How do consumers perceive online advertising?
– A cross cultural comparison between Sweden and China

Writers
Nasiha Avdic
Israa Badran

Supervisor
Veronika Tarnovskaya

Examiner
Christer Ekelund
Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate cultural differences in consumer perception of online advertising. As the Internet grows it has become important for companies to adjust website design to cultural differences in online advertising. Internet users are more comfortable with website design related to their own culture. There have been a limited number of previous investigation regarding website design and our study aims to fill this gap.

Schwartz cultural values are used to investigate cultural differences on a micro level. Our study aims to compare Sweden and China based on cultural values. The two countries were chosen because of the cultural differences. Schwartz cultural values have been selected since Schwartz investigates cultural differences on an individual level.

The result of the dissertation indicates that there are other factors than colour text and image that influence consumers’ perception of the website design. One of the challenges in the dissertation was to connect the conceptual model to the collected data from the focus group interviews. However, some of the Schwartz’s cultural values could be captured where the participants were motivated by the culture in the responses. The result of the study can be used for companies and their website design in connection to Swedish and Chinese culture. The investigation gave us more understanding regarding the area of online advertising in connection to website design.

Keywords: cultural differences, consumer perception, online advertising, website design, motivation and attitude.
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Israa Badran

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Nasiha Avdic
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1. Introduction

The first chapter of this dissertation includes background information, problem formulation, research question, purpose, and limitations

1.1 Background

Over the past decade the Internet has grown rapidly. According to Internet World Stats (2011) there were approximately 2.2 billion Internet users in the world during 2011. This means that the Internet users have grown more than 500% over one decade (Internetworldstats.com, 2011). In the world, Asia has the most Internet users, 44.8% while Oceania and Australia have the least Internet users in the world, 1.1% according to Internet World Stats (2011), presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. Internet users in the world distributed by world regions - 2011
(From: Internetworldstats.com, 2011)

More people visit the Internet every day and it has made the Internet a new marketplace. There are millions of products accessible for one and all, and consumers show a huge interest in new products and a larger range of products (Gong, 2009). The world embracing the Internet opens opportunities for companies in general toward using the Internet as an instrument for marketing and business purposes in connection to online
advertising. Online advertising or Internet advertising can be described as delivering advertisements through, websites, e-mail, banners, pop ups (Ha, 2008). There is one large difference between online advertising and offline advertising, and that is that online advertising is both measurable and collectable. Depending on what the visitors do on the website and where the visitors come from, the behavior pattern of the visitors can be measured. The information may be valuable and the website can be adjusted according to what form of behavior the visitors have (Aljukhadar & Senecal, 2011).

The Internet has become an important part of the world, for individuals as well as for companies. People are using the Internet with similar interest but for the different purposes, because all individuals are different and have a different culture (de Mooij, 2010). International companies might adapt to the different cultures, since Internet users are more comfortable with websites related to their own culture (Cyr, Bonanni, Bowes, & Ilsever, 2005; Cyr, Kindra, & Dash, 2008; de Mooij, 2010; Kabadayi & Gupta, 2011). Cultural adoptions make people seek information faster and easier, and it also creates a positive attitude towards the website, which can affect the purchase decision. People are varying in their values, motivation and thinking and, therefore, companies have to take in account cross-cultural differences in their website design to achieve favorable results (de Mooij, 2010).

The emphasis in the dissertation is on the countries China and Sweden. The countries are appropriate since the culture differences are great. Using Hofstede’s (2011) cultural framework the countries, Sweden and China differ on all Hofstede’s five cultural elements (Hofstede, 2011). Furthermore, China has 513 100 000 Internet users, while Sweden has 8 441 718 Internet users. Asia has 44,8% of the world’s Internet users. China has approximately 23% Internet users of the total 44,8%. The Europe, including Sweden, has 15,9% Internet users. Sweden has approximately 0,4% Internet users of the total 15,9% (Internetworldstats.com, 2011). The statistics of the Internet users in comparison with the world is appropriate since the emphasis in the dissertation is on the countries China and Sweden.
1.2 Problem formulation

The Internet has increased hurriedly the lasted decade including the website visitors and consumers as mentioned in the background. The globally Internet users who visits the Internet are from different cultures and the website design differ from culture to culture and therefore the culture differences influence the consumers’ perception. There is researcher that has claimed that cultural concepts are related to design elements in the website and even so there has been extremely little research about “web preferences of users related to a variety of online design characteristics” (Cyr & Smith, 2004, p. 2). The existing studies made on online advertising investigate cultural issues in Internet advertising regarding standardization versus localization debate, consumer response to online advertising, advertising content, social and regulatory issues, culture values, issues related to integrated marketing communication and international advertising agencies and campaign management (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Furthermore, recent studies investigating online advertising has examined the online shopping phenomenon and the perceived risk of purshaing online (Brettel & Spilker-Attig, 2010; Constantinides, Lorenzo-Romero, & Gomez, 2010; Ko, Jung, Kim, & Shim, 2004; Park & Jun, 2003; Wu, 2002).

The concept culture is a significant part in connection to the Website design as the usability increases of multilingual WebPages. Barber and Badre (1998) coined the expression ‘culturability’ initially. The expression ‘culturability’ can be described in “cultural usability is a term we use to emphasize the importance of the relationship between culture and usability in WWW design…Color, spatial organization, fonts, shapes, icons, and metaphors, geography, language, flags, sounds, and motion contribute to the design and content of a Web page, which directly affects the way that a user interacts with the site” (Cyr & Smith, 2004, p. 4). The preferences for design characteristic are perceived differently of the consumer depending on the culture (Cyr & Smith, 2004; Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; Cyr, 2008).

The aim of this study is to investigate the topic website design and the elements colour, text and image/pictures. There is a “gap” of investigations regarding website design and the few investigations that has been made on the topic has shown that there is a
difference of perceiving a website design depending on the aspect culture. The elements color, text and image/pictures are some of the core elements in website design. The elements have not been examined widely and consequently website design is important to investigate based on localization. Considering, localization is a form of adaptation to a particular culture when adapting the website design to a specific language, time, local color, appearance and so on. The advantage is to adjust the Internet users and visitors for various websites design (Cyr & Smith, 2004). As previously mentioned the preferences for design characteristics are perceived differently depending on the culture and consequently it is important to have the culture in the investigation as an important aspect. Schwartz’s cultural values are a theory that can be used to investigate consumer culture and since the study is on an individual level the cultural values are appropriate. Furthermore, Hill (2010) have defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society” (Hill, 2010, p. 89). The problem that arises is that unadapting website design including color, text and image/pictures can influence the consumer in a negative way. When the website design is not adapted to a particular culture, the consumer will be less attracted. In order to undertake this study it is important to increase the understanding of how consumer from two different countries percevie website design.

1.3 Research question

*How do cultural differences influence consumer perception of online advertising regarding website design?*

1.4 Research purpose

The purpose the study is to examine the impact culture has on consumer perception when it comes to website design. The research will highlight how consumers from two different cultures perceive the website design by making a comparative study investigating Sweden and China. The countries were chosen since the significant differences. The main observation that will be studied is how website design and the elements color, text and image affects consumer perception in different cultures.
Mainly, the outcome from this thesis will fill the "gap" there is of studies regarding online advertising and particularly website design.

1.5 Limitation

This dissertation is limited to a few established theories within the field of the investigation. Firstly, Schwartz’s ten cultural values will be used to explain cultural differences; only nine of the cultural values are useful and the benevolence cultural value will be removed. Secondly, the dimension of motivations will be used to clarify what factors motivate the consumer to perceive things in a certain way, primary motives will be removed. The dimension of the motivation will be used to get a deeper understanding of consumer perception and attitude toward online advertising. In the dissertation we are investigating online advertising and website design including the elements color, text and image. The investigation will be limited to high school students between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Moreover, the focus group interviews are limited to Chinese and Swedish participants.
2. Research Method

The second chapter of this dissertation, research method, begins with an introduction followed by a presentation of the research philosophy and the research approach. Further the choice of theory is explained, followed by a description of the choice of methodology.

2.1 Introduction

The “onion model” provided by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007) develops more knowledge in the field research methodology. Figure 2 presents the research process in different layers; the process includes six central parts such as philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons and techniques and procedures. According to Saunders et al. (2007) the “onion model” can be supportive regarding the investigation of the research question. The different parts in the “onion model” are explained further in the methodology chapter.

Figure 2. The research “onion”

(From: Saunders, et al., 2007)
2.2 Research philosophy

The research philosophy is based on our assumptions about the world around us; examine the research method and strategy that will be used in the dissertation. The research philosophy is important to identify sub questions that are related to our topic, which contributes to answering how cultural differences influence consumer perception of online advertising regarding website design. According to Saunders et al. (2007) the research philosophy consists of different components that are positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism.

The investigations regarding culture differences can be understood enhanced by clarify how people think and believe, considering the interpretive emphasizes interpretations of how an individual perceive the world around. Moreover, interpretivism investigates the knowledge about individuals’ attitude and perception that is useful in our dissertation.

2.3 Research approach

According to Saunders et al. (2007) there are three different ways one can use to approach a research: deductive, inductive and abductive. The deductive approach is explained as developing hypothesis or hypotheses and developing a research strategy for testing the hypothesis or hypotheses. When using the deductive approach the study is depending on the existing information available regarding the subject. The inductive approach is explained as collecting information and developing a theory as a result of the study (Saunders, et al., 2007). The abductive approach is a mixture between the inductive and deductive approach. The abductive approach implies that new knowledge is brought to the topic in our case online advertising. The approach starts with an empirical observation or with theoretical knowledge and aim to develop a theory/model. “The primary aim of abduction is to develop the understanding of a “new” phenomenon” (Kovács & Spens, 2005 p. 140).

The area online advertising has long been studied (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007) but there is a need of knowledge regarding cultural differences in connection to website design. In our thesis the abductive approach is appropriate since the theoretical review includes a developed model applicable for the empiric data collection, showing the “gap”
regarding cultural differences and the perception of online advertising concerning website design. Additionally the study move from the theoretical to the empirical/data making the abductive approach relevant. Finally the investigation is a qualitative study since it would be difficult to prove that the culture is influencing the choice of website and the appearance using surveys, it could be all sorts of factors that play a role.

