similar as in Europe. The use of social media will provide great opportunities in the Middle East, since the use of this medium is increasing rapidly. Advertising in the Middle East will shift towards new media and become less dependent on traditional media.

Advertising appeals

The family values in advertisements are used often in the Middle East and advertising appeals need to include luxury and status symbols. The use of family values are important in the Middle East, whereas Europe is more an individualistic society. Mooij (1998) also states that status symbols are frequently used in large power distance cultures. Masculine societies, like the Middle East, like to hyperbole. Another example given by Mooij is that in large power distance cultures, the elder (grandmother, mother, or aunt) advises the younger and the elders are highly respected. The appeals that are integrated in advertising described by dimensions are related with cultural values of the countries in the Middle East. Furthermore, the authors have also described two cultural frameworks in the theoretical framework. The High- and Low-Context framework in the theoretical framework categorized Saudi-Arabia as a high-context/collectivistic. The authors had an assumption that this would mean that the surrounding countries would share similar characteristics like Saudi-Arabia, however it should be noted that the managers of Turkish Airlines, AstraZeneca and La Roche pointed out that Saudi-Arabia and Iran are more stricter (higher-context) than the surrounding countries. Yet, the surrounding countries are still part of the high-context culture. This allegation, are backed up by the data that can be found in appendix 1. The communication behavior according to the

high- context communication is different in the Middle East. Also, in collectivistic cultures as the Middle East there is a different indirect communication style used in advertising. Strong uncertainty avoidance, that is high in the Middle East, translates into the need for explanations, structure, testing, test reports, scientific proof and advice. The advertisement should be structured and detailed. For example, illustrating how a product works, including the technical details is important. Thus, the competence of the manufacturer should be demonstrated in the advertisement (Mooij, 1998).

Summary

The results of the interviews regarding the recommendations for global companies consist of considering and following the regulations within the country, adapt the local market and understand and respect cultural / religious values so there is no communication that is offensive to the customers. The findings of the study conducted by Elbasher and Nicholls (1993) showed that nine out of ten from the export management that were interviewed said that cultural factors are important. The results of the study furthermore showed that even though the companies have a high cultural awareness, they do not adopt a systematic approach in analyzing cultural differences as described in marketing literature, but base it more on personal observation and experience. The global companies need therefore a clear understanding of the cultural factors by analyzing the cultural and religious values. The global companies need to know the customer and the local market. There are a lot of successful marketing advertising agencies who understand the local culture of the specific country. Cooperating with local advertising agencies can provide support in order to adapt the strategy. Elbasher and Nicholls (2000) came with the following solution to tackle the cultural problems that is supporting the results from the empirical data analysis of this study:

- Adapting all- or partly of the marketing, especially the advertising and product.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In this final section the answer to the research question will be given, based upon the empirical and theoretical data that has been gathered and analyzed by the authors. Furthermore, the authors will describe the recommendations and implications for further research.

The research question for the thesis is as following:

How can global companies better address cultural differences in marketing advertising in the Middle East?

The purpose of this thesis is to get more insight about “how global companies can better address cultural differences in advertising in the Middle East.” In order to answer the main question, this study examined different theories in combination with empirical findings.

The findings of the theoretical framework resulted that going towards globalization provides an important cultural challenge for companies. Cultural values have been recognized in the marketing literature as a strong influence on consumer motivation, lifestyle and product choices. The most important step is understanding and respecting the cultural values of the Middle East. Global companies, operating in the Middle East, need to choose whether to standardize or adapt the marketing advertising strategy. Based on the empirical findings and the data analysis, global companies need to adapt their marketing advertising strategy to the local market in order to handle the cultural differences.

Moreover, even among the Middle Eastern countries there are differences that global companies need to consider. Therefore, the approach ‘think globally and act locally’ (glocalization) that Wind (1986) introduced is suitable for global companies in their marketing advertising strategy for the Middle East. Glocal marketing explicitly recognizes the importance of locally and domestically related issues in the marketplace of marketing activities. The culture of the Middle East is analyzed by the theoretic model of Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and the High & Low context cultural framework. The appeals in advertising differs according to the dimensions and the cultural framework. In order to better address cultural differences global companies need to consider the appeals used in advertising based upon the cultural dimension and high context cultural framework for Middle East.

Furthermore, to handle the cultural differences the global companies need to understand and respect the role of the religion in the Middle East. Religion is one of the important elements of culture and the religion influences the culture in this region. The countries in the Middle East have different regulations based upon the culture and religion regarding advertising. The regulations are related with restrictions in the use of women in advertising and alcoholic products are not permitted for advertisements. Global companies need to follow these regulations and guidelines for their marketing advertising strategy. Additionally, to understand the local culture and adapt the advertising strategy effectively, global companies can cooperate with local agencies in order to solve the cultural challenge in advertising.

The question how global companies can better address cultural differences in marketing advertising in the Middle East is to first understand and respect the culture and religion of the region, following with the regulations and guidelines for advertising in every specific country, cooperating with local agencies and adapting the marketing advertising strategy with a glocal - think global, act local - approach.

6.1 Recommendation

The main research question has been answered according to the data analysis in the conclusion part. Additionally, the authors would like to add their recommendations regarding the thesis topic.

In the background section of the introduction chapter the authors mentioned the importance of being flexible for cultural values in the current environment of today's economy. Today's environment is becoming more and more global and enables an easy access to people and places all around the world.

The Middle East region is selected because of its challenges, since it has a totally different culture than in the Western world. Due to the globalization, the Arab world is opened for foreign products and therefore this region offers great potential for global companies. The culture is influencing all aspects of marketing, especially advertising in marketing are most culturally influenced. Global companies need to understand the importance of the culture and its influence on marketing in order to solve the challenges in global marketing.

The standardization or adaptation debate of global marketing strategy is an important topic regarding how to better address cultural differences and solve these challenges in marketing advertising. The authors agree with Mooij (1998) and Sheth (1986) arguing that globalization has not produced globally uniform consumers and that the increase of globally operating companies is not directly related to an emerging universality of consumer needs and wants. The cultural factors such as peoples' traditions, customs, beliefs and attitudes are affecting their needs and wants and how they are satisfied. Therefore, understanding the culture is one of the first steps for global companies when deciding a global marketing strategy. Even among the countries in Europe or the Middle East there are differences. The adaptation of the global marketing strategy according to the local market is necessarily. Therefore, the authors suggest the approach 'think globally and act locally' for global companies in their global marketing strategy for the Middle East, since global marketing recognizes the importance of locally and domestically related issues in the marketplace of marketing activities.

