

# Designing Culturally Compatible Internet Gaming Sites

*Sudhir H. Kale*

## Abstract

Rising e-commerce volumes the world over provide opportunities to global marketers to expand their markets using the Internet. While Internet casinos have had their share of failures, the industry still rakes in three times the revenues as web pornography. Converging web technology allows for Internet gaming operators to expand their markets all over the world. However, appealing to consumers in different countries and regions requires adaptation of websites to the cultural milieu of the various target markets. This paper reviews existing literature on culture and website design and goes on to discuss the impact of culture on designing Internet gaming sites. A series of propositions hypothesizing the impact of culture on consumer responses to online gaming sites have been formulated using Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Theoretical and managerial implications of the proposed framework have also been discussed.

Key words: Internet gambling, cross-cultural communication, website design, culture, e-gaming.

## Introduction

Over fifty years ago, the economist James Duesenberry observed that all of the activities people engage in are culturally determined and that nearly all purchases are made either to provide physical comfort or to implement the activities that make up the life of a culture (Duesenberry, 1949). Since then, marketing scholars have been grappling with the problems of adapting the marketing mix to the cultural mores and nuances of consumers in culturally diverse regions. One of the key manifestations of culture is reflected in how people within a society communicate. All communication takes place through cultural symbols that are assimilated and learnt within the culture. It is the lack of shared symbols and experiences that makes cross-cultural communication difficult (Kale & Barnes, 1992). This challenge is particularly acute in web communication which is potentially ubiquitous in its reach.

One of the fastest growing industries in the Internet space is e-gaming. While over two million people visit the more than 1,800 virtual casinos every week, success in the virtual gaming space can never be taken for granted as evidenced by the sour experiences of brands like Aspinall and Crown Games. If past experience in other industries is any indicator, success of e-gaming in the global marketplace depends, to a large degree, on the extent to which the websites are compatible with the culture of the targeted audience.

The nexus between culture and communication has been studied for quite some time (cf. Barnlund, 1989; de Mooij, 1997; Hall, 1960; Kale, 1995; Mueller, 1996; Kanso & Nelson, 2002). With the advent of the Internet as a global medium, scholars are now looking at how culture impacts communication on the web (cf. Singh, Zhao, & Hu, 2003; Hiller, 2003; Robbins & Stylianou, 2002). While these studies have helped in developing an appreciation of the impact of culture on website design, scholars and practitioners are

Sudhir H. Kale  
Associate Professor of  
Marketing  
Faculty of Business  
Bond University, Gold Coast  
QLD 4229 Australia  
Phone: +(61)7-55952214  
Email: skale@staff.bond.edu.au

still at a loss when it comes to unequivocal norms or solid prescriptions for designing culturally appropriate websites. Furthermore, the domain of these studies is far too broad to be of practical assistance to Internet gaming providers and suppliers of Internet gaming software.

With over 1,800 online casinos currently operating, competition for the \$5 billion online gaming market is intense. Companies desirous of making inroads into the global online gaming market would fare better if they adapted their website to the cultural ethos of their target market. Doing so would provide them with a loyal and trusting customer base.

This paper reviews the existing literature on culture and web marketing across three broad disciplines – information technology, marketing and management. Based on these studies, it then generates propositions formalizing the relationship between culture and web design for Internet gaming sites. Finally, the implications of this discussion for managers and researchers have been highlighted.

### **Literature Review**

Thus far, not a single paper, conceptual or empirical, discusses the link between culture and the make-up of an e-gaming site. The extant literature addresses its discourse to website design in general. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the scholarly articles discussing the role and consequences of culture in the online context have emerged only over the last five years. As with any new area of research, the discussion of culture in the Internet context has been dominated by conceptual studies of a limited scope or by empirical studies based on fragmentary frameworks. Despite these inevitable weaknesses, when collectively assessed, these studies do provide value for scholars and practitioners interested in the area.