2.4 Choice of theory

The aim of this study is to investigate how culture influences the perception of consumers concerning online advertising and website design. In the dissertation existing theories are used as well as a new developed conceptual model. The aim is to contribute with new information regarding the lacking area website design and fill the existing ”gap”. This dissertation focuses on previous theories and cultural concept to develop a new “conceptual model” to help us answer our research question. The study has a focus on culture and thereby it becomes relevant to define the concept culture. Schwartz cultural values are presented to describe the cultural differences; in order to study the cultural influences on the consumers’ perception the term of Schwartz’s cultural ten values needs to be defined and explained. Furthermore, motivation, perception and attitude are clarified. Finally website design and online advertising has been discussed using existing articles for a better understanding of the area. All the existing articles and theories give to some degree explanation and understanding for the area we intend to study. The theories resulted in a conceptual model designed for a better overview of the literature review and for the topic.

2.5 Choice of methodology

The main point in this dissertation is to study how cultural differences influence consumer perception of online advertising concerning website design. As indicated formerly online advertising has been covered in many areas but the research field website design has not been closely observed. The choice of methodology depends on both suitable approach and philosophy. The dissertation will adopt an interpretive research philosophy with an abductive approach. Considering, the interpretive research philosophy with an abdicative approach are useful in our topic. In order to answer our
research question, a qualitative method is relevant for the research focused on consumers’ perception field where existing data can be used as a supportive source. The quantitative method does not suit this dissertation mainly because the research question cannot be answered through analysis of numerical data. To study the cultural differences in the dissertation the literature review begin with an investigation of the concept culture. The study of culture is on individual level. Furthermore, the literature review will result in a conceptual model designed as a summary. Finally to understand how consumers from two different countries perceive website design the investigation collects data from focus group interviews. Focus groups are a guide system to solve our research question and using focus groups the consumer perception can be acknowledged.
3. Literature Review

The third chapter of the dissertation, the literature review includes an introduction of culture in general, and then a presentation of Schwartz’s cultural values, consumer culture and online advertising and culture. Further consumer behavior is discussed, including motivation, perception and attitude and web design are presented. The chapter ends with a presentation of our conceptual model.

3.1 Introduction

The literature review begins with culture giving the reader a general presentation of culture as an introduction for later reading in the literature review. Hill (2010) is used to explain the presentation of culture, since Hill (2010), provides basic information regarding culture. Further Schwartz’s cultural values are discussed as Schwartz investigates culture on an individual level making the theory relevant to the dissertation. Since the investigation is on an individual level, consumer culture is also discussed where the debate regarding the localization is brought up. Culture cannot be generalized, stereotyping people as a group but rather focusing on the specific culture for the individual. The cultural part ends with a presentation of an important aspect in the dissertation online advertising and culture; here other authors’ articles regarding online advertising are discussed.

The next part in the dissertation presents consumer behavior including motivation, self-concept, perception and attitude. The focus in the dissertation is not about consumer behavior but rather about the topics motivation, perception and attitude. The part of the chapter begins with a presentation of consumer behavior giving the reader an overview of the topic by basic information. Blythe (2007) is used to explain the presentation of consumer behavior, since Blythe (2007), provides basic information regarding consumer behavior. Hence the focus is not about consumer behavior. Further on perception, motivation and attitude is presented and explained, as important factors of
individuals’ attitude and motivation regarding online advertising and website design. In addition the web design is presented; where other authors’ articles regarding web design are discussed. The chapter ends with a presentation of our conceptual model, where a model has been developed connecting the relevant theories together for a clearer view of the dissertation.

3.2 Culture

There have been a number of studies made regarding culture associated with online advertising and numerous of cross cultural advertising researchers have used Hofstede’s cultural dimension. Schwartz’s cultural values have been used to a lesser degree as well as the newer culture classification named GLOBE (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Culture is a big concept that needs considerably understanding and Hill (2010) have defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society” (Hill, 2010, p. 89). Hill (2010) is used to explain the presentation of culture, since Hill (2010), provides basic information regarding culture, the information is appropriate given our purpose.

According to Okazaki & Mueller (2007) the cultural values are the most investigated component regarding cross cultural advertising studies making it an important cultural aspect and relevant to our study. Culture is additional divided into two components that are values and norms that are connected. Value is defined as “abstract ideas about what a group believes to be good, right and desirable. But differently values are shared assumptions about how things ought to be” (Hill, 2010, p. 89). Norms are defined as “the social rules and guidance that prescribe appropriate behavior in particular situations (Hill, 2010, p. 89). Further, norms can be dived into two categories that are, folkways and mores. Folkways are defined as the routine for how people are expected to behave every day. It may be about dressing properly, treat their comrades’ right, and generally appropriate behavior. Attitude towards time is an important aspect in folkways. Time means differently in different cultures for example, in USA time is very important while in the Arab and Latin time is less important. In the United State time is money, but in Arab and Latin rather the social life is more important. Mores ensure that
a society function and mores include factors like incest and cannibalism which are factors that in most societies are enacted into law (Hill, 2010). Hill (2010) explains two aspects that are of great importance and those are the “individual” and “the group”. The most investigation regarding culture that is associated with advertising has included the “individual” and “the group” as an important part in the culture. The investigations have included Hofstede’s dimension regarding individualism versus collectivism in numerous of studies (Ko et al., 2004; Okazaki & Mueller, 2007; Park & Jun, 2003) making the aspects “individual” and “the group” relevant to our study. In the Western world the individual is more encouraged than the group, where in other parts of the world the group is rather encouraged. In individual societies the individual achievement is highlighted and the individual are expected to look after himself. The groups’ achievements are highlighted in group societies and people are supposed to look after the interest of his or her collective. In individual societies people do not have the same relationship to their comrades because they try to fulfill their own needs, but in group societies people have a closer relationship to their comrades because they are mostly dependent on team work (Hill, 2010).

Hofstede (2011) have done studies investigating “the group” and Hofstede’s investigations are in other words on macro-level because of the investigation is made in more than 76 countries. On the other hand, Schwartz’s have made studies regarding the “individual” and therefore Schwartz’s investigations are connected to micro-level. According to de Mooij (2010) the cultural values of an individual and a group are differentiated into macro- and micro-level. The cultural values on macro level are named collective values or culture values and the values on micro level are named value orientation (de Mooij, 2010). Since our study is on a micro-level, investigating the “individual” Schwartz cultural values is of great importance and appropriate.

3.2.1 Schwartz’s cultural values

Given our purpose considering the “individual” level in our study, Schwartz’s cultural values are relevant. Schwartz (1992) investigated the concept of cultural values that are an important aspect on the individual level. Values are defined as “concepts or beliefs pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, transcend specific situations, guide selection
or evaluation of behavior and events, and are ordered by relative importance” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 4). There are cultural values that function as goals for humans and there are three requirements of human existent where all humans must be coordinated. The universal requirements are needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups, and the requirements are believed to be needed for survival. Out of the three requirements came Schwartz “value circle”, eight motivating values and the result of the eight values were “prosocial, restrictive conformity, enjoyment, achievement, maturity, self-direction, security, and power universalism” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 4). Schwartz would further make some modification on the theory, and the values enjoyment, maturity, prosocial and security would be modified (Schwartz, 1992).

According to Schwartz (1994) ten motivationally distinct types of values were derived from the three universal requirements, needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups, and the requirements are believed to be needed for survival, after the modifications. The ten values, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition, security, power, achievement, hedonism and stimulation are relevant to our study, since our study contains investigations of people on individual level. The ten values are presented in the figure 3 and will further be explained. Self-direction clarifies the independent thought of the individual. The individual moreover, have independent actions and the human desire to explore and understand the world. Creation is important as well, in the value self-direction (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz 1994). Universalism describes the “understanding, appreciations, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (Schwartz, 1992, p. 22). Benevolence is about maintaining the welfare, as well as improves it for the individuals that you regularly have personal contact with. Conformity explains the individual limiting their actions and impulses that can upset other people or that violate against some norms or expectations. Tradition explains a culture with norms and morals for one group of people. The traditions of religion and custom should be respected, accepted and there should be a commitment to the tradition. Security is about the society being safe for the people. There should be harmony and stability, not only in the society but moreover, in relationships, and of self.
Power is about dominance and or the control over people and capital. Further it explains the social status and prestige. Achievement clarifies the success of individuals and their achievement in the society. Hedonism explains the individuals and the need of pleasure and satisfaction. Hedonism was earlier called “enjoyment”. The last motivating value is stimulation and stimulation describes the excitement in life. The individual need stimulation, variation and challenge in life as a motivational goal (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz 1994).

![The Schwartz value circle](image)

Figure 3. The Schwartz value circle

(Based on: Schwartz, et al., 2011)

In our opinion Schwartz’s cultural values are not used often, since the Hofstede’s framework have been the most important theory regarding cross cultural advertising studies. Hofstede’s framework has been accepted around the world and is almost always used in connection with advertising studies, because Hofstede’s framework provides an
overview of the culture, on a macro-level. Schwartz theory is used on individual level, micro-level and has been less applied on the area marketing and advertising (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Given our research purpose the individual level of Schwartz’s cultural values is relevant given that the dissertation is on micro-level.

3.2.2 Consumer culture
There have been a number of studies made regarding culture and numerous of studies investigate the phenomena about standardization versus localization (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Standardization is used when there is no local adaptation and when there is no or slight consideration regarding culture. Localization on the other hand is used when there is local adaptation, the products are customized making them suitable for the customer and when the culture is considered (Hill, 2010). Newer studies from the last decade have questioned the way of studying national culture and claimed to rather focus on the localization, then the standardization (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004; Fang, 2005-6; Okazaki, 2004). Hofstede’s (2011) dimensions of culture only provides a general picture of the culture, stereotyping people as a group, when the culture rather is a more complex phenomena. Fang (2005-6) argued for culture as an "Ocean". Our purpose is to study the culture on an individual level and therefore the consumer culture and the localization of the culture must be considered.

Arnould et al. (2004) argued that there are cultural “blueprints” that includes habits and customs in the culture that need to be considered. Blueprints may be cultural myths described as stories that have shared emotions and cultural values. Cultural rituals explaining a behavior that is repeated with a human, the rituals can for example be religious, familiar, personal etc. (Arnould et al., 2004). The cultural “blueprints” are of great importance to our study, since our study is on individual level and different people from the same country can have different views on the culture. The “blueprints” can explain the habits and customs for the individuals.