Advertisements in the Middle East need to have Arabic as a main language and there are also other important regulations in advertising. Every country in the Middle East has different regulations that companies need to follow. The regulations are mostly related with the use of women in advertising. This is again related with the standardization and adaptation debate, since the global companies need to adapt their marketing advertising strategy according to the regulations and guidelines.

The several factors influencing the marketing advertising in this region, such as different culture, role of religion and regulations are the difficulties and challenges of advertising in the Middle East. Global companies need to understand the local culture of the country, the Islamic religion and follow the regulations in each country in order to be successful in their marketing advertising strategy.

Furthermore, the authors believe that cooperating with local advertising agencies might be a good solution to solve and handle the cultural challenge. The local advertising agencies have a clear understanding of the local culture and therefore can provide the necessary support to the global companies in order to create an advertisement that is suitable and adapted to the local market.

The authors expect that in the future, due to globalization, the Middle East will become more similar to Western countries. Due to the new occurring of technology and influence of social media the world is becoming rapidly more global. For example, the students all over the world from different countries, religions and cultures are using Facebook and share common values and have common interests. The next generations worldwide are more similar to each other and therefore a global marketing strategy will be easier to adapt. However, as Mooij (1998) mentioned is that having globally uniform consumers is very difficult, since desires and behaviors of consumers are not converging. The students might use Apple products and Facebook, wear clothes from H&M, Zara and Bershka, eat at McDonalds, Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken, listen to the same music and watch the same movies or series, the cultural framework will remain different. Therefore, the authors agree that in a certain way globalization is expected to destroy local cultures, because of the global brands that are occupying the market. However, on the other hand it is the reason for the revival of local culture identities in different parts of the world due to the multicultural societies, since global companies need to adapt to the local market.

The authors compare the topic with their study in Sweden. Also, the study environment is becoming more and more global and enables at the same time an easy access to people and places all around the world. Therefore, students are having the opportunity to study abroad in an international environment. When going abroad students need to adapt in a certain way to the local culture in order not to face difficulties during their stay. Also, one needs to follow the regulations within that country. Even though there is an international environment, the students are still keeping their cultural values while adapting to the local culture. In this globalized world, global companies still need to adapt their strategy to the local culture in order to be successful.

6.2 Future research

The authors would like to mention that for any future research regarding this topic, the researchers first of all should consider to have a large number of interviewees that are involved with marketing practices from global companies, also operating in the Middle East, to represent a more reliable study. Furthermore, the authors suggest that the Middle East is changing and developing at the moment and more countries will start becoming like Dubai and Qatar that are more liberal and open minded. It would be interesting to continue research on this phenomenon, how the Arab culture will be influenced by the increasing non-Arab population and what kind of effect this will have on the marketing advertising. The differences among the Middle Eastern countries can also be analyzed further to understand the relationship of the culture, religion and the regulations. Furthermore, the role of social media in the Middle East can be analyzed by researchers, since there is a rapid increase in the use of social media with great opportunities. For example, how global companies can use social media in the Middle East.

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Appendix 1 – High and Low contextual framework

Characteristic	Low-context/individualistic (e.g. western Europe, US)	High-context/collectivistic (e.g. Japan, China, Saudi Arabia)
<i>Communication and language</i>	Explicit, direct	Implicit, indirect
<i>Sense of self and space</i>	Informal handshakes	Formal hugs, bows and handshakes
<i>Dress and appearance</i>	Dress for individual success, wide variety	Indication of position in society, religious rule
<i>Food and eating habits</i>	Eating is a necessity, fast food	Eating is social event
<i>Time consciousness</i>	Linear, exact, promptness is valued, time = money	Elastic, relative, time spent on enjoyment, time = relationships
<i>Family and friends</i>	Nuclear family, self-oriented, value youth	Extended family, other oriented, loyalty and responsibility, respect for old age
<i>Values and norms</i>	Independence, confrontation of conflict	Group conformity, harmony
<i>Beliefs and attitudes</i>	Egalitarian, challenge authority, individuals control destiny, gender equity	Hierarchical, respect for authority, individuals accept destiny, gender roles
<i>Mental process and learning</i>	Linear, logical, sequential, problem solving	Lateral, holistic, simultaneous, accepting life's difficulties
<i>Business/work habits</i>	Deal oriented ('quickly getting down to business'), rewards based on achievement, work has value	Relationship oriented ('first you make a friend, then you make a deal'), rewards based on seniority, work is a necessity

Figure 9: General comparative characteristics of cultures (Svend Hollensen, 2011, p. 220)

Non-verbal language	Implications for global marketing and business
<i>Time</i>	The importance of being 'on time'. In the high-context cultures (Middle East, Latin America), time is flexible and not seen as a limited commodity.
<i>Space</i>	Conversational distance between people. <i>Example:</i> Individuals vary in the amount of space they want separating them from others. Arabs and Latin Americans like to stand close to people they are talking with. If an American, who may not be comfortable with such close range, backs away from an Arab, this might be taken incorrectly as a negative reaction.
<i>Material possessions</i>	The relevance of material possessions and interest in the latest technology. This can have a certain importance in both low-context and high-context countries.
<i>Friendship patterns</i>	The significance of trusted friends as a social insurance in times of stress and emergency. <i>Example:</i> In high-context countries extended social acquaintance and the establishment of appropriate personal relations are essential to conducting business. The feeling is that one should often know one's business partner on a personal level before transactions occur.
<i>Business agreements</i>	Rules of negotiations based on laws, moral practices or informal customs. <i>Example:</i> Rushing straight to business will not be rewarded in high-context cultures because deals are made not only on the basis of the best product or price, but also on the entity or person deemed most trustworthy. Contracts may be bound by handshakes, not complex agreements – a fact that makes some, especially western, businesspeople uneasy.