*Six cultural factors and six individual factors influence people's web experience.*

Yoon and Cropp (1999) were among the first researchers to look at the cultural dimensions of web-based communications. Their findings comprising an investigation of 20 South Korean and 20 American national-brand product websites reported no significant differences along culture-based measures of advertising content. In contrast, Marcus and Gould (2000) examined how Hofstede's (1991) five dimensions of culture might affect user-interface design. By drawing from the Internet sites of several corporate and non-corporate entities of differing nationalities (Finland, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Costa Rica, Germany, etc.), the authors go on to suggest that societal levels of power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation are reflected in several aspects of user-interface and web design.

Zahedi, Van Pelt and Song (2001) suggest that no single model of cultural understanding is sufficient for communicating effectively with all web audiences. Accordingly, they identified six cultural factors and six individual factors that would influence people's web experience. The six cultural factors were power distance, individualism, masculinity, anxiety avoidance, long-term orientation, and monochronic versus polychronic time orientation. The six individual factors were demographics (age and gender), professional knowledge, information technology knowledge, flexibility, information processing ability, and cultural knowledge. User satisfaction with the website was postulated to consist of perceived usability, reliability, clarity, and comprehension. The authors then developed a series of propositions relating the aforesaid twelve factors to site effectiveness. Unfortunately, the culture-specific propositions are far too general to offer any real utility to either scholars or practitioners.

Warden, Lai, and Wu (2002) investigated the impact of different language interfaces on web-based product searches. The results indicated that understanding the web-page interface language enhances product evaluation for highly differentiated products but leads to decreased evaluations for products with low levels of differentiation. The authors conclude that product evaluations are affected not by language barriers alone but by the level of product differentiation as well.

*E-gaming is in the early stages of its lifecycle, and culturally savvy operators are more likely to survive the inevitable shake-out than than the culturally ignorant.*

Robbins and Stylianou (2003) content analyzed websites from ninety companies represented in *Fortune 500* international corporations. Fifteen companies headquartered in each of the six clusters based on Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions were investigated. The clusters were Anglo, Nordic, German, Latin, Asian, and Japan. Differences across clusters on various aspects of content and design were analyzed. The content component addressed what was included in the site, i.e., the various types of information provided. The design component probed the presentation and navigational aspects of the site. Results indicated that web site content was significantly different across national cultures, and to a much lesser degree, across industry. However, very minor differences were found by national culture or by industry with regards to web site design.

Singh, Zhao, and Hu (2003) surveyed forty large U.S.-based companies to investigate the degree of cultural adaptation in their Chinese websites. Four of Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions and the context dimension of Hall (1960) were included in the study. Content analysis of the U.S. and Chinese websites for each company was conducted. The results indicated a clear evidence of cultural adaptation being practiced by the chosen U.S. sample in their Chinese websites.

Smith, Dunckley, French and Minocha (2004) present a "process model" for developing usable cross-cultural websites. This model is comprised of five main activities: planning the website development process, specifying the context of use, specifying user and organizational requirements, producing design solutions, and evaluating the designs against requirements. The use of ethnography and application of Hofstede's (2001) typology is advocated in several of the processes. While comprehensive, the complexity of the process model makes it more relevant to web designers than to cross-cultural researchers and international managers.

Maynard and Tian (2004) examined Chinese websites of the top 100 global brands. The results indicated the top brands did not follow the strategy of standardization when operating in China. The top brands localized their websites by integrating China's political, economic, and cultural characteristics into their online branding strategies.

A careful review of the above studies as well as some of the managerially oriented papers (cf. Sheldon & Strader, 2002) suggests the need for an integrative assessment of the literature pertaining to culture and website design. This will aid both scholars and practitioners in their appreciation of culture's influence on web interactions. E-gaming, in particular, is in the early stages of its lifecycle, and culturally savvy operators are more likely to survive the inevitable shake-out than the culturally ignorant.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Constructing a culturally compatible website involves more than translating the text from one language to another (Hiller, 2003). Cultural factors shape all aspects of communicative interaction, and impact both the nature of messages conveyed via a website as well as the processing and interpretation of these messages (Ito & Nakakoji, 1996). Edward T. Hall was among the first to observe that culture is primarily a system for creating, sorting, sending, storing, and processing information, and went on to assert that "culture is communication." (Hall, 1959, p. 119). In the context of an e-gaming website, designers of a website typically create web pages based on their own cultural norms and conditioning. Cultural conditioning occurs at levels below conscious awareness, and is therefore difficult to comprehend. Web audiences, in turn, operate from their own cultural wiring when perceiving and processing various cues from a gaming site. The successful 'decoding' of web messages on the part of the target audience will depend on the level of psychological overlap between the site designer and the audience. Chances of successful decoding will be greatly enhanced if web designers exhibit