3.2.3 Online advertising and culture
De Mooij (2010) have investigated global advertising and marketing, and tried to understand and clarify how advertising is influenced by the culture. Given our purpose, de Mooij’s (2010) studies regarding online advertising and culture are very relevant to
our study. According to de Mooij (2010) advertising reflects in the meaning of the culture: in the way people think, what moves them, how they relate to each other, how they live, relax and enjoy themselves” (de Mooij, 2010, p. 49). One important aspect in global advertising is for international companies to understand how the advertising is influenced by the culture and even how web design is influenced by the culture. The advertising needs to be formed, after the culture where it is experienced. If the advertising is adapted locally and if it contains consumer values, the advertising will be much stronger since the consumer can reflect to the advertisement (de Mooij, 2010).

Most of the articles regarding online advertising investigate cross cultural differences, where the culture is the main topic of the research. The authors tried to emphasize an important link between online advertising and the culture. The investigations regarding previous cross cultural studies used mostly Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Through Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, the national cultural differences can be measured. The Hofstede’s cultural dimensions is presenting the national cultural differences that has an impact on how consumer attitude and perception are connected to online advertising (Brettel & Spilker-Attig, 2010; Constantinides, et al., 2010; Park & Jun, 2003; Wang, Zhang, Risook, & D’Ermita, 2002).

The articles regarding online advertising and cross cultural differences discuss the factors that contribute to a certain perception among consumers, reflecting the online advertising. By investigating how Internet users perceive online advertising in different ways, the consumer attitude and perception can be measured towards online advertising. The investigations assume that the marketers can strategize their advertising design in efficient ways, by understanding consumers attitude towards advertising; since the better understanding of consumer perception and attitudes help to improve effectiveness of the Internet (Brettel & Spilker-Attig, 2010; Constantinides, et al., 2010; Park & Jun, 2003; Wang, et al., 2002).

3.3 Consumer behavior

There have been a number of studies made regarding culture in association with online advertising and numerous of cross cultural studies investigate the phenomena about consumer behavior (Brettel & Spilker-Attig, 2010; Chau, et al., 2002; Park & Jun,
2003). Given our purpose, investigating consumer perception the elements motivation, attitude and perception in consumer behavior is relevant to our study. Consumer behavior is moreover, defined as “the study of the process involved when people select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desire” (de Mooij, 2010, p. 93). The theory of consumer behavior is embedded in the Western World and therefore the theory is not necessary appropriate in other parts of the world, like Asia for example. The theory cannot necessary be used to understand all the worlds consumer behavior (de Mooij, 2010).

Blythe (2007) have investigated consumer behavior, and though the studies are limited the theories and models Blythe provide are relevant to our study, due of the clear understanding of consumer behavior and the important issues involved, as motivation, perception and attitude (Blythe, 2007). Blythe (2007) argues that the definition about the consumer theory includes the preparatory before the consumer makes the purchase, regarding information about the product or service and then buying the product and at last evaluating the purchase and the alternatives for the purchase. The word consumer behavior leads to the word “consuming” which means use a product. Consuming includes two factors, how and where the product is used. The standard model used for consumer behavior includes thoughts, emotions and behavior and these factors are influenced by person and environmental factors. The companies can impact these factors and even the consumer behavior of a person by giving relevant information at the right time; have a good environment where the stores are and have the stores look enjoyable (Blythe, 2007).

Blythe (2007) argued that by good environment and having the stores look enjoyable, companies need to have the customer in focus, because having the customer in focus make them feel estimated which increase the customer loyalty and the behavior tend to move in a positive direction. Further it is important for the companies to segment their market, regarding the most potential customers. The segmentation is done to determine “which potential buyers are most likely to behave favorably towards the company and its products: most segmentation methods bear at least some relationship to consumer behavior issues” (Blythe, 2007, p. 9).
3.3.1 Motivation

Motives are reasons for people having certain behaviors. All humans have instincts and instincts are inborn and spontaneous. In our opinion regarding our research purpose the motivation is relevant because motivation is what makes you actually perform something, in our case motivation for visiting a website. Additionally needs and wants are important factors in motivation. Wants are described as something people urge for and the needs are explained as something people feel a shortage of. To recognize a need there should be a perceived shortage of something and it should fill a void making the life more enjoyable. Some of the needs filling the void in humans are achievements, sex, dominance, aggression, understanding, rejection, and nurturance (Blythe, 2007).

According to Blythe (2007) the motivation can be classified in six categories. The categories are primary motives, secondary motives, rational motives, emotional motives, conscious motives and dormant motives. These motivations are relevant, since the categories provide a framework for the investigation of people regarding motivation in our study. Primary motives are explained as the motives to why you buy something in the first place, for example if your car broke down then you will get a new car; the primary motive is that you are buying a car because your old one is broken. Secondary motives are the motives for choosing a specific brand, for examples if your car broke down you want to buy Audi rather than buying Opel. Rational motives are described as intelligent decisions, for example when you choose the car you want to buy you think about the size of the vehicle if your family is large. In contrast you may choose a car with only two seats if you do not have a large family. Emotional motives are the motives that affect you emotionally, making a decision depending on feelings, for example if you love fast cars you may decide to buy a Ferrari rather than a family car though you have a large family at home. Conscious motives describe the awareness, the car buyer knows he must buy a new car and the car seller know that the car buyer need a new car, they are both aware of the situation. The last factor is dormant motives describe factors that you are not aware of, for example the car buyer emotionally desire a fancy sport car, but this may occur because he is approaching middle age, though the car buyer is not attentionally aware of this situation. The six motives are a classification.
of consumer behavior, and the six motives describe the motivation for in our case purchasing a car and what types of motives that motivate the purchase (Blythe, 2007).

The motives can be classified in three different dimensions, see figure 4. The primary, rational and conscious motives are classified in one dimension and secondary, dormant and emotional motives are classified in another dimension (Blythe, 2007).

![Figure 4. Dimensions of motives](From: Blythe, 2007)

**3.3.2 Perception**

There have been a number of studies investigating consumer perception in association with culture and online advertising (Blythe, 2007; Brettel & Spilker-Attig, 2010; Chau, et al., 2002; Park & Jun, 2003). The understanding of consumer perception in our study is important and studying consumer perception will provide a clear image about how consumer think and believe.

The consumer perception involves the perception of price, quality and value that shapes the purchase behavior and choice of product. Perception is consumer’s judgment about some object, determining consumer behavior toward purchases decision (Zeithaml,
Furthermore, the consumer knowledge about everything in the world constitutes perception. Perception is consumer view of the world and how they analyze the environment. Every individual has its own perception and own view that make them interpret messages and information differently. Perception is a process of different sensory, the basic five senses are touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing, and moreover, sense of direction, sense of balance and sense of knowledge are included. The five senses inform the brain about the environment and the things happening around the person, when new information enters the brain. The brain further collects all information and makes a decision (Blythe, 2007). Our brain is able to respond flexibly to the outside world and recognizes messages through past experience, determined by learning, memory and expectation. From psychological perspective, perception is a different aspects of personality, explained as recognition and awareness of certain object from sensory processes (Freeman, 1991).

3.3.3 Attitude
The attitude differentiates us from other people and everybody has an attitude toward things, like your family or your friends. The attitude people have for websites make the elements attitude appropriate for our study. The attitude is not measurable or observable like the behavior is, even though attitude is a part of the consumer behavior. People have to be asked about the attitude toward different object. The result of measuring attitude can sometimes be difficult to ensure if people are untruthful. Moreover, the attitudes with people are often based on the experiences, which from different attitudes towards example different brands. The first impression in humans are regularly the most important moment where the attitude is formed, although people around can affect the attitude by transmit their own attitude about something over to another human been. Attitude is divided into three dimensions which are, affect, cognition and conation. The cognition is defined as “the individuals’ awareness, knowledge, beliefs and images of the object of the attitude. It is the conscious, thinking part of attitude” (Blythe, 2007, p. 141), affect is defined as “the emotions, the feelings of like and dislike which do not always have a basis in objective fact” (Blythe, 2007, p. 141) and the conation is defined as “what we intend to do about the attitudinal object; whether to approach it, reject it, buy it etc. It is not the actual behavior; merely an intention” (Blythe, 2007, p. 141). If
there is a balance between these three factors, then there is a balance in the attitude (Blythe, 2007).

3.4 Website design
The purpose in the dissertation is to investigate website design and the elements color, text and image. There are few previous studies investigating the area of culture and website design (Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; Kabadayi & Gupta, 2011) and therefore our investigation is appropriate. Website design drives consumers to visit websites and create opportunities for a more effective marketing (Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; Kabadayi & Gupta, 2011).

There are few numbers of studies investigating website design and the part of web design in cross cultural context. The articles that deal with the field of web design are focusing on how the website design influence consumers; that means how web design can influence consumer by creating trust and loyalty, which is associated with increased satisfaction. Understanding of website design contribute to the customers revisit to the website and build online connection between businesses and consumers (Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; Kabadayi & Gupta, 2011). In conclusion, the most studies investigating website design and culture are focusing on the importance of website trust, website satisfaction and online loyalty in online business environment. Furthermore, a comparison between different cultures for website design was investigated and the website design was perceived in different views (Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; Kabadayi & Gupta, 2011).

According to Würtz (2005) the cross-cultural website design needs to have different cultures in consideration, for example issues that include culture specific color connotations, preferences in layout, animation, sounds, and other effects that are characteristic for the present generations’ websites. The investigation of the elements color, text and image are relevant to our dissertation, since it is important for the website designs to be adapted to the different cultures. Moreover, there are a lack of investigations regarding consumer perception and website design including the elements, text and image. Although there were a number of articles investigated the
elements color, the association connecting the culture and the website design are limited (Chau, et al., 2002; Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; Kabadayi & Gupta, 2011). Therefore in our study it is appropriate to investigate the elements colors, text and image in connection to the culture.

3.5 Summary

The summary describes a developed conceptual model presented in figure 5 in order to present an overview of the theories used in the dissertation. The model is based on the theoretical framework as previously described in the chapter.

As displayed in figure 5, online advertising is the center in the dissertation and the investigation includes cultural differences, regarding consumer perception of the web design including color, text and image. Schwartz’s cultural values are used to study the cultural differences between Sweden and China and, since our study is on an individual level the theory is relevant. The nine cultural values used in the investigation are: self-direction, universalism, conformity, tradition, security, power, achievement, hedonism and stimulation. Culture will be investigated using Schwartz’s cultural values and the values that will not be captured will be removed. Hence, consumer perception, including motivation and attitude is used to measure the perception or the attitude people have toward online advertising including web design. Referring to figure 5, the dimensions of motives of Blythe (2007) is used to investigate motivation. The dimension consists of secondary motives, rational motives, emotional motives, conscious motives and dormant motives. Primary motives are removed since it is not useable in the investigation. The dimension of motives can be used to examine how consumers’ perception is motivated.