Figure 10: The main non-verbal languages in international business (Svend Hollensen, 2011, p. 223)

Appendix 2 – The analyzed and compared elements

(1) Picture (40 points):	
(a) Visual background (20 points)	Local (ten points) Different (20 points)
(b) Model(s)/spokesperson (ten points)	Local (five points) Different (ten points)
(c) Modifications (ten points)	Minor (five points) Major (ten points)
(2) Text (32 points)	
(a) Headline (ten points)	Same language/different meaning (three points) Translated/same meaning (six points) Completely different (ten points)
(b) Subhead (six points)	Same language/different meaning (two points) Translated/same meaning (three points) Completely different (six points)
(c) Body text (copy) (ten points)	Same language/different meaning (three points) Translated/same meaning (six points) Completely different (ten point)
(d) Slogan (six points)	Same language/different meaning (two points) Translated/same meaning (three points) Completely different (six points)
(3) General layout (ten points)	Minor differences (five points) Major differences (five points)
(4) Product portrayal (six points)	Difference in size (one point) Difference in number (one point) Replaced by local (two points) Other differences (two points)
(5) Product packaging (six points)	Difference in size (one point) Difference in number (one point) Replaced by local (two points) Other differences (two points)
(6) Colour(s) of the advertisements (three points)	Colour vs B/W (one point) Different colour (three points)
(7) Size of the advertisement (three points)	As original + extra section (one point) Different size (three points)

Notes: Total score = sum of points from all the elements; degree of standardisation = 100 – total score

Figure 11: Elements analysed and compared (Harris and Attour, 2000, p. 158)

Nationality	Number of sampled companies
USA	16
France	16
Italy	10
Switzerland	6
Japan	3

Product category	Number of brands
Fragrances	16
Apparel	12
Cosmetics	11
Watches/jewellery	12

Figure 12: Nationality of sampled companies and product category of sampled brands (Harris and Attour, 2000, p. 159)

	Estée Lauder True Lipstick cosmetics								
	UK	France	Germany	Spain	Italy	Greece	Saudi	Lebanon	UAE
Visual background 10/20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Model 5/2/4/6/8/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Modifications 5/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headline 3/6/10	6	6	10	6	6	6	0	0	0
Subhead 2/3/6	3	3	6	3	3	3	0	0	0
Body text 3/6/10	6	6	10	6	6	6	0	0	0
Slogan 2/3/6	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0
Layout 5/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Product portrayal 1/2/4/6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Packaging portrayal 1/2/4/6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colour of Ad 1/3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Size 1/3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total score	18	18	29	18	18	18	0	0	0
Degree of standardisation	82	82	71	82	82	82	100	100	100

Figure 13: Results of the content analysis of advertising standardisation for True Lipstick (Harris and Attour, 2000, p. 159)

Appendix 3 – Interview questionnaire

Introduction

We are writing our thesis about cultural differences in global marketing advertising. The purpose of our thesis is 'to reach an understanding about how cultural differences in global marketing and advertising can be handled by global companies in the Middle East'. This interview is intended to provide the authors more knowledge how the culture of Middle Eastern countries influences advertisements of global organizations. Moreover, the purpose of the interview is to find out what the interviewee thinks about global companies advertising in the Middle East, challenges in their approach and recommendations.

Questions

- What is your job function (and responsibilities) in your company?
- What do you think about advertising in the Middle East? What are the challenges?
- What are the main differences between advertising in Europe and advertising in the Middle East?
- Are there any guidelines that companies need to follow when making marketing advertisements in the Middle East region?
- What do you think about the standardization and adaptation debate of marketing advertising? Which one occurs more frequently in the Middle East?
- Does your company adapt the marketing advertisement to the local market? Could you give an example of this?
- What are the most important factors that are influencing the marketing advertising strategy in the Middle Eastern region?
- How important do you think that a religion plays a role within marketing advertising in the Middle East region?
- Does your company face any difficulties when it advertises in the Middle East? Could you give us some examples? How did your company solve these problems?
- Are organizations often cooperating with local advertising agencies? Do they provide the necessary recommendations and solutions?
- What can you recommend global companies in order to solve cultural differences in advertising within the Middle East?
- What do you think about the advertising approach in the Middle East in the future? Will it be similar as in Western countries?
- Is there any other information that you would like to share with us related to advertising in the Middle East and handling cultural differences?

Appendix 4 – Company background information

Turkish Airlines

The airline, that has a star alliance membership, can be considered as a global company that takes 30 million people to 190 cities around the world in a year. Furthermore, the company is sponsoring the Euro league basketball, and also the football clubs FC Barcelona and Manchester United. The airline with the slogan ‘We are Turkish Airlines, We are Globally Yours’ is an interesting company for the thesis topic. The global company Turkish Airlines is active worldwide, and also in the Middle Eastern countries: Bahrain, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Egypt.

The majority of Turkey is Islamic, which is the same as the Middle East region. However, Turkey is also considered as a European country. The marketing communication strategy of Turkish Airlines is very diverse and dynamic according to the country and continent. Therefore, this company is interesting in order to analyze the approach in advertising strategy in the Middle East.

Heineken Group

Heineken, the small 19th-century local Amsterdam brewer, has grown into a worldwide business with valuable international premium brand beer. Heineken can be considered as one of the world’s most international brewer. It has a wide international presence through a global network of distributors and breweries. Heineken is active in 178 countries around the world (Heineken International, 2012).

In the Islamic religion, that is followed by the majority in the Middle East, alcohol is prohibited. Therefore, Heineken’ activities in the Middle East is interesting considering the marketing of alcoholic drinks and prohibition of alcohol in the Islamic religion. Heineken Holding is active in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon.

Education First

Education First is active in International Education. The organization is offering courses in English and many other languages for all ages and ability levels. Education First operates 400 schools and offices in 50 countries across the globe and the expansion continues every year (Education First, 2012).

Education is a global value for every citizen across the world. This global organization is providing education worldwide. The organization is also active in the Middle East. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze how Education First is approaching the Middle Eastern market and are handling the cultural differences in their advertising.

AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca is a Swedish-British global biopharmaceutical company and is among the largest pharmaceutical companies. It provides medicines for some of the world’s most serious diseases for patients and physicians. It is active in more than one hundred countries, with a growing presence in emerging markets.

AstraZeneca is active in Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Even though AstraZeneca is a pharmaceutical company, the

authors were interested to know how companies in such fields deal with the marketing advertisements in the Middle East. (AstraZeneca, 2012)

La Roche

Hoffmann-La Roche is a Swiss global healthcare company that operates under pharmaceutical and diagnostics divisions. It is one of the world's leading research-focused healthcare groups in their field and is also active in more than one hundred countries. It uses their research and development capabilities to develop drugs, diagnostics and drug/diagnostic combinations to address some of the medicine's most pressing challenges.