cultural mindfulness and conceptualize and construct sites in accordance with the beliefs, norms, and culturally-based preferences the target audience (cf. Kim, 2001). This is best accomplished with the help of cultural frameworks.

Several competing frameworks exist by which to operationalize the phenomenon of culture (cf. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Hall, 1959; Hofstede 1991; Trompenaars, 1993; Schwartz, 1999). It is unrealistic to expect gaming website designers to visualize every target audience along the dimensions underlying every major framework. Besides, since all frameworks probe the selfsame phenomenon of culture, there are inevitable commonalities across the various conceptualizations of culture (for a thorough review of some of the earlier frameworks, see Clark, 1990). The choice of cultural frameworks or dimensions to consider when designing or adapting a gaming website is ultimately a tradeoff between parsimony and comprehensiveness.

For e-gaming providers interested in ensuring cultural compatibility between the website and the target market, the cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede (1991) seem most relevant. Here is not the place to discuss the merits of various cultural frameworks and tease out their usefulness. Suffice it to say that despite several well-warranted criticisms (cf. Landis & Wasilewski, 1999; Baskerville, 2003), Hofstede's cultural dimensions offer the advantages of intuitive appeal, parsimony, and empirical validation. Because of the wealth of data and deep theoretical interpretation underlying this framework, Hofstede has received much attention in the social sciences. In the second edition of *Culture's Consequences*, Hofstede (2001) describes over two hundred external comparative studies and replications that have supported his indices. This framework is comprised of five dimensions: individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and long-term orientation.

### **Individualism vs. Collectivism**

This dimension addresses how people in a society define themselves and assesses the link between an individual and his/her fellow individuals. In highly individualist countries, the individual views the self as independent, separate, and self-contained. In contrast, in highly collectivist societies, the individual views the self as fundamentally connected to others, i.e., as part of a group. Individualistic societies depict a loosely knit social structure whereas collective societies are constituted by very tightly knit social structures. Thus, people in individualistic cultures are concerned about themselves and their immediate nuclear family whereas people in collectivist cultures are concerned about their in-group, be it the extended family, clan or tribe.

### **Power Distance**

This dimension indicates a society's position on equity and equality. It is the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept that power is distributed unequally. Small power distance societies strive to minimize the inequities in the distribution of power, status and wealth whereas large power distance societies more readily accept such inequities in distribution. Visual manifestations of status differences are frowned upon in small power distance societies whereas such depictions are both expected and welcome in large power distance societies.

### **Uncertainty Avoidance**

This is the extent to which cultures tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty. Strong uncertainty avoidance cultures attempt to create as much certainty as possible in the day-to-day lives of people. Weak uncertainty avoidance societies condition their members to handle uncertainty and ambiguity with relative ease. Because of the low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, large uncertainty avoidance societies experience greater stress and anxiety when compared with weak uncertainty avoidance societies.

### **Masculinity vs. Femininity**

This is the extent to which the predominant values in the culture are stereotypically 'masculine' (e.g. assertive and domineering) or 'feminine' (e.g. softer and less aggressive). In masculine cultures sex roles are sharply differentiated and traditional masculine values such as achievement, assertiveness, and competition are valued. In feminine cultures sex roles are less sharply distinguished and attributes such as nurturing and quality of life are relatively more valued. Masculine societies tend to be hero worshippers whereas feminine societies tend to sympathize with the underdog.