Referring to our research question, “How do cultural differences influence consumer perception of online advertising regarding website design?”, website design is an important part given our purpose. International companies can now adapt to the different cultures, since Internet users are more comfortable with a website related to their own culture (Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; de Mooij, 2010; Kabadayi & Gupta, 2011).
Figure 5. Cultural influences and online advertising
4. Empirical Method

The forth chapter of the dissertation, the empirical method, begins with an introduction of the empirical method and then a presentation of research design and strategy. Further, the time horizon is discussed followed by data collection. The chapter ends with a presentation regarding the investigation of the focus groups that is a summary of our focus group interviews.

4.1 Introduction

The “research onion model” provided by Saunders et al. (2007) develops knowledge in the field of empirical method. The “research onion model” presents the research process in different layers, the process includes the research strategies, time horizons and techniques and data collected associated with data analysis. According to Saunders et al. (2007) the “onion model” can be useful in our investigation regarding our research question. The chapter of empirical method deals with different parts in the “onion model”.

4.2 Research design and strategy

The research question of this study is: How do cultural differences influence consumer perception of online advertising regarding website design? The research question informs us about the choice of research strategy to conduct the research of the dissertation. The research design is an overview plan of strategies that answers the research question. There are two different tactics that help us to investigate the study case. The tactics are qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Saunders, et al., 2007).

Qualitative research techniques consist of the data that emphasize words rather than numbers, since the qualitative data is based on interpretation, and an understanding actors’ perception and analysis. Quantitative data is based on numerical indices and analysis that are investigated by using statistics and diagrams and usually begins with
hypotheses and theories (Saunders, et al., 2007). Our purpose of the dissertation is to study the role of cultural differences in consumer’s perception of website design. The investigation is studying social processes and interpretations of consumer perception, for that reason the qualitative approach will be selected. These kinds of techniques allows to search for a certain pattern by answering the collected data from the focus group, thereby draw conclusions through identifying the relationship between the responses of these two different focus groups. The choice of qualitative data is relevant for our purpose that can make a better understanding of the whole context of the social process and its meaning in our case.

According to Saunders et al. (2009) there are three types of research designs; which are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Exploratory study is defined as investigating some phenomena in a new light that has not been investigated earlier. The exploratory study can be conducted by searching in the literature, interviewing experts or by conducting focus group interviews. A second research design is the explanatory study that indicates the way of studying the relationship between variables in order to get a clear view of how they are connected to each other. Explanatory study is used to explain events and compare them with other events. Finally, the descriptive study refers to the main topic to describe a person, situation or event. The descriptive studies formulate their question in the way of “what is” to examine the research question. The descriptive research can utilize both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in the same study (Saunders, et al., 2007).

The exploratory design is investigated in this dissertation to explore the cultural differences that influence the consumer perception of online advertising and website design, by conducting focus group interviews. The exploratory design is relevant to our purpose, considering our study is a qualitative research design, where data are collected through focus group interviews (Saunders, et al., 2007).

4.3 Time horizon

During the development stage in the process, a research design and strategy are important; since the time horizon is an important part, for a better time overview of the research. The first approach is named cross-sectional study and the approach is
explicated as an investigation of a phenomenon in a particular time. The cross-sectional study can additional be explained as a “snapshot” taken in time. The most investigators use the approach cross-sectional study since the time may be limited. The other approach is named longitudinal studies and the approach is explicated as an investigation over time regarding change and development. The longitudinal studies are named a “diary” (Saunders, et al., 2007).

In the dissertation a cross-sectional study is used. The focus groups are used in the investigation during the course of 15 weeks. The approach is appropriate since our purpose is not to develop or change over time, rather to take a “snapshot” since culture is not changing or developing over time.

4.4 Data collection

Data collection is the way we measure and evaluate information to answer our research question. The data can be measured with different strategies as interviews, observations, documentaries analysis and questionnaires source (Saunders, et al., 2007). The data collection has two components, which is primary data and secondary data. Primary data defined as the new collected data and is concerned with what people think, act and do that involve recording, description, analysis and even interpretation of peoples’ perception. Secondary data is defined as the already collected data, meaning you can use collected data to answer your research question (Saunders, et al., 2007).

The exploratory research design of this dissertation allows us to use primary data collection to investigate and collect new data. The purpose of the bachelor thesis is to analyze the impact of cultural differences concerning website design using focus group interviews. There are two different types of primary data collection, participant observation and structured observation (Saunders, et al., 2007). The participant observation is a qualitative research that is combined with cultural, social and communication studies. The participant observation investigates a group of individuals and the individuals report about what they believe, think and feel. By contrast structured observation is a quantitative research that refers to a high level of structure that estimate how people act and behave (Saunders, et al., 2007). Given our purpose the
participant observation will be appropriate for our main topic since the dissertation is a qualitative research investigating individuals’ perception and attitude.

The participant observation and primary data is used in the dissertation. By using the primary data you spend more time than using secondary data there you save a lot of time for the research. On the other hand the primary data collection provides open questionnaire and informal conversations (Saunders, *et al.*, 2007). By primary data you are able to collect mass of information, since it gives the individuals opportunities to talk freely about their beliefs, attitudes and perceptions in line with the research question.

4.5 Investigation of the focus group interviews

The reason for understanding why we are investigating the focus groups is to gain more knowledge, regarding cultural differences of consumer perception in connection with website design. By more understanding, the overview of the situation can be clearer and the answer for our research question can be found. The focus groups are separated in terms of cultural differences, since the different cultures have different perceptions of website design regarding online advertising. The Swedish and Chinese focus groups included 5 participants. Focus group 1 is the Swedish participants and focus group 2 is the Chinese participants. We choice to investigate five participants since five participants are moderately to conduct a discussion. More than five participants can be too many in a focus group interview since it would be hard to involve all the participants in the discussion. The participants were chosen in the first hand by the country and culture which were Sweden and China. Further the age of the participant was 17 years old and therefore the participants were chosen. We contacted Perstorp Gymnasium to ask if we could make our investigation in their school and the replay was very positive. We were invited to the school to present our study for the students. Then the students had a couple of days to think about the study and if they wanted to share the discussion. The persons who were interested in participating left their personal information. We thereafter were in contact with the volunteers and decided regarding time and date. The participants in each focus group were homogenous. They were the same age, same level in education, same culture and country. Hence each focus group
included participants with different sex. With the reference to the appendix (1a) we formulated out questions based on Schwartz cultural values. We asked the participants regarding one value at time, every value contained of several questions. All the participants answer all the questions in order and it occurred a discussion regarding the values when the participants were not in agreement. Every session last from 45 to 60 minutes and the focus group interviews were filmed. In the end of our investigation we showed the participants four different website designs with reference to the appendix (1b, c, d, and e). We chose the different website designs depending on color, text and image differences. To decrease the participants focusing on the websites’ content we have chosen to use the same products category on every website. The purpose with showing the four website designs is to investigate which design is the most attractive one.

4.5.1 Finding on self direction
The participants in focus group 1 argued for some elements in the website design that attracts them and people that influence the participants’ choice of websites. The participants argued mostly about websites that are attractive if you know about them. Participant 1 argued that the factors that make you choice a certain website are “if you have heard of the website before and most preferably if they exist in the real life like H&M and JC”, participant 2 added “names that you know about” participant 3 agreed with earlier speakers. Participant 4 entered the discussion and stated that “if you have not heard about the website before and for me to want to buy something from it, there should be a lot of images of the products and information regarding the payment and it should be a nice website that you can trust”. Participant 5 made his/her voice heard and stressed that “it can also be that you have four websites, where you recognize two of them and two that you do not recognize and even though the websites you do not recognize look good, then I would choose the website I recognize”. The participant further claimed that “if there are four websites that you do not recognize, then you look at the appearance of the website”. Regarding choosing websites sometimes there can be some influences of the choice from friends and family. We asked the participants regarding the choice of websites and if someone influenced the participants’ options. The participants all laughed and said “mum”. Participant 1 included that influences also
come from “if you have seen the website in some advertising”, “a tip from a friend” participant 2 filled in, and all the participants were in agreement. Participant 3 said that it can also be “if a friend has shopped there before” participant 4 and 5 enthusiastically agreed.

The participants in focus group 2 argued for some elements in the website design that attracted them and people that influenced the participants’ choice of websites. The participants argued mostly for the factor that the website is recognizable. Participant 1 argued for “big famous websites” participant 2 agreed. Participant 3 added “if someone you now have purchased something from the website”. Participant 4 and 5 were in agreement with earlier presenters. Regarding the influence of the choice of websites all the participants were in agreement and quickly and enthusiastically answered “the parents”, as the ones affecting the participants’ choice regarding websites.

Resuming the value self direction the participant in focus group 1 were above all attracted to websites that the participants knew about or recognized, and recognition was more important than the website design and appearance that came second to the participants. The participants were influenced by their parents and friends regarding selection of websites. The participants in focus group 2 had similar response in general and argued that the factor recognizable was the most important factor when selecting websites; the participants further argued that the parents influenced the selection of websites.

4.5.2 Finding on universalism

The participants in focus group 1 argued about the environmentally consciousness and the inappropriate images versus the nice and harmonious images. Regarding the environmentally consciousness and ecological products online, the participants responded with a strict “no” when we asked them regarding the environment. Participant 1 stated that “I usually do not think about it, if I want ecological products of course I will look at it but usually I do not want it”, participant 2 added “very rarely”. Participant 3 interfered and stressed that “if they characterize, we have ecological products here then it is very good and then you put that website higher because they care and that feels better”. Participant 4 and 5 were in agreement regarding the
environmentally consciousness. We interfered as well and asked the participants “if the company, in connection to the website has to show that they have the products, for the participants to care” and all the participants agreed with a “yes”. Hence regarding inappropriate images versus the nice and harmonious images the participants were harshly against inappropriate images and the participants immediate argued “no” concerning staying or even revisiting the website. Regarding the nice and harmonious images the participants had a different view. Participant 4 initiated by stating that “the image really need to speak to you and a picture have to say buy me buy me, it should look trustworthy if they sell a pair of jeans they should make a whole image, with the jeans in focus, it could be a regular image of someone at a party having fun, but selling a pair of jeans. You have to have an overall picture of the jeans, to see how they look in the reality”. All the participants agreed to the importance of websites containing nice images that are harmonious, relaxing and show good message.