Similar to AstraZeneca, the authors were interested to have an interview with someone working in this field in order to get to know more about the way it uses advertising.

Vogue boutique

Vogue boutique (not to be mistaken by the popular fashion and lifestyle Vogue magazine) is a high-end boutique that started in 1978 in Bahrain. It has seven retail stores that are located in Bahrain. It focuses on bringing new designs from different countries to its own store as well as keeping the classic brands that the customers are familiar with. However, this is not a global operating company, but a local retailer that understands the local culture. Therefore, the authors found it interesting to interview a local retailer and their experiences in advertising.

The reason for the authors to include Vogue boutique for the interview is because there was a possibility to have an interview with the retail manager. Hence, it was believed that valuable information could be attained.

Zed Communications

Zed communications is an integrated marketing communications agency that was founded in 1999 in Dubai, and has expanded (and is still expanding) their scope to fully integrate 360 degrees communications of national and international clients.

Zed communications is currently operative in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Kuwait. Besides having interviewed marketing managers and a retail manager, it is also added value to know the opinion of agencies that are actually making the advertisements in the Middle East, so therefore the authors also contacted an advertising agency.

Fortune Promoseven

Fortune Promoseven is part of MCN – the largest group of advertising, marketing and media agencies in the Middle East and North Africa. Promoseven, being part of MCN, is part of the Interpublic Group – one of the largest agency groups in the world. Promoseven is an advertising agency using advertising in newspapers, magazines, on TV, outdoor, radio, etc.

Promoseven is all over the map in the Middle East and North Africa with offices in 16 major cities across 14 countries known under different brand identities. These are Albert Promoseven in Saudi Arabia, Rawan Promoseven in Syria, Promoseven McCann in Algeria, etc. Fortune Promoseven is an important advertising agency that can provide the study valuable insight.

Appendix 5 – Interview Results

After a short introduction where the interviewee describes his job function and responsibilities the authors continued with the main questions for collecting the required data. The results of the eight different interviews are integrated in order to have a total summarized view of the results.

Advertising in the Middle East

In order to get to know more general information about the opinions of the interviewees concerning advertising in the Middle East, the following question is asked in the beginning of the interview. *‘What do you think about advertising in the Middle East and what are the challenges?’*. Advertising in the Middle East has the same challenge as anywhere else. The countries within the Middle East region differ among each other. According to the sales manager of Education First, family values in advertisements are used often in the Middle East. In addition, humor in advertising is very important in Egypt. In the Middle East the advertising appeal needs to include luxury and status symbols according to the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines. The cultural values of the countries in the Middle East are taken into account in the advertising strategy.

There are similarities among the countries considering the basic common rules and regulations regarding advertising. Mainly the restrictions are related to the use of women in advertising. The Islamic religion related with the culture is mostly a challenge in the Middle East. For example, in Saudi Arabia and Iran the regulations in advertising are very strict in that using women in advertisements are almost forbidden. In contrary, Qatar, UAE, Egypt and Lebanon are less strict in their regulations. Also, in the Gulf States there are certain restrictions due to the more closed mind set. The account manager of Zed Communications also states that another challenge in the Middle East are that all outdoor media needs to have Arabic as a main language, whereas only one secondary language is allowed. The marketing & sales manager of La Roche argues that Middle Eastern culture is quite similar to each other except for Saudi-Arabia and Iran.

According to marketing manager of AstraZeneca and Hoffman La Roche in general pharmaceutical companies in the Middle East are not allowed to use advertising for their products that are not over the counter products (such as vitamins, obesity medications, aspirin, etc.) due the regulations. This is in contrary with America, where the marketing & sales manager of AstraZeneca experienced advertising used by pharmaceutical companies.

The marketing manager of Heineken that is responsible for global brands in Africa and the Middle East mentions that advertising in the Middle East has a challenge. Since in the Middle East there is a very clear rule where no ATL advertising (Promotional activities carried out through mass media, such as television, radio, out-of-home, magazines, cinema and newspaper, are classed as ‘above the line’ promotion) is permitted for alcoholic products. The Heineken Group is respecting this regulation and therefore does not spend their marketing budget in ATL Media. Introducing new brands in the market without ATL can sometimes be a quite slow process according to the marketing manager. There is a limited ‘big bang effect’ which can be possible in other markets where advertising alcoholic products is allowed. The target group is reached by Heineken according to the regulations. The budget for marketing communication is hence invested in BTL (below the line) – in On and Off premise outlets whereby the target group is reached without offending others.

Furthermore, the marketing manager of AstraZeneca and La Roche mentioned that the people in Kuwait prefer to have advertising through traditional media tools, such as television and newspapers. This is supported by the account manager of Zed Communications that states that the traditional media is still very alive in this region. The advertising manager of Turkish Airlines also argues that outdoor advertising is not developed as in Western or Asian countries. The retail manager of Vogue support this statement by mentioning that the effectiveness of print/outdoor advertising is quite poor in terms of converting potential clients in to customers. However, the outdoor advertising is starting to grow in the Middle East according to the marketing & sales manager of La Roche. For example, in Egypt the importance of outdoor advertising has been increasing and many types of advertising is being used. This can be supported by the fact that there is a high competition in the Middle East and the prices for advertising are increasing. The customers are getting more dependent and involved with advertising. However, there is definitely a trend starting where companies need to measure their ROI and are leaning more towards different advertising campaigns, such as using the existing online media channels.

The CEO of Fortune Promoseven, the largest Communications Agency in the Middle East and North Africa, mentions also that advertising in the Middle East has the same challenge like everywhere else in the world. He mention that they try to communicate a message, win brand awareness, knowledge, advocacy and loyalty just like anywhere else. Also, try to engage and surprise and connect with people just like anywhere else. The industry has matured. And it matured at a supersonic speed. Clients and agencies expect global excellence that Fortune Promoseven is providing.

Differences between advertising in Europe and the Middle East

The second question is: *'What are the main differences between advertising in Europe and the Middle East?.'* The main differences in advertising between the regions consist of the use of women in advertising according to the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines. The clothes that women are wearing needs to be considered more in the Middle East and there are strict regulations for this matter as described before. According to the sales manager of Education First there is another perception of the women in the Middle East and therefore the use of women is different. This is influenced by the culture and the Islamic religion. Another example of the influence of the culture and religion is related with advertisements for credits. Using credit is not supported in the culture and religion. In the advertising the use of family values is very important in the Middle East. This is different than in Europe where there is an individualistic society. The account manager of Zed Communications believes that Europe also targets less on traditional media nowadays and more towards social media.