### **Long-Term Orientation**

Also called "Confucian Dynamism," this dimension assesses a society's capacity for patience and delayed gratification. Long-term oriented cultures tend to save more and exhibit more patience in reaping the results of their actions. Short-term oriented societies want to maximize the present rewards and are relatively less prone to saving and anticipating long-term rewards. Hofstede (2001, p. 359) writes, "Long Term Orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, Short Term Orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of 'face' and fulfilling social obligations."

### **Impact on Gaming Site Construction and Perceptions**

Communicating effectively with culturally diverse audiences across long distances is one of the greatest challenges faced by e-gaming operators. Audience perceptions and reactions to a gaming website would be strongly impacted by their culture. Based on the cultural dimensions discussed above, certain propositions can be formulated so as to better comprehend the degree of effectiveness of a gaming website along cultural parameters.

*Communicating effectively with culturally diverse audiences across long distances is one of the greatest challenges faced by e-gaming operators.*

A society's position on the continuum of *individualism* would dictate the tone and substance of a gaming website. Recall that people in individualistic cultures tend to have loose ties with their fellow individuals. Such cultures would place greater salience on website personalization as compared to individuals from collectivistic cultures.

Individualistic cultures place a great deal of emphasis on seeking novelty, variety, and pleasure. Collectivist societies do not value these attributes nearly as much, and make their product and brand choices taking into consideration the opinions of their in-group instead (Kale & Barnes, 1992). This leads to the following propositions.

- P<sub>1</sub>: Features resulting in a personalized gaming website would be more valued in individualistic cultures than in collectivist cultures.
- P<sub>2</sub>: Gaming sites that employ themes connoting novelty, variety, and pleasure would be more positively evaluated in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures.

*Power distance* will also impact people's preferences in relation to a gaming website. Kale and Barnes (1992) suggest that in certain large power distance societies such as Japan, the buyer is king and the seller is accorded lower status than a beggar. Gaming sites targeting people from large power distance cultures therefore need to portray modesty on part of the provider. The status of customers needs to be acknowledged through proper salutations, choice of words, and tone. Power distance will also dictate the degree of formality to be observed in interactions (cf. Kale, 1991). Large power distance societies would expect the content of the web pages to be expressed in a very formal tone. Small power distance societies would prefer informality instead. Entry to the gaming website in large power distance societies could be made possible by pre-qualifying registered members so as to maintain an aura of status and exclusivity. This discussion suggests the following propositions:

- P<sub>3</sub>: Internet gaming sites displaying respect and subservience toward the customer will be favorably evaluated by inhabitants in large power distance societies.
- P<sub>4</sub>: Relative to small power distance societies, large power distance cultures will prefer a higher level of formality in website tone and presentation.
- P<sub>5</sub>: Compared to small power distance cultures, overt references to status and power of the customer will be more favorably received in large power distance societies.

*Uncertainty avoidance* will impact site content with regard to the risk reduction elements of a website. Societies with strong uncertainty avoidance will place a lot of emphasis on the security aspects of a website. These could relate to downloading gaming software and other documents, making online deposits, and accepting “cookies” from a website. Features of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures include low tolerance for ambiguity, distrust of outsiders, and skepticism toward youth. Audiences from weak uncertainty avoidance societies are more likely to visit and explore a website regardless of the safety guarantees displayed by the site administrator. They would be relatively more willing to part with credit card information and other details or make online transactions. Audiences from strong uncertainty avoidance societies are less likely to trust a site provider and would engage in site patronage only if they are absolutely convinced of a site’s integrity and security features. Accordingly, it could be postulated that:

- P<sub>6</sub>: Relative to audiences from weak uncertainty avoidance societies, perceived trust in a gaming website would be a far stronger determinant of site patronage in strong uncertainty avoidance societies.
- P<sub>7</sub>: Unless proper security assurances and explicit guarantees are offered, visitors from strong uncertainty avoidance societies will be very resistant to download software, part with personal information, and play on online gaming sites.
- P<sub>8</sub>: Compared to strong uncertainty avoidance societies, cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance will be relatively more receptive to new technologies and to less perceived navigation control in a gaming website.