The participants in focus group 2 argued about the environmentally consciousness and the inappropriate images versus the nice and harmonious images. Regarding the environmentally consciousness and ecological products online, the participants responded with a strict “no” when we asked them regarding the importance of the environment. Participant 1 added “you should care, but either I nor my parents think about it”, participant 2 continued “if I buy clothes then I do not look at the chemicals that the clothes contain” all the other participant agreed and participant 2 further explained “it is good if they write that the things I buy are good for the environment but it does not affect my choice”. Regarding the inappropriate images versus the nice and harmonious images the participants were harshly against inappropriate images and the participants immediate argued “no” concerning staying or even revisiting the website. Regarding the nice and harmonious images the participants had a different view. Participant 3 and 4 argued for “images that are good taken and not blurry” participant 5 entered the discussion and proudly said “nature”. The other participant chuckled a bit and said “no”, participant 5 argued for his opinion and said “In China there is many images of the nature, if you are in China and then come home to Sweden and se the same nature on a website then you think wow”. Participant 1 added “they are famous
for that” and the other participant slowly change their mind and mostly of them agreed now.

Resuming the value universalism the participant in focus group 1 argued against inappropriate images and environmental consciousness on the websites was not as important for the participants. The participants in focus group 2 had the same view regarding the inappropriate images and the environmental consciousness. Hence the participants had a different view regarding the pleasant images. The participants in focus group 1 believed that the images taken in real life, were more attractive and pleasant and the participants in focus group 2 were more influenced of the culture and argued for images containing nature as more attractive and pleasant, since in China there are numerous of images of nature.

4.5.3 Finding on conformity

In focus group 1 all the participants argued that every website may have rules and structure. Participant 1 stated ”the website should have structure and rules, but not rules as age limits because everyone should be able to use the website”. Participant 2 agreed and said ”everyone should be able to use the website”. Participant 3 added ”it is important that the website have rules and structure, it feels more comfortable”. Participant 4 and 5 were in agreement with their colleagues. Regarding the website content and the individuals’ attitude, all the participants were in agreement with participant 1 that stated ”it would be more comfortable if the website’s content is matching my beliefs and attitude, but at the same time it is not a big problem if the website do not match my personality”.

In focus group 2 all the participants as well had the same view and agreed with each other. The participants claimed a website with rules and structures make us perceive the website in a professional way. The participants further argued regarding the text that is one of the elements that make the website structured. Participant 1 argued ”big size of the text make the website seem more structured”. Participant 2 agreed with participant 1 and added ”big size of the text in dark colour”. Participant 3 claimed ”I agree but when it come to colour it should be a colour that does not melt in with website”. Participant 4 pointed out ”yes the website has to stick out and to be clear”. Regarding
the website content and individuals’ attitude, the participant 1 argued “I would feel more happy when the website content match my values, attitudes and beliefs, it would mean that the website maker have the same taste and even the same way of thinking which would make me feel like I am at home”. Participant 2 were in agreement and said “thereby you will visit the website again and again. Participant 3 claimed ”it feels more relaxed”. Participant 4 added ”yes even more confident and comfortable” participant 5 claimed ”the website has to match my beliefs or natural”. Finally the other participants were in agreement with him.

Resuming the value universalism the participant in focus group 1 believed that a website with rules and structure were more serious and comfortable. Regarding believes and attitudes the participants claimed that it is more comfortable if the website match the participants’ values but it is not essential. The participants in focus group 2 has the same view regarding the structure and rules, and argued as well that the text is an important factor for the website design to be perceived as structured. The participants in focus group 2 believed that the attitude and believes were more important and if the website content match the participants believes and values there would be more connectedness.

4.5.4 Finding on tradition
The participants in focus group 1 debated regarding traditions. As an introduction we asked the participants how traditional they were, regarding celebrations in the family. Participant 1 celebrated “the most common like Christmas and midsummer”, the other participants agreed and participant 2 added “Christmas, midsummer, New Years Eve and Eastern”. Further in the discussion the participants were asked if there is some colour, image, text or appearance that represents something in the tradition. Participant 3 said “maybe if there is some sale, like Christmas sale or Eastern sale, then it feels like they are on the same place as we are” Participant 4 added that “there is no direct connection, it is if they have some midsummer sale, the you know they are in Sweden”. We interrupted in the discussion and asked the participants if there is some colour connected to some tradition in Sweden, since during the Christmas in Sweden there is often red colours. Participant 5 argued that “it is more pleasant if you feel at home”,

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Participant 1 agreed and said that it is “cosier” all the participants agreed, but the participant did not believe that colours in Sweden are connected to some specific tradition regarding website design. Concerning the text, it is less important. Participant 5 argued that “the text can be the identical the entire year” all the participant were in agreement regarding the text.

The participants in focus group 2 debated regarding traditions. As an introduction we asked the participants how traditional they were, regarding celebrations in the family. Participant 1 said “pretty much”, participant 2 agreed and said “pretty much”. Participant 3 on the other hand said “very much, when there are major holidays, then we always celebrate it like in China since our parents have grown up with it, so we have done it as well. On Chinese New Year’s Eve you go around to everybody and visit and give away red pockets” Participant 4 and 5 agreed with participant 3. Additionally, participant 4 continued and argued regarding the tradition, symbols and stated “we in China like our religion and depending on how traditional you are if you are very traditional, like if there is a cross on a website then you will not visit the website again, we are believers when it comes to religion, therefore we would not enter a website with any cross on collar”. By interpreting that, we asked if they would leave a website with very Christian or Muslim messages and they all quickly responded “yes” to the question. Participant 5 additionally added “we have a totally different view of things”. As all participants mentioned before that during celebration they give away red pockets to their families, thereby a question was asked why the pockets have to be in only red colour. Participant 1 answered “yes especially red colour in our culture is presenting happiness and celebrations, even when a woman get married she wear a red dress during her wedding day“ all the participants had the same view regarding the traditions. Furthermore, participant 2 added “we in China appreciate red and golden colours, depending on cultural traditions. Participant 1 mentioned “that the red colour presents happiness and the golden colour present power”. Participant 3 explained “by traditional aspect, we perceive a website design with golden colour as a website with exclusive products together with high quality. In old time our currency was of gold, motivating us to perceive the colour with power and highly status”. As followed
Participant 4 added “also the website with the colour silver is connected to exclusive product for the same reason, since the currency was of silver too”.

Resuming the value tradition the participants in focus group 1 said that they were quite traditional and the participant argued that the most common feasts were celebrated. The participant in focus group 1 did not believe that the culture were connected to a specific colours, text or image, the participants though argued that it was more pleasant when there is some Christmas sale since then the participants felt a closeness. The participants in focus group 2 were more traditional and had a different view regarding the culture in connection to website design. The participants argued that website design including the colours red, silver and gold were perceived as more pleasant since the colour red represents happiness and silver and gold represents power in China.

4.5.5 Finding on security
The participants in focus group 1 argued regarding security as followed. Participant 1 argued ”it is important for me that I check out the websites instructions regarding safety before I use the website. When it comes to foreign websites, I would read the instruction more careful. In addition, from my view the website appearance and design can provide security”. Participant 2 added “I agree with participant 1, it is as well important for me and specially my parents to read all instructions before I am using the website”. Participant 3, participant 4 and participant 5 agreed and they had the same view. Regarding the security in association with color, the participants believed that light blue or dark blue is connected with security, since in Swedish culture all police cloths and cars are blue that make the participants feel at home and comfortable.

The participant 1 in the focus group 2 said ”it depends, if it had been an unknown website for me, I would eventually read the security instruction and especially my parents will read to give me the permission to use the website, and I think that the website design including colour, image, text and appearance sends signal of the security”. The other participants were in agreement with participant 1 and claimed if our parents read the instruction, then we will not read it. At the end it is important for us that either I or my parents check the instruction of the website. Participant 2 stressed ”if
the website’s appearance looks professional, it feels more relaxed and safe”. Participant 3 stressed ”yes, it have to be a website with less images and more text to make me feel more comfortable”. Participant 4 argued ”if the website includes many images and pop up ads, I would directly connect that with viruses and feel less comfortable”. Participant 5 said ”I got the virus of visiting a website with many pop up ads” and participant 4 agreed. Furthermore, the participants’ view regarding the color in association with the security is the same. The participants stressed white and black color is connected with security, since in the Chinese culture all warning signs and police cars are black and white and that make the participants feel safer.

Resuming the value security the participants in focus group 1 felt the importance of reading the safety instructions before using the website. The participants further argued that the colour light blue or dark blue were connected to security in connection to website design since in Sweden the police equipment and police cars are blue; the participants responses had cultural influences. The participants in focus group 2 were as well in agreement regarding the security instructions on a website and claimed the importance of reading the instructions. The participants in focus group 2 connected security with the colours white and black since police equipments and warning signs in China are black and white. The websites containing these colours were perceived as secure of the participants in focus groups 2.

4.5.6 Finding on power
The participants in focus group 1 argued for darker colours regarding power in connection to website design. Participant 1 argued that prestige is connected to “darker colours, since the darker colours gave a more luxurious sentiment”, the other participants agreed. Participant 2 additional argued that “prestige can be connected to a white side as well as an darker side” the participant further claim that “the luxury feeling comes from other websites that have luxury products and a darker background”. Participant 3 stated that prestige and power on websites should either be “connected to darker and white websites” and all the participants agreed. Regarding text in website design in connection to power and prestige participant 4 argued that “the text does not matter or how the text look like, I react more if the text is in some strange colour, like
turquoise, then I feel like the person who have done the website does not really know what he have been up to, that kind of text is hard to see and read, but if the text is really big or small that does not matter”. Participant 5 were in agreement and stated that “regular text on websites has less importance”. Participant 1 argued that “text have less importance compared to image and appearance” all the participants were in agreement regarding the text. The images in the website design, regarding prestige had though more importance to the participants. Participant 2 argued that “expensive brands have stronger images, more fashionable images were the picture is selling” the participant enthusiastically added that “there should be a different background” to the image. Additional participant 3 entered the discussion and argued that “real fashion images are stronger, if you take for example Ellos they just show the products, but Fillipa K there it can be a stronger image were not only the product is in focus”. All the participants were in agreement, and participant 4 included “I agree with the earlier speakers, if the website is cheap there is a model in jeans, in a white background, but in a more prestige full website there is images in the sunset, even when using photo shop, the image is showing a boy and a girl but the focus is still on for example a pair of jeans”. Participant 5 reflected that prestige and images were connected in the way that there is “high resolution and sharp images, not blurred and easy to see; that feels more attractive” participant 1 agreed that there should be “good quality on the pictures so that you can see the products clear”.