The people in the Middle East watch the television more compared to other countries. According to the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines one of the reasons is due the popular Turkish series that are introduced in these countries. The outdoor advertising, such as billboards is not developed in the Middle East as in Europe as mentioned before. However, there is a very high demand for online advertising in the Middle East, like in almost every region, and this is increasing rapidly. In the Middle East advertising by phone (text message, mms, pictures) is very popular in contrary with Europe. Especially in countries such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates. Promoting products by advertisement with phone is starting to get highly used in the Middle East, because of the increase of using

iPhones and Smartphones by consumers. However, the marketing manager of AstraZeneca states that the European market is far more advanced in the e-market, whereas in most of the countries in the Middle East there is less feeling for the technological devices. Also, according to the marketing & sales manager of La Roche innovation and social media is more developed in the West. What furthermore is interesting is that this manager believes that in the future other countries surrounding Dubai might decide to go into the same direction since petrol will once dry out, hence making these countries vulnerable if they do not have any other resources. This, according to him, could mean that the marketing advertisements will have a growing potential in surrounding countries within the Middle East (i.e. where Qatar is getting more known like Dubai, and is also planning to sponsor the World Cup in 2022).

The retail manager of Vogue and the account manager of Zed Communications state that the advertising in Europe has more creativity, and allows more provocative advertising when it comes to ambient media. However, as mentioned earlier by other companies, the retail manager also agrees that there are many taboos and restrictions that must be avoided and this can strongly undermine how creative advertising is approached in the Middle East.

However, the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines argues the influence of the globalization of the world and the decrease of differences in advertising between these regions. There are several factors that are different in the approach between Middle East and Europe, but according to him it can be assumed that it's becoming more similar to the European approach. The Middle East is now in the stage that Asia was involved 10 years ago, which means that the European and American culture is influencing the lifestyles of people. The government is also aiming on investments of 'Western' companies in this region. Therefore, in a certain way the approach becomes more and more similar as in Europe. The world becomes more global and the Middle East wants to be part of this global world. The main difference for Heineken according to the marketing manager is that for alcoholic products ATL is allowed in Europe, whilst this is not so in the Middle East.

The CEO of Fortune Promoseven mention that the market in the Middle East is having matured quite recently. Creativity had never been considered a "serious" business. And when you mention Europe, you are referring to multiple markets, with local marketing teams. The Middle East is the same. Each market is different and has to be treated differently. According to the CEO, this sounds obvious, but from the outside, many people think of it as one market.

There are cultural differences. For example, in the Middle East you stay as far away from politics as possible. Also, the people are more conservative in their traditions. There are not a lot of sexual references in advertising. The CEO mentions also that you have to be mindful of communication that will run in Saudi Arabia which has very strict rules of engagement, versus Lebanon who are quite open about sexuality. But, he suggest that this is what makes communication rich. The cultural insights that can be used is what brings people and brands closer together, whether it's in Kuwait or Latvia.

Guidelines to follow in marketing advertisements in the Middle East

The third question is: *'Are there guidelines that companies needs to follow when making marketing advertisements in the Middle East region?'* There are regulations, influenced by Islam and the culture, about using women in advertisement in the Middle East according to the sales manager of Education First. Between the countries in the Middle East the regulations and guidelines differ among each other. Therefore, each country in the Middle East has specific regulations that companies needs to follow when they are advertising. For example,

Bahrain and Egypt are less strict compared to other countries in the region. The advertising manager of Turkish Airlines also supports that the guidelines mainly based on using women in advertising. For example, the marketing manager of AstraZeneca and the account manager of Zed Communications note that advertising alcohol is strictly forbidden in the Middle Eastern countries (unless the advertisement takes place at the location where the alcohol is actually being sold) due to the religion. Furthermore, the account manager of Zed Communications states that companies have to respect the country's local culture and use Arabic as a main language when it comes to outdoor media. The marketing manager of Heineken suggests that there are clear guidelines that they have to follow according to advertising alcoholic products. The organization diligently follows the local rules and regulations on advertising.

The CEO of Fortune Promoseven suggest that all major advertising networks have been present in the region for quite some time. In the last few years, many of them have taken on full or majority stakes. So, organizations have to comply with the rules and laws of the country of registration. The CEO think that this is great, because it means that the industry is getting more and more transparent every day.

In terms of the actual communication, the rules vary. They must comply with all intellectual property rules that other countries comply with. And have to push the boundaries as far as the local authorities allow. Typically, before going ahead with an activation, a campaign that will run in local markets or pan regional, have to go through the ministry of information to make sure that there is nothing in the communication that goes against the cultural and religious morals of the country. According to the CEO, if you cannot be relevant to your market and you are just doing ads that will make a statement for personal gain, then you are doing a disservice to your client partners and even worse, to the brand.

Standardization and adaptation debate of marketing advertising

The fourth question was related to the standardization and adaptation debate of marketing advertising in the Middle East and what the strategy is of these companies.

According to the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines the organizations need to consider the local market and adapt the marketing advertising strategy according to the market. Not only within an area such as Europe, Asia or Middle East, but also your strategy needs to be adapted according to the countries within an area. For example, Turkish Airlines is currently creating an advertising strategy with using the theme of the holy Ramadan month for the Muslims. Since the majority of the population in the Middle East follows the Islamic religion, the advertising message is related to these values. The advertising manager of Turkish Airlines states: *'The campaign aims at the Ramadan month for Muslims, which is not suitable in Europe and Asia. We use religion to reach the target group effectively. However, we are trying to do this without damaging the image of the religion and trying not to make it commercialized.'* As mentioned before, there are even differences among each of the Middle Eastern countries and every country has its own values that need to be considered in the marketing advertising strategy. Therefore, adaptation to the local market is more preferred even though of the globalization of the world. Turkish Airlines needs to compete with strong local competitors that are active for many years in the market. The advertising strategies of these competitors are also analyzed. Therefore, the same strategy that is used in Turkey by Turkish Airlines is not suitable for Middle Eastern countries.