*Masculinity vs. Femininity* refers to characteristics that affect both individual men and women within a culture. Masculine values consist of assertiveness, competition, and toughness. Feminine values include sympathizing with the downtrodden, nurturing, and a focus on people and environment as opposed to material possessions. These values would impact the way web messages are designed as well as interpreted. Site attributes such as gaming competitions (e.g. online poker tournaments), making frequent references to high achievers and jackpot winners, and a strong emphasis on the “winning” aspects of gaming would be favorably received by audiences within masculine societies. Feminine cultures would be relatively more receptive to messages promoting the charitable causes of the site sponsor, pleas for responsible gaming, statement of environmental policies adopted by the sponsor, and androgyny in site tone as well as language. The following propositions can thus be forwarded:

- P<sub>9</sub>: Depictions of successful achievers and past winners on gaming sites would be more favorably received by audiences from masculine cultures than those from feminine cultures.
- P<sub>10</sub>: Information on sponsored charitable causes, appeals toward responsible gambling, and portrayal of environmental friendliness of a gaming operator would impact feminine societies more favorably than they would impact masculine societies.
- P<sub>11</sub>: Androgyny in the pictures and messages constituting a gaming website would be more valued by feminine cultures than by masculine cultures.

*Long-Term Orientation* deals with issues such as adapting traditions to modern perspectives, being thrifty and sparing with resources, and perseverance toward slow results. Short-term oriented cultures live in the present (or past) and show relatively little

concern for tomorrow. Everything else being equal, short-term oriented customers are likely to be relatively impulsive in making bets while long-term oriented cultures would be expected to show more restraint. Given their past-orientation, appeals to tradition will be favorably interpreted by short-term oriented cultures. Also successful will be overt comparisons with the audience's peer groups. Fads and gimmicks are by definition short-term and would therefore resonate well with short-term oriented societies. This brief discussion suggests the following:

- P<sub>12</sub>: Relative to long-term oriented societies, cultures with short-term orientation are more likely to be impressed by gaming websites that effectively operationalize peer group influence.
- P<sub>13</sub>: References to audiences' traditions in the content of gaming sites and effective use of traditional icons in site design will be more valued by short-term oriented cultures than by long-term oriented cultures.
- P<sub>14</sub>: When it comes to online gambling, short-term oriented cultures will display greater impulsiveness in their betting behaviors than long-term oriented cultures.
- P<sub>15</sub>: Short-term oriented societies will be more positively impressed by gimmicky features of an online gaming site (such as depiction of live dealers and scantily-clad women) as compared to long-term oriented societies.

### **Validating the Propositions**

The propositions presented here should first be tested for their validity for them to be of use to online gaming operators and researchers. Some suggestions for testing are therefore in order. An initial starting point for testing would be to design mock websites containing appeals incorporating different levels of *one* cultural dimension (e.g. uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, power distance, etc. at low, medium, and high levels) while holding the level of other dimensions constant. Each of these mock web sites could then be tested using samples of individuals from different cultures to assess their favorability and persuasiveness. This will provide correlations of respondent culture and site evaluation for each mock website incorporating the different treatments. Such an experimental approach would ensure comprehensiveness as well as control in testing.

Alternatively, these propositions could be tested in a natural setting. Representative web pages of online gaming operators from culturally diverse countries could be chosen and content analyzed for their cultural content by experts well versed in cultural typology. The evaluations of various experts could be compared using inter-rater reliability. Having determined the cultural score for each dimension, these web pages could then be presented as stimuli to a sample of respondents from different cultures. Respondent favorability toward the site as well as assessment of intention to play could be assessed, thus providing an empirical test of the propositions. With large enough samples, propositions that hold up under empirical testing can be incorporated for subsequent theory building in the area. They can also be used to develop managerial guidelines for designing online gaming sites for various cultures.