From the participants view in focus group 2, the shiny, golden and silver colors are associated with power in connection to website design, the participant 1 said ”when the front page of the website have a golden color, then you will perceive the website with much power and prestige”. In addition if the website contains expansive products, the individual feel power and prestige”. Participant 2 agreed and claimed ”the website with expansive products, would present high quality and with cheap products, presenting a website with less quality and no power”. Participant 3 added ”sometime you feel like you are looking to find products with less pries but at the same time you want to have expansive products to feel that you are on the prestige level”, participant 4 added ”shiny golden colors are associated with power since in old time our currency was of gold, motivating us to perceive the colours with power and highly status” all the
participants were in agreement. Participant 5 added "I agree, because in our culture the metallic color as golden and silver presents the purity".

Resuming the value power the participants in focus group 1 argued that darker and white colours are connected to prestige and that it gives a luxurious feeling, the luxury feeling comes from other websites that have luxury products and a darker background. The text was less important for the participants in focus group 1 since the appearance and images were more important. The participants further argued that the images in the website design should be taken in real life for the participant to feel attracted. The participants in focus group 2 believed that the colours gold and silver were connected to prestige and the participants perceived the website design containing the colours more powerful since there is a cultural connection.

4.5.7 Finding on achievement

The participants in the focus group 1 found that the perception of the website design help to achieve the desired goals on the website. Participants 1 emphasized "if the website have good design, absolutely it would help me to achieve my desired goals and if the website design include dark background with time new roman text, this may give an impression of uncertainty which contributes to not achieving the goals". Participant 2 claimed "I agree, because when I enter a website with a simple design, it feels less safe. While more advanced website design make me feel confident", participant 3 agreed. Participant 4 pointed out "good designed websites’ attract you to fulfil your goals”, participant 5 agreed.

The participants in the focus group 2 found that the perception of the website design is less important when achieving the desired goals. Participant 1 stated "I am not really sure that the website design can help me to achieve my goal, but on the other hand I believe that other elements like price is more important when achieving some goals on the website”. Participant 2 said "the website with nice images, balanced colour and big text size that are more visible help me to achieve my goal”. Participant 2 disagreed and said "the website do not need to have advanced elements like colour, text, image and appearance for me to continue on the website".
4.5.8 Finding on hedonism

The participants in the focus group 1 found that the enjoyment is depending on the situation. Participant 1 stressed "my enjoyment is depending on what it is that I am searching for when visiting a website, further it depends on the age for example during the childhood you are attracted to a more playful website design, but when you are older you will prefer a stylish website design". Participant 2 followed on the point and added "if I was looking for a certain product like clothes then I would prefer a playful website that includes a white background with light colours, in form of a log and numerous of pleasant images, but otherwise if I was looking for products like electronics, then I would prefer more stylish website with muted colours". All the participants agreed that products such as clothes on the website are connected to many joyful colours; many images and the individual prefer a playful website that gives more pleasure and enjoyment. Moreover, participant 3 pointed out "I would actually prefer that luxury and exclusive products are in connection with a stylish website including colours like dark blue and dark red, since it gives more pleasure and enjoyment to me. Participant 4 explained “when visiting a website, I would enjoy if the website include more text about the products, more images and slideshows that show us all angels of an image, that provide safety and enjoyment” additionally participant 5 explained "the text on the website do not give pleasure at all to me in term of enjoyment, it is more colour and imaged that give me pleasure on the website".

The participants in focus group 2 had the same opinion as focus group 1 that the enjoyment is depending on the situation and what the individual is searching for, when visiting a website. All the participants claimed that a playful website design has to include red colour, considering that the red colour presents happiness, high time, love and celebration in China that give more pleasure and enjoyment. Participant 1 argued "the pleasure on the website is associated with the age of the individual; I preferred more playful websites during my childhood since a more playful website gave pleasure and enjoyment, while now the stylish website give me more enjoyment", all the participants added "yes we agree". Participant 2 said "luxury and exclusive products are associated with a stylish website design. On the other hand products such as clothes
on the website are associated with a playful website design, including joyful colours and many images that give more pleasure and enjoyment”.

Resuming the value hedonism the participants in focus group 1 believed that a stylish website versus a playful website is preferred due to what the participants are buying and the website design is connected to the situation. The participants in focus group 2 connected a playful website with the colour red, since the colour red presents happiness in China. The participants in focus group 2 had though the same view as the participants in focus group 1 were the website design is connected to the situation.

4.5.9 Finding on stimulation

The participants in the focus group 1 argued similar regarding stimulation. Participant 1 argued ”when buying jeans, the website may have jeans design in the background of the website design, so that you directly see what kind of product the website is offering. The front page of the website design has to indicate what they offer depending on what you are searching for. It is important for me to check around the website first and see if it attracts me and if it is a serious website”. Thereafter participant 2 stressed ”when buying jeans, it feels good if the website design have darker background with blue color or many images of the jeans product that attract me to want to see more. It is important that the website have attractive design and as well good images of the product itself in many models to see exactly how the product looks like”. Participant 3 added ”when you enter any website, the first you want to see is what the website actually offers, I really check around the website with foreign background more careful than the Swedish website, since I trust the Swedish website more”. Participant 4 said ”when buying jeans, I want to see that the front page of the website is dark blue and have many images of jeans that attract me to continue on the website. I am a little more careful when it comes to foreign website and I will look more at design and read comments of previous users”. Finally participant 5 argued ”I think that the website design have to include images of different models of a certain product, it is not important that the website have special background and color, the most important factor in the website design is to have various images of the product and as well that I read all comment of previous user,
since sometime the products may look differ in reality. If there are any stores near, then I would rather buy it from there”.

In focus group 2, the participants perceived the question about if a well done website design including colour, image, text and appearance stimulates and gives them some pleasure when visiting the website, or if the website design has to be at a professional level to stimulate them to purchase the product they want? The participants argued in different ways regarding stimulation, but at the end of the discussion all of them had similar views. Participant 1 stressed that "I have never thought about the website design before and it is not often that I buy products online; if I am looking for a certain product, then I will still buy it even if the website design is not professional”. Participant 2 agreed with participant 1 and added "me too I had bought the product anyway, because my main purpose when visiting a website is to buy the product and I do not care how a website design looks like". When we added another sub question to the conservation that explains our main point with the primary question, the answer was completely different. The sub question was that if you are visiting a website that you never visited before, do you stay at the website and buy what you ever want while the website design does not look at the professional level? Participant 1 and 2 change their view and added that in such situations we may feel that the unprofessional website design gives an uncertainty feeling and we will not continue at the website. To proved the participants’ point participant 3 said "if the website design is not well done, you will create a bad perception of the website contents and you will not continue at the website”. Participant 4 agreed a ”that the said ”the website with an unprofessional design will not encourage me or stimulate me to stay at the website”. In addition Participant 5 pointed out that “I feel more comfortable with a website that includes nice colour, image, text and appearance”.

Resuming the value stimulation the participants in focus group 1 argued that it is important for the website to have plenty of images, so that it is clear what the website actually offers; the participants claimed this to be very important. Further the participants in focus group 1 argued that Swedish websites are more trustfully then foreign websites. The participants in focus group 2 argued that an unprofessional
website design gave an uncertainty feeling and the participants stated that the website design is important when buying something online.

4.6 Website design

The participants in focus group 1 and 2 looked at four different websites design (appendix 1b,c,d,e) where the participants had to justify which websites design were the most attractive one in connection to the culture. The four websites design was Media Markt, Hp, Electrolux and Elgiganten. The websites design were appropriate to have in the study since Media Markt is completely red, Hp is completely black, Electrolux is completely white and Elgiganten is a combination between blue and green. Hence the text and images are relatively different between the website designs Overall the appearance differs.

**Website design 1**

The participants in focus group 1 argued regarding website design 1 (appendix 1b). Participant 1 stated that the website design is “clean and they show what they have and sell”, participant 2 continued and said “they have that slideshow” participant 3 and 5 agreed and said “yes exactly”. Regarding the colour participant 3 claimed “the website design becomes funnier to watch and the things that they have due to the red colour”. Participant 4 interrupted and argued “I feel more negativity and would like to look at another page”, participant 5 agreed and said “yes I believe it is quite simple”, participant 2 filled in and stressed “it looks simple”. Participant 5 explained that “they have two colours one dark red and one brighter they could have toned it up instead”. We interrupted the discussion and asked the participants regarding their earlier answers where the participants claimed that the colour red were attractive. Participant 1 claimed “burgundy” the other participant nodded. Further we asked the participant regarding the text in the website design and participant 2 claimed that “the text category is nice but the little knot in the middle does not really show what they sell” participant 4 agreed. Participant 5 interrupted and said with an enthusiastically voice “that is their logo?” The text was not attractive to the participants.

The participants in focus group 2 argued regarding website design 1 (appendix 1.b). Participant 1 claimed “all the colours we like”, participant 2 continued and said happily
“could not be better”, everyone laughed a little. Participant 3 further claimed “clear text” and all the participants agreed. Participant 4 stated and laughed “there is a contrast on the text so the price is clearer” participant 5 interrupted and ended the discussion by saying regarding the logo “the text could be black up here”.

**Website design 2**

The participants in focus group 1 argued regarding website design 2 (appendix 1c). Participant 1 stated “more luxurious then the red design” all the participant were in agreement. Participant 2 continued and said “the text feels messy, they have so many that you cannot focus on which one to read”, participant 1 added “they have not any direct boxes around the text” participant 2 supplemented with “no exactly”, participant 1 further continued and claimed “if they had framed the text it would have been easier to see”. Participant 5 said with frustrated voice “you can barely see that (pointing)”, still the participant argued “this page attracts me”. We asked the other participant if the website design attracted them and they all argued “more than the other”.

The participants in focus group 2 argued regarding website design 2 (appendix 1c). Participant 5 opened the discussion and claimed “boring design”, participant 4 agreed “yes, really boring”, participant 3 continued “not so attractive” participants 1 and 2 agreed. Regarding the text participant 2 believed the text was “very small and unclear”, participant 1 argued “little more structured” then the earlier website design. Participant 3 said with a cheerful voice “but is looks kind of pro (professional)”, participant 4 fill in with “the white text is clear” participant 5 agreed.