According to the sales manager of Education First adaptation of the marketing advertising strategy is important and necessary. It's not easy to apply the European advertisement to the

Middle East. Also, he states that the advertisements between countries in the Middle East is also different. For example, in Dubai women are used in the advertisements, but this is not possible in Saudi Arabia. Every company needs to adapt to the local market to be successful in marketing advertising.

The retail manager of Vogue describes that it all depends on the scope of your operations and the nature of your business. However, in general, adaptation occurs more often. The marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca comes with the same description as the other interviewees by stating that there is definitely a requirement of global companies to adapt to this part of the world. Even though a company could apply the same strategy that it is doing worldwide, it should adapt its activities such as marketing advertising.

Finally the marketing and sales manager of La Roche comes with a similar explanation by saying that the international campaigns that are used globally can be brought to the Middle East, however they do need to adapt as well if it does not fulfill the requirements. Pepsi-Cola for example might decide to use different celebrities for its advertisement and/or MacDonald's might add or change their menu's according to the market. Hence, Middle-Eastern market does require adaptation as it is not similar to the western market, making the companies think on a global scale and act on a local scale when this is necessary.

The retail manager of Vogue states that since they bring international brands the advertising strategy is standardized, however they consider the local culture. The marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca states, as mentioned before, that in general to a certain extent the advertisement does need to be adapted to the local market in order to cover the needs and mindsets of the local people, even though the strategy of a company has a global focus.

The marketing and sales manager of La Roche believes that there is not necessarily a need for adaptation to its advertisements to the local market, since it is a pharmaceutical company. The standardization and adaptation debate depends on the product and market. However, most of the interviewees states that adaptation to the local market is necessarily in order to be successful.

As for the account manager of Zed Communications, he believes that within the Middle East adaptation occurs and larger companies such as Vodafone and Shell adapt their advertising strategy to the local country (while in other parts of the world these larger corporations can easily standardize their advertising campaigns and even product offerings). He thinks that in the Middle East adaptation needs to happen if companies want to run a successful marketing/advertising campaign. There are different target markets, usually local communities and the expatriate communities, thus either way depending on the target segment the marketing mix needs to be adapted. Finally, the marketing manager of Heineken mentions that adapting the global marketing strategy is necessary to meet the needs of the consumers in this region.

The CEO of Fortune Promoseven thinks that it does not happen more in the Middle East. There are 2 forces tugging away simultaneously across the globe. One is the commoditization of the product and the other is its extreme opposite, is cracking the local relevance and doing bespoke work for a brand within the cultural context that it is living in. The first has already been given a more attractive name than commoditization – it's called transcreation. Which

means that work produced in a central location is then fed into a company that typically has low cost operating Hubs that translates, re-sizes and adapts a master artwork for a wider geography. Work created in Botswana by local creative's, to be relevant to markets as diverse as Russia and New Zealand would simply mean that the idea will have to be watered down and reach the lowest common denominator.

Factors influencing the marketing advertising in the Middle East

The fifth question is related with: *'What are the important factors that are influencing the marketing advertising strategy in the Middle East'*. According to the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines the most important factors that are influencing the marketing strategy in the Middle East is the use of women in advertising and the cultural values. Besides that there are not many factors that are influencing the advertising strategy. It is becoming more and more European / Western. However, as a company you still need to consider the country and adapt your strategy to the local culture as mentioned before.

According to the sales manager of Education First the new technology is one of the most important factors influencing the marketing advertising. The consumers are adapting and using this new technology. Therefore, organizations can use the possibilities within technology in their marketing advertising approach.

The retail manager of Vogue sees a variety of influencing factors, but mainly being the religious and cultural focus of the Middle East that make out the main deciding factors (excepting major cosmopolitans such as Bahrain, Dubai, etc.).

The marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca foresees also several factors that influence the advertising strategy. First of all, the agencies. A larger local agent can offer more opportunities for its customer than a smaller one. Hence, it is important for the global companies to find the right agent that will make the best use to promote your product. The second factor is the different tastes between the Western and the Middle Eastern culture. Where it is more common to go for simplicity and something more practical in the Western, the Middle East goes for products that are clumsy and expensive that people can show how rich they are to others. As mentioned before, luxurious products that express their status are important values. Thus, making it far more complicated in the Middle East compared to the Western. He summarizes the main factors as religion, culture, different tastes and different lifestyles where it is definitely different from anywhere else.

The marketing and sales manager of La Roche on the other hand states besides culture also a different factor that the other interviewees had not mentioned, which is politics. He believes that politics influence the marketing strategy by putting more pressure to global companies on the corporate social responsibility. However there is also a thought of corruption in most of the Middle Eastern countries, which influences the overall operation of a company, hence also the advertising.

The account manager of Zed communications said that the most important factors are PR and print, due to the fact that many campaigns within the regions are measured by the amount of press releases and the amount of printed.

According to the CEO of Fortune Promoseven, the single most important factor is Digital, because it has empowered the next generation by providing them with all the information. It pushes them to challenge convention, yet ironically, strengthens their loyalty to their own tradition and heritage. Moreover, the Arab Spring has given this part of the world a heightened respect for the power of the second screen. And according to the research conducted by Fortune Promoseven, per capita, the Middle East and North Africa region upload more content than any other market. Even more interesting, and again through some research that the Holding Company has conducted, the youth are using social media in the Middle East as a way of changing public opinion. The CEO mention that this may sound quite obvious, but the same study in the US found that the majority is using it for entertainment. The same study demonstrates that in Russia, the youth engage on Social media to connect. The Communications Agency is using it to make a difference. And that makes a world of difference. *'If the people are going onto twitter to change their reality, it might not be the right thing to sell a canned soft drink because of it's flavor, but it might be ok if you're selling the canned soda because the brand shares your values and beliefs.'*

The role of religion within marketing advertising in the Middle East

The sixth question is related with the role of religion: *'How important is the role of religion within marketing advertising in the Middle East?'* The advertising manager of Turkish Airlines mentions that it differs according to the countries in the Middle East region. Basically, Middle East can be separated in two parts. One part is strongly influenced by Islamic values that also affect the advertising. The countries where Islam plays an important role are Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. These countries are becoming more similar with the European market. For example, especially in Saudi Arabia and Iran it is not suitable and allowed to use women in advertising. However, religion is strongly related and influencing the culture and lifestyle of the people.