### **Managerial Insights**

The propositions suggested in this paper provide conceptual guidance to e-gaming operators desirous of adapting their websites to the preferences of culturally diverse target markets. Understanding web audiences' culture along the five dimensions discussed here will point the way to identifying specific adaptations that would be needed when communicating with each culture. This will help e-gaming providers bridge some of the inherent cultural distance with customers and enhance their prospects for effective and persuasive communication.

Hofstede's (1991) model is based on quantitative research and gives scores for 75 countries and regions on each cultural dimension. These dimensions offer the robustness seldom evidenced in other cultural frameworks. Since this framework spans a wide array of countries, it covers most e-gaming customers constituting the global marketplace.

Using the five dimensions as cultural markers will ensure greater congruence in web content and design on the one hand and audience cultural characteristics on the other. It will enable e-gaming operators to seek answers to several vexing questions such as: How formal or rewarding should the web interaction be? What needs to be conveyed in the site to motivate different groups of people to try out a gaming site or to ensure ongoing loyalty (e.g. money, fame, honor, achievement)? How much conflict can people tolerate in content or style of argumentation? How avant-garde should a website be to differentiate itself in the Internet gaming clutter within the context of a particular culture? Answers to such vital questions will go a long way in designing culturally compatible gaming websites.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This article presented fifteen propositions on culture and gaming site construction. As mentioned, the next logical step is for researchers to test these propositions either in an experimental setting or through field research. Doing so will considerably strengthen the existing theory on culture and web communication in general and also contribute specifically to normative aspects of constructing cross-cultural e-gaming sites.

It would be interesting for e-gaming scholars to probe other cultural frameworks and assess their usefulness in designing websites targeted to various cultures (e.g. Hall & Hall 1990, Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961, Triandis 1972). No single framework would uncover all the important aspects of cross-cultural web communication. Using competing frameworks would enable researchers to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each framework in predicting patron behavior within the e-gaming context. In pursuit of an appropriate framework or frameworks, a balance will have to be struck between parsimony and intuitive appeal on the one hand and comprehensiveness on the other. As the veracity and applicability of various cultural frameworks are uncovered, we will move one step closer to a normative theory of culture and web communication.

Returning to the five cultural dimensions discussed in this paper, the relative impact of cultural compatibility of each dimension on overall site evaluation needs to be assessed. Not all dimensions would be equally paramount in determining the favorability with which online gaming sites are perceived.

This leads to the issue of standardization versus adaptation in the design of online gaming sites. The costs inherent in adaptation need to be weighed against the possible benefits. Also, intra-country cultural differences need to be considered before any final conclusions on the optimal country website can be drawn.

*The next logical step is for researchers to test these propositions either in an experimental setting or through field research.*

### **Conclusion**

Culture and communication involves the total spectrum of language, non-verbal communication, customs, values, concepts of time and space, and context. Culture impacts how audiences from different parts of the world perceive, process, interpret, and react to various cues contained in a web site. The greater the cultural distance between the site provider and the audience, the more difficult the web communication. Understanding and applying Hofstede's five dimensions of culture would facilitate reduction in cultural distance between an e-gaming provider and its audiences. This will enhance audience receptivity to the provider's web communication and thus increase the chances of site trial and patronage.



This article mostly discussed the content aspects of gaming websites. Culture's impact on aspects of design such as colors, numbers, and fonts will still have to be investigated for various audiences. While the five dimensions discussed in this paper should provide great value in deciding on the web appeals to be used for each culture, specific information on the execution of these appeals will still need to be gathered on a case-by-case basis.

*Culture impacts how audiences from different parts of the world perceive, process, interpret, and react to various cues contained in a web site.*

On the research front, a lot needs to be done in the international e-gaming area. Culture alone presents a fecund research frontier. Scholars could investigate several issues such as the relative importance of various cultural dimensions in web information processing, cultural adaptation versus standardization of gaming sites, cross-cultural segmentation for international e-gaming, and catering to various cultural diasporas using the web.