**Website design 3**

The participants in focus group 1 argued regarding website design 3 (appendix 1d). Participant 1 immediately said “wow that looks luxurious” and all the participants agreed and said “yes”. Participant 2 filled in and claimed “clean”, participant 5 continued and stressed “they show many different products that they have there”, participant 4 added “and good pictures on the products”, participant 5 continued “and then they have a slideshow in the middle”. Regarding the text the participant believed that the text was good. Participant 4 stated “it is not as messy as the earlier one (web design 2)”, participant 3 added “much clearer”; participant 5 interrupted and argued
“the text fits very well with the product; it is a clear blue text”. We asked the participants if they were attracted more with the web design 3 rather than the last one web design 2 and all the participants agreed and answered “yes”.

The participants in focus group 2 argued regarding website design 3 (appendix 1d). Participant 1 claimed “this was really cool”, participant 2 argued against and said “boring”, participant 3 agreed and said “one-colored” and participant 4 claimed “it have to be variation”. Participant 5 argued with participant 1 and said “it is good, it suites the website” participant 3 changed mind and added “and what they sell”.

**Website design 4**

The participants in focus group 1 argued regarding website design 4 (appendix 1e). Participant 1 opened the discussion and said “it does not feel like an exclusive website, but they have good thing and good price it feels like”. We interrupted the participant and told them not to consider the name of the company, rather the website design. Participant 2 argued “then the other page were more attractive to me (website design 3)”, the most participants agreed with a “yes”. Participant 3 continued and claimed “but this website design is still kind of nice with the consideration that there is all the categories in the side” participant 4 filled in and said “yes easy to find”. Participant 5 argued for the website design and stressed “you came in to the website and you knew what you were looking for and there was a search engine in the beginning and then the categories”. Participant 1 ended the discussion and argued “a website that is easy to handle, you can immediately see what option you have, if you want to search for something immediately or click on something in the category field”.

The participants in focus group 2 argued regarding website design 4 (appendix 1e). Participant 1 opened the discussion and argued “I do not like the blue colour up there, it does not suit with the green colour”, participant 2 entered the discussion and said “unclear text, the prices are not clear”. Participant 3 continued and claimed “too small text” and participant 5 continued “there is no images or effects, they should have but some images in the background clouds and that” but participant 4 argued for the website design and said “the green colour makes me want to click”.

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We asked the participants to select one of the website designs that attracted them the most. The participants in focus group 1 argued mostly for website design 3 and 4. Participant 1 argued for website design 3 or 4, participant 2 for website design 3, participant 3 for website design 3, participant 4 for website design 3 or 4 and participant 5 for website design 2 or 4. The participants in focus group 2 argued only for website design 1.
5. Analysis

The fifth chapter of the dissertation, the analysis includes an analysis of the focus group interviews. The main purpose is to analyze the focus group interviews and to investigate the empirical outcomes. Respectively focus groups will be evaluated and compared to the theories presented in the theoretical framework.

5.1 Analysis of the focus group interviews

5.1.1 Self direction

The participants in focus group 1 argued for the factors recognizable when we asked them “which factors make you choose a certain website”? The participants in focus group 2 argued for the same factor and in general the answers between the groups were similar. The main point of the question got lost since the participants were more interested in recognizable websites rather the website design. Self direction is connected to independence and describes the independent actions of an individual and therefore it was appropriate to investigate how independent the participants are. The participants had shared assumptions, first to recognize the website and then look after other factors like the appearance. The participants motivation came from secondary motives were the participants choose a specific website depending on the recognizable factor (Blythe, 2007). There have been a number of articles who have investigated the factors risk (Ko, et al., 2004; Park & Jun, 2003) and previous studies have investigated that the social collective cultures in our exemplification China are more risk taking than individual cultures in our exemplification Sweden (Park & Jun, 2003) in our opinion none of the cultures selected riskier options. Furthermore, we asked the participants “if the choice of website is their own or if someone affected the participants’ choice”? The participants in focus group 1 were affected of their mum, friends or advertising and the participants on focus group 2 responded similar and argued for the parents. In general the responses in the focus group and between the focus groups were comparable and the participants were motivated from emotional motives when the participants involve relationships in the decision making. An observation is that the participants are less self
directed since the participants have more trustworthiness in other individuals as the parents. The participants’ age can have an impact on the self direction. Hence considering self direction the value were less connected to the choice of website design since the main point of the question got lost. The participants were not influenced of the culture in the selection of websites since the recognizable factor was more important and there were no apparent connected between the participants decided the factor recognizable and the culture.

Self direction is connected to independence as mentioned earlier and the participants in focus group 1 and 2 were less independent since the participants have more trustworthiness in other individuals as the parents. Schwartz cultural values and self direction are comparable to Hofstede’s (2011) cultural dimension named individualism. Using Hofstede’s (2011) cultural dimension individualism Sweden have a higher degree of individualism than China, on the other hand using Schwartz cultural values and self direction the independence were equivalent between the countries Sweden and China (Schwartz, 1992). Referring to the consumer culture in the literature review we strengthen our supposition regarding consumer culture and that the culture cannot be measured, but rather should be considered diversely. Arnould et al. (2004) argue that there are cultural “blueprints” that includes habits and customs in the culture that need to be considered.

5.1.2 Universalism

Universalism is connected to peace and equality, making it appropriate to ask the participants if the participants believed that there was an “importance visiting a website that is environmentally conscious”. The participants in focus group 1 did not feel the environment as an important factor visiting a website, neither did the participants in focus group 2. In general the participants’ responses were similar and the focus groups argued the same. The participants in focus group 1 argued as well against inappropriate images, containing sex, war, fraud etc. in a website design and even here the focus groups were in agreement since focus group 2 was against inappropriate images in a website design. The participants were motivated by rational motives making intelligent decisions regarding the inappropriate images (Blythe, 2007). The responses from the
focus groups in general are similar and there is no connected between the responses and the culture in connection to the website design. The focus groups argued for no inappropriate images and therefore we further asked those regarding appropriate images and “if it is important that the website you visit contains of nice images; that are harmonious, relaxing and show good message”? for better understanding of the culture in connection to the website design. The participants in focus group 1 argued for images in real life, for a better overview of the picture, focus group 2 on the other hand had a more traditional aspect on pleasant images and the participants argued for the nature, were in China there is plenty of images of the nature. The participants believed that a website design containing images of nature were more pleasant. The differences between Swedes and Chinese are that both of the focus groups have different perceptions related to certain culture differences. According to (Ko, et al., 2004) “culture is considered one of the most influential factors that affect consumers' motives, attitudes toward choices, intentions, and purchases on a global basis” (Ko, et al., 2004, p. 23). The differences between the focus groups are visible and focus group 2 desire to have more images related to the culture, whereat the participants in focus group 1 have no clear connected to the culture in the responses. Focus group 2 perceives a website design more preferable if it contains nature images connected to the culture. There have not been pervious investigations regarding the images, in connection to the culture and the website design (Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr et al., 2008). The value universalism is connected to peace and equality and the participants are all against inappropriate images in connection to website design. On the other hand the participants found that the environment in connection to websites is not as important and for that reason universalism is not as important for the participants in both the focus groups (Schwartz, 1992).

5.1.3 Conformity

The participants in focus group 1 and 2 argued for the website to be structured as one of the attractive factor when selecting website. The participants in focus group 1 did not prefer a website with rules like age limits for using the website. In our opinion the age is an important factor for the participants since the participants’ age is under 20. On the other hand the participants in focus group 2 mentioned that the website should have
both rules and structure. The participants in focus group 2 discussed the text and colour in connection to the structure of the website. In contrast with the participants in focus group 1 which did not mentioned something regarding website design that association with the structured.

In the focus group 1 all the participants had the same view regarding the website’s content and individual’s attitude. From the participants’ perspective the website content do not have to match the beliefs and attitude; while in focus group 2 it was very important to all of the participants that the website content matched the attitudes and beliefs. The motivation for the responses in focus group 2 comes from emotional motives (Blythe, 2007). According to Schwartz (1992) cultural value the conformity value intends the individuals that seek clear rules and structure and never violate against some norms. The information we collected from both focus groups stressed that the participants in focus group 2 appreciate the conformity factor more than the participants in focus group 1, when visiting a website (Schwartz, 1992)

5.1.4 Tradition

The tradition explains the culture with norms and morals for one group of people and it was appropriate to ask the participant “how traditional the participants are”? The participants in focus group 1 as well as in 2 were traditional, the participants in focus group 2 were however more traditional then the participants in focus group 1. The participants were asked if there were some connections between the tradition and culture and elements on the website design and the participants in focus group 1 argued that there was no connection between the tradition and website design, and the elements colour, text and image. The participants however argued that it was pleasant with Christmas sale and that it felt like the individuals were on the same place as the participants. The participant felt a cosier and more pleasant feeling but there was no element in the website design directly connected to the culture. The responses in the focus group were similar in general. In our opinion the responses regarding the website design are connected to culture even though the participant did not argue for it, since the participants feel the pleasant and cosier feeling regarding Christmas and eastern sale the tradition is motivating the participant unconsciously and lay in the background of the
participant. For that reason the participants in focus group 2 are driven by the dormant motives that are factors that you are not aware of (Blythe, 2007). The participant in focus group 2 argued for a more cultural connection and claimed that religious signs and symbols that were not connected to their own culture were not attractive and the participant left the website if it contained religious elements that did not match their believes and values. In addition the participant in focus group 2 argued that the colour red represented happiness in the Chinese culture and that the colours red, gold and silver are appreciated in China and the websites containing these colours are perceived more pleasant and attracting. The Chinese participants are driven of the culture and therefore the participants are motivated by conscious motives that describe the awareness of the cultural influences (Blythe, 2007). According to Chau et al. (2002) success in connection to websites occur when the design on the website contains a cultural nuance for example the colours red represents happiness in China and therefore the Chinese perceive red websites more satisfying (Chau et al., 2002).

The participants in focus group 2 were more traditional than the participants in focus group 1, there are more commitment to the tradition in focus group 2, were the tradition reflect the perception of the website design and motivates the participant to act in certain behaviour. The participants in focus group 1 were as well driven of the culture in some extent, but the motivation was rather unconscious (Schwartz, 1992).

5.1.5 Security

The participants’ perception toward online advertising including website design in focus group 1 was similar regarding the value of security. The participants in focus group 1 emphasized that safety have a great importance for making them visit the website. It was important for the participants in focus group 1 to check out instructions regarding safety especially when it comes to foreign websites. It was obvious that the participants in focus groups 1 relied more on the Swedish website than the foreign website since the Swedish website gave the participants safety and security. The participants in focus group 1 connected Swedish websites with security without considering the website design. In support of Cyr, et al. (2008) the local website indicate more trust, satisfaction and loyalty in all design elements. The participants in focus group 2 are more careful
with unknown websites and would read the security instructions before using the website. The participants connected known websites with safety and trust. The participants in focus group 1 believed that Swedish websites provide more security than foreign websites and in contrast to the participants in focus group 2 who perceived the well known websites as more secure than unknown websites.