This is supported by the sales manager of Education First that states that advertising alcohol products and use of women in advertising have restrictions that are due the influence of the Islamic religion. Therefore, Islam plays a certain role within marketing advertising. In some countries it might become similar as European countries. However, there are certain cultural and religious values that are not similar as in Europe. The marketing manager of Heineken supports this also, since they have challenges in advertising their product. The organizations are following the countries rules and regulations on marketing in order to respect the religious sentiment.

The retail manager of Vogue states that *"despite the cultural advancements in the recent decade, the role of religion is undeniable. Regardless of a person's (particularly women) taste or personal opinion, there is a certain standard that must be adhered to."* As stated by the other managers, the marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca mentions that there are certain things not allowed due to the religious causes, but also due to cultural causes, such as

alcohol. However, these are in general accepted by the people. As an example he mentions that Egypt covers body parts of women if they are too much uncovered. Also he gave an example in Kuwait of the Virgin store that had to close. The reason for this was because they were selling certain books that had some different beliefs compared to the beliefs that are more common in Kuwait.

The marketing and sales manager of La Roche said that religion will keep having an important role and referred to the previous examples that he had given. The account manager of Zed Communications agreed upon this that to a certain extent there is more influence in the advertising campaigns and you do think about the religious aspect more than for instance in Europe or the US.

The CEO of Fortune Promoseven points out that religion is engrained in the culture. Even the way of talking will throw in a reference to God even as it is spoken by someone quite secular. Insha' allah. Translated into, if God will it. Christians, Muslims and every type of off shoot will say that without implying one religion over another. However, the CEO think this is everywhere as well. He mention: *'having started my career in NY, I cannot tell you the number of times I have heard clients say that their business HQ and hometown is in the bible belt and that the communication needs to be mindful of Christian values.'* Finally, he points out that no matter what religion is dominant in what country, brands will always want to spread positivity and love.

Difficulties in advertising in the Middle East

The seventh question is about the companies facing difficulties in advertising: *'Does your company face any difficulties when it advertises in the Middle East?'* Turkish Airlines does not face serious problems in their advertising strategy in the Middle East. Mainly, in the advertising man are used that are practicing sports. Since, Turkish Airlines is sponsoring the popular football clubs. These messages do not create any difficulties. However, Turkish Airlines is also sponsoring the world number one female tennis player, Caroline Wozniacki. This advertisement theme is not suitable for the Middle East region, because of the female tennis player. The advertisement can be published worldwide everywhere, but not in the Middle East. Therefore, Turkish Airlines have to find a different solution for this issue. In advertising there is always another solution, it's important to be creative according to the advertising manager. The sales manager of Education First states that the company should keep in mind the regulations of the country and create an advertisement according to that in order not to face any difficulties.

The retail manager of Vogue states that her company is "the exclusive dealer for various very high end European clothing brands." Their biggest advertising issues are that people do not like to see "revealing" clothing on billboards etc. Further, "We have a very specific niche for our brands so this makes advertising ROI very low. We try and work around the difficulties by providing low cost advertising in terms of SMS's, fashion shows for select people, etc. "

The marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca describes that their field in pharmaceuticals are much more different, since their company sells prescription drugs and not-over-the-counter drugs (as described earlier). As the manager describes: "This means that they can only promote their products through the doctor, and conferences, lectures, meetings etc. So it is a

different way of advertising these products which are more “under-the-line advertising”. When we come to adaptation, we adapt in terms of let’s say; when you go to a physician for example and you talk about a company product, your role is to tell him the benefits of your products and why it is better compared to the competitors. So you have to relate the product to the patient’s that he sees on daily basis. Your messages must be compelling with those patients, and has to meet the standards and lifestyles of these patients. So you adapt your medicines to the solutions of the patients that they have in large number.” Hence, this manager describes not directly a problem but merely something in which they have to handle.

The marketing and sales manager of La Roche gives the following example: “In the US a cardiovascular medication was shown on TV, and that it was even compared to other competitors, this however is not allowed in the Middle East.” Hence he points out that in terms of medicines the company does not face any big issues in the advertising for their company in the Middle East.

Cooperation with local advertising agencies

The following question is related to the advertising agencies: *‘Are organizations often cooperating with local advertising agencies? Do they provide the necessary recommendations and solutions?’* Turkish Airline does have a cooperating with an advertising agency that gets insight of the local culture. Education First does not cooperate with advertising agencies, however the sales manager states that there are a lot of successful marketing advertising agencies. Furthermore, the marketing and sales manager of La Roche says that many organizations as a matter of fact do make use of agents in Kuwait, he relates this to the fact that most of the advertisements have the logos of the agents that are visible. The account manager of Zed Communications believes that most of the companies outsource to local or international agencies. The CEO of Fortune Promoseven mention that there is preference for local brands to work with local agencies. Organizations appreciate the stability of working with a big, famous, multinational, award-winning, etc., agency.

Recommendations for global companies

To the end of the interview the companies are asked for recommendations that they give to global companies: *‘What can you recommend global companies in order to solve cultural differences in advertising within the Middle East?’* With this question more issues about handling cultural differences are collected. First of all, the regulations within the country need to be considered according to the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines. The sales manager of Education First recommends to adapt the local market and respect the cultural values and regulations. The companies need to adapt the marketing advertising strategy according to the cultural framework of the target group.

Furthermore, the retail manager of Vogue states also that companies should do a thorough study of the region before embarking on any major advertising campaign. The level of modernization varies according to each country in the Middle East. She gives an example that an advertisement might do very well in Dubai but could be potentially a disaster in Qatar.

The account manager of Zed Communications said that companies should adapt to the local market(s) and use local advertising agencies who understand the cultural values of the specific region and/or country.