### References

- Barnlund, D. C. (1989). *Communicative styles of Japanese and Americans*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Baskerville, R. F. (2003). Hofstede never studied culture. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 28 (1), 1-14.
- Clark, T. (1990). International marketing and national character: A review and proposal for an integrative theory. *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (4), 66-79.
- de Mooij, M. K. (1997). *Global marketing and advertising: Understanding cultural paradoxes*. San Francisco: Sage Publications.
- Duesenberry, J. S. (1949). *Income, saving, and the theory of consumer behavior*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hall, E. T. (1959). *The silent language*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hall, E. T. (1960). The silent language in overseas business. *Harvard Business Review*, 38 (3), 93-96.
- Hall, E. T., & Hall, M. R. (1990). *Understanding cultural differences*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Hiller, M. (2003). The role of cultural context in multilingual website usability. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 2 (1), 2-14.
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Culture and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw Hill.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ito, M., & Nakakoji, K. (1996). Impact of culture on user interface design. In: E. M. del Galdo & J. Nielsen (Eds.), *International user interfaces* (pp. 105-126). New York: Wiley Computer Publishing.
- Kale, S. H. (1991). Culture-specific marketing communications: An analytical approach. *International Marketing Review*, 8 (2), 18-30.
- Kale, S. H. (1995). Grouping Euroconsumers: A culture-based clustering approach. *Journal of International Marketing*, 3 (3), 35-48.
- Kale, S. H., & Barnes, J. W. (1992). Understanding the domain of cross-national buyer-seller interactions. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 23 (1), 101-132.
- Kanso, A., & Nelson, R. N. (2002). Advertising localization overshadows standardization. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 42 (1), 79-89.
- Kim, Y. (2001). *Becoming intercultural*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kluckhohn, F. R., & Strodtbeck, F. Z. (1961). *Variations in value orientations*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Landis, D., & Wasilewski, J. H. (1999). Reflections on 22 years of the International Journal of Intercultural Relations and 23 years in other areas of intercultural practice. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23 (4), 535-574.

- Marcus, A., & Gould, E. (2000). Crosscurrents: Cultural dimensions and global web user-interface design. *ACM Interactions*, 7 (4), 32-46.
- Maynard, M., & Tian, Y. (2004). Between global and local: Content analysis of the Chinese web sites of the 100 top global brands. *Public Relations Review*, 30 (3), 285-291.
- Mueller, B. (1996). *International advertising: Communicating across cultures*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Robbins, S. S., & Stylianou, A. C. (2003). Global corporate web sites: An empirical investigation of content and design. *Information & Management*, 40 (3), 205-212.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1999). A theory of cultural values and some implications for work. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 48, 23-47.
- Sheldon, L. A., & Strader, T. J. (2002). Managerial issues for expanding into international web-based electronic commerce. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 67 (3), 22-30.
- Singh, N., Zhao, H., & Hu, X. (2002). Cultural adaptation on the web: A study of American companies' domestic and Chinese websites. *Journal of Global Information Management*, 11 (3), 63-80.
- Smith, A., Dunckley, L., French, T., & Minocha, S. (2004). A process model for developing usable cross-cultural websites. *Interacting with Computers*, 16 (1), 63-91.
- Triandis, H. C. (1972). *The analysis of subjective culture*. New York: John Wiley.
- Trompenaars, F. (1993). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding cultural diversity in business*. London: The Economist Books.
- Warden, C. A., Lai, M., & Wu, W. Y. (2002). How worldwide is marketing communication on the world wide web? *Journal of Advertising Research*, 42 (5), 72-84.
- Yoon, D., & Cropp, F. (1999). Cultural differences in Internet advertising: A content analysis of Internet advertising between the United States and Korea. In M. S. Roberts (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 1999 conference of the American Academy of Advertising* (pp. 89-96).
- Zahedi, F. M., Van Pelt, W. V., & Song, J. (2000). A conceptual framework for international web design. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 44 (2), 83-103.

Article submitted: 12/15/05

Sent to peer review: 12/15/05

Reviewers' comments sent to author: 1/03/06

Author's revised version received: 1/05/06

Article accepted for publication: 1/05/06