However, the marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca claims that their company will now consider to make one market in the Middle Eastern region, a pilot market where all the communications will be done. Basically the strategies will be handling globally but the pilot market will test which strategies work out for the Middle Eastern market since, according to this manager, besides Saudi Arabia and Iran the other countries are in general the same. The difference in the recommendation among these two interviewees might derive from the different area in which they are operative since pharmaceutical companies might be more standardized products whereas clothing can be more sensitive to local taste. The marketing and sales manager of La Roche had the following to say: *“Rely on your expertise, and also recruit local experts from the countries that they are operating in. This can be accomplished by, for example, getting in touch with agencies.”* In addition to that the marketing manager of Heineken gives the following recommendations:

- *“Know your consumer – both globally and locally in order to fine tune communication which resonates with them.*
- *Ensure in depth understanding of cultural differences so that there is no communication that is offensive to the consumers.”*

The CEO of Fortune Promoseven recommends that global companies should cooperate with their communication agency in order to be able to improve their brand. Also, the CEO would recommend that global organizations should spend some time in the region. The cultural differences are actually very superficial and as people, there are more similarities as differences. *‘We all respond to the same emotions. We all want the best for our lives, our families and our futures. We all want to be special and we all need to eat, drink, sleep and use toothpaste. It’s just the cultural approach to each of these very human things that differs. Be observant, be curious and it will be very clear to you no matter where you are.’*

The future of advertising in the Middle East

The future expectations will provide the thesis a valuable insight. The interviewees are asked for their opinions regarding the future of advertising in the Middle East with the following question: *‘What do you think about the advertising approach in the Middle East in the future?’*

As described before, the advertising manager of Turkish Airlines states that in the future the advertising approach in the Middle East will be very similar as in Western countries. This means that the regulations will be less strict within the region. Perhaps, it will remain the same in Saudi Arabia and Iran, because of the stronger influence of the religion. Also, online advertising will increase rapidly in this region. However, the social media has reached its highest point in America and people are getting overwhelmed with it. Then companies need to be more creative. In Europe social media is starting to reach the highest point. The use of social media and advertising is new in the Middle East with great opportunities.

The sales manager of Education First has a different opinion. He states that there will be a mix between European and Middle Eastern approach in advertising. Some rules such as use of women in advertising will remain important. The Islamic values will also continue playing a role in advertising. The culture is still different and therefore the approach needs to be also different in advertising. The people in the Middle East are influenced by the Western world,

however the people are very proud about their culture and religion. They do not want to adapt completely to Western lifestyle. The people are getting more open minded, but are keeping some values from their own culture.

The account manager of Zed Communication also has a slight different point of view compared to the manager of Turkish Airlines. He believes that the future for advertising in the Middle East will for sure shift towards new media and become less dependent on traditional media. Specifically in Qatar he noticed that more companies are starting to use social media as a marketing tool and web banners as a replacement for outdoor media, as this is more cost effective and one can easily measure the ROI from a campaign. He furthermore does not think it will become similar to Western countries in the near future. However having said this on the long run the Middle East will need to adapt to the Western world and its cultural values. This does not mean that the Middle East will lose its local touch, but it means that there will be a shift from traditional campaigns towards more innovative campaigns from a creative as well as an innovative point of view.

Moreover, the retail manager of Vogue states that *“in terms of advertising development, the Middle East can very well see an adaptation of Western standards. However, the material used in adverts would have to be very carefully selected to ensure no offence is given to the cultural beliefs of the region.”*

The marketing manager of Heineken states that advertising approach in terms of reach, frequency, execution, media choices etc. are becoming congruent with the western approach – still taking into account differences to ensure the budget allocations is done efficiently. In terms of content, the companies still need to take the Middle Eastern consumers and not airing Global / western content. Therefore the advertising should be glocal.

The marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca claims that it will change certainly in the future. He believes that the Middle East will become more open to ideas and he reminds that they are quite aware that Europeans and Americans are on a higher level than what they are right now. He also thinks that the Middle Eastern are a bit like copy-cats and they cannot create things themselves. And the Middle East is also exposed to the Europe due to the increasing number of Arabs that go and visit Europe, wishing that their own countries are more similar to the Western. He argued the following: *“So, I think that with the pleasure of the society combined together with newer generations that are becoming more exposed and more educated by going abroad, this will have tremendous pressure on the norms and cultures we have right now.”*

The marketing and sales manager of La Roche thinks first of all that in terms of pharmaceutical, it might start advertise also in medication like the United States. He also believes that internet is a growing advertising media tool which global companies should keep in mind. Finally as some other interviewees have mentioned in earlier questions, the manager of La Roche thinks that especially outdoor advertising are still in a growing stage for countries such as Bahrain and Kuwait, amongst others.

The CEO of Fortune Promoseven is optimistic. He mentions that the Middle East want their part of the world to matter. The Middle East is tired of being TROTW (the rest of the world). *‘We want to be a meaningful part of it. We want to contribute. And we have more to share than oil. If you think about it, our governments are already diversifying and putting a great deal*

of attention into making such a statement. We're on the table to solve global issues. We're inventing. We're setting up Positive-Energy communities. We're building brands of our own. We're getting a new generation of ambassadors that are from every profession that are taking the global standard as a starting point. And we're moving faster than anyone else. We have a lot to prove and not enough time to fulfill our ambition in just one lifetime!

In addition

The retail manager of Vogue states that *"As I have repeatedly stressed, beyond a certain level of a) religious conservatism b) lack of awareness of the level of importance advertising plays there are no major difficulties to advertising in the middle east."*

The marketing and sales manager of AstraZeneca wanted to emphasize the importance of technology and electronics, in terms of advertisements. However he also wanted to state the following regarding cultural differences: *"people might look from the outside as being open to many things, but deep inside they are really struggling between what they are from the inside and what they are from the outside. They could seem from the outside that they accept everything, but from deep inside, due to the way they were raised up has the urge inside of him that they cannot accept anything. So there is a conflict between what one really wishes to do, and what he can do."* Besides the culture and religion, the global companies also have to go through the regulations and procedures in regard to advertise in the Middle East.

The account manager of Zed Communicatoins thinks that in the Middle East and specifically Qatar in some cases you will need to educate/convince the client to move away from traditional advertising campaigns and move towards the new media campaigns. In some cases you also need to teach clients the difference between marketing, pr, branding, etc. and emphasize on the fact that implementing a marketing strategy can on the long run make a difference within the region and specifically when foreign companies come in with years of worldwide marketing experience.

The advertising manager of Turkish Airlines states that the global companies that use 360 degree marketing can be very successful. This means usage of the integrated marketing communication strategy and the use of web 2.0 usages. Global companies making effective use of all communication channels, integrated online and offline communication tools, in the marketing campaign adapting according to the country and the cultural values will be the winner in advertising.

Finally, the CEO of Fortune Promoseven points out that culture is a beautiful thing. It's what makes the world richer. The flatter the world gets, the more people want to stand out. *'Globalization has made the world a little vanilla. I can get the same starbucks coffee in Azerbaijan that I can get in Seattle as I walk around in my Gap Khacki's , Nike shoes and Ray Ban sunglasses. The world and people need to share.'*