The perception of the website design including colour, text and image in each focus group was completely different depending on the cultural differences. In focus group 1, the participants motivated that they are in need of a website design including blue colour to feel safety. A factor that drives the participants to perceive the blue colour as a secure element is cultural aspects. The mainly reason for the participants’ motivation in focus group 1 is that in Swedish culture the police uniform and even the police car is blue and therefore the blue colour represents power. From our perspective the police car and equipment that the police use in daily work to keep security in society are important and for that reason the participants connect them to power. On the other hand the participants in focus group 2 argued that white and black colours associated with the security since in the Chinese culture all warning signs and police cars are black and white. Focus group 1 and 2 had the same view regarding the police’s equipment that is associated with security and the motivation for the participants is rational motives since the participants take security in account (Blythe, 2007). The only factor that differs between the focus groups is the police equipment’s colour. The security value was captured by both focus groups and is related to the participants’ choice of website design (Schwartz, 1992).

5.1.6 Power

Power is connected to social status and prestige and therefore we asked the participants “if there were some factors in the website design that were connected to prestige?” The participants in focus group 1 argued for darker and white colours as the colours connected to prestige since the darker colours were more luxurious according to the participants. The motivation of the participant is related to secondary motives since the participants are driven by a specific property (Blythe, 2007). The participants in focus group 1 believed that the size of the text did not have importance since image and
appearance were more important. Real fashion images from real life in connection to a well done website made an impression of prestige perceived of the participant but there is no connection to the culture. The answers in general were similar in focus group 1. The participants in focus group 2 had a different view of the power in connection to some elements in the website design. The participants in focus group 2 believed that the colour gold and silver were connected to power since in China back in time the currency used were gold and silver. The differences between the focus groups were that focus group 2 were influence of the culture regarding prestige, which can be summarized into perceiving a golden or a silver website design more powerful.

Power is connected to social status and prestige and in our opinion both of the participants in focus group 1 and 2 experienced the importance of the value power, focus group 2 had more power in connection to the culture than focus group 1 since there were no cultural influences in the responses from the participants in focus group 1. The focus groups were in connection to power but in different situations. Focus group 1 connect power to what the participants have perceived before in form of images and colours and focus group 2 rather are influence of the culture in terms of prestige in connection to website design (Schwartz, 1992).

5.1.7 Achievement
The participants in focus group 1 argued that the website design including colour, text, image and appearance is an important factor for the value of achievement. The participants in focus group 1 reasoned that advanced website design would drive them to achieve the desired goal since the participants claimed that well done website contributes to comfortable feelings. The participants in the focus group 2 argued that the website design is less important when achieving the desired goals. For the participants in focus group 2 the achievement and the impact of website design was less important than for the participants in focus group 1. The responses from focus group 1 and 2 were not enough help for analyzing the achievement value. The achievement value become lost since there was lack of information and we could not connect the responses to any cultural aspects.
5.1.8 Hedonism

The hedonism value refers to pleasure and sensuous gratification. There were a great similarity between the focus group 1 and 2 and the participants in both focus groups had the same opinion when they claimed that enjoyment is depending on the situation. The participants in focus group 1 and 2 stressed that the playful website design is connected with clothes and the stylish website design was connected with luxury products like electronic. The focus groups preferred a playful website design during their childhood and a stylish website design when they are older. The participants in focus group 1 argued that the playful website design including white background with light colours and pleasant images provide enjoyment. Further the stylish website design including dark red as well as dark blue provides enjoyment. On the other hand the participants in focus group 2 argued that the playful website design including joyful colour as red colour and many images provide enjoyment. In support of Cyr, et al. (2008) the website design have a huge impact on consumers satisfaction and the consumer satisfaction in relation to website design elements varied by country. As conclusion the participants from both focus groups was at the same level of hedonism the participants were satisfied depending on the situation (Schwartz, 1992)

5.1.9 Stimulation

The participants in focus group 1 were in agreement regarding the value of stimulation. The participants all were very careful when choosing a website. All the responses we received from the participants demonstrated that the main point when choosing the website design is to be sure that the website address is serious. The website design played a role for some of the participants and was less important for other participants. In general the website design is not the main element that made the participants excited and challenged. Most of the participants in focus group 1 enhanced that the websites design has to associate with what the website offer of products. Entering the website it was important for the participants to see directly by the website design including images, text, and colour what kind of products the website offer. In addition it is important for many of the participants to check around before choosing a website to be sure that the website is serious, to feel stimulated. All the participants in focus group 1 mentioned that they would be more careful with foreign websites. The motivations that
drive the participants to answer in this way indicate that the participants with Swedish culture and background feel threatened by unknown situations and try to avoid uncertainty. In other words the participants are motivated by rational motives since the participants are taking the risk in account (Blythe, 2007). According to Hofstede’s (2011) dimension the Swedish culture is very uncertainty avoidance. Furthermore, the participants in focus group 1 enhanced that the website have to include images for different model of each product. The website design does not have to include a special background or colour since with many images of the same product the picture will be clearer and it may reflect the reality. The participants would as well be able to read all comments of previous user.

The participants in focus group 2 began the conversation and said that the website design is less important when it comes to the value of stimulation. The participants’ main purpose when visiting a website is to buy the product even if the website design is not professional. The conversation took another direction when we added a sub question that said “if you are entering a foreign website with unprofessional design, would you still stay at the website?” The answers changed and the participants claimed that an unprofessional website design gave an uncertainty feeling. This showed that our question was perceived in wrong way before. All the participants were in agreement and all appreciated a professional website that stimulates the participants to continue at the website. According to Hofstede’s (2011) dimension the Chinese culture is as well uncertainty avoidance but the Swedish culture is still more uncertainty avoidance.

The answers from participants in the focus group 1 and 2 were similar in designate that the website design has to reflect the website’s content clear and try to show how serious the website is to feel attracted and stimulated to choose the website. The answers in terms of how stimulating the participants would be by the website design differ. In the conversation during the interview we could capture the stimulation value and measured that the focus group 2 was more excited by advanced website design than the focus group 1. Furthermore, some of the participants in focus group 1 emphasized that the website design have to include special colour that are connected with what the website offer. In contrast to focus group 2 no one mentioned a specific colour or image the
website may have. The participants all argued that the website design have to be professional from all aspect (Schwartz, 1992).

5.2 Website design

The participants in focus group 1 argued different regarding the website design 1 (appendix 1b). The participants in focus group 1 argued that red color is one of the attractive elements regarding the website design and some of the participants disagreed and claimed that they perceived the website design as negative considering the red color and the simple design. Further the participants in focus group 1 were in agreement regarding the text that was not attractive. The participants in focus group 2 had a different view regarding the website design of website design 1 (appendix 1b). The participants point out that the website design including red color is very attractive and the text was clear even if it could to be black instead of white. In general the color of the website design was the main element for choosing the website design 1 in both focus groups.

The participants in focus group 1 argued regarding the website design 2 (appendix 1c). The participants in focus group 1 claimed that the website design 2 was more attractive than the website design 1 and that the website design seemed more luxurious. The participants in focus group 1 associated the website design 2 including black color with status. The participants also argued about the text which was not clear and made the participants confused. The participants in focus group 2 had a different view of website design 2. The participants in focus group 2 stressed that the website design gave a boring impression that was not attractive. Regarding the text the arguments was different between the participants in focus group 2; some of the participants argued that the text was clear and some other argued the other way around. The main element of the website design that is important for focus group 1 and 2 is the color and the text.

The participants in focus group 1 were existed regarding the website design 3 (appendix 1d). The participants in focus group 1 argued that the website design is clean and looks luxurious. Many of the participants liked the images that the website design includes since the website design had a slideshow at the first page. The slideshow included many pleasant images with different products. The participants in focus group 1 argued
similar regarding the text element the participants perceived the adaptable to the website design. The participants believed that the website design 3 was less confusing in comparison with website design 2. The participants in focus group 2 argued differently regarding the website design 3 (appendix 1d). Some of the participants argued that the website design was not attractive and boring and other participants in the same focus group claimed that the text was attractive. Finally the participants in focus group 1 had another view in comparison with the participants in focus group 2. The participants in the focus group 1 were very attracted to the website design 3 and the participants in focus group 2 were less attracted to the website design 3. The website design including color, text, color of the text and images was captured of focus group 1 and 2 and influenced the participants’ choice of website design.

The participants in focus group 1 argued regarding the website design 4 (appendix 1e). The participants in the focus group 1 stressed that the website design was very structured since the website design included categories. The participants in focus group 1 appreciated the categories field because the consumer can find the products easier. The participants in focus group 2 had a different perspective regarding the website design 4 (appendix 1e). The participants stressed that the website design 4 were less attractive since the blue color was not suitable with the green color. The participants in focus group 2 were not attracted to this type of color combination. Further the participants were less attracted to the text since the text was small.

In general the choices of these four website design was completely different. Most of the participants in focus group 1 were attracted to website design 3 and website design 4; In contrast to the participants in focus group 2 where the website design 1 was more attractive for all the participants. The website design elements color, text and images had an impact on the participants’ perceptions regarding website design. The participants in focus group 1 claimed that the dark red colors were attracted for the participants during the conversation. In fact when we showed the participants website design 1 the perception changed directly. The participants argued that website design 1 were no longer attractive and the participants were more attracted to website design 3 that was white. The participants in focus group 2 were directly attracted to website
design 1. The participants choose the website design influenced of the culture since the color red represents happiness in the Chinese culture.
Table 1. Schwartz cultural values and website design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The cultural theory: Schwartz cultural values</th>
<th>Swedish participants</th>
<th>Chinese participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self direction and website design</td>
<td>Recognizable factor</td>
<td>Recognizable factor</td>
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<td>Universalism and website design</td>
<td>Images of real life</td>
<td>Images of the nature</td>
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<td>images</td>
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<td>Conformity and website design</td>
<td>Structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stick out</td>
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<td>Tradition and website design</td>
<td>Text is less important</td>
<td>Red, silver and gold</td>
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<td>colors are attractive</td>
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<td>culture</td>
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<td>Security and website design</td>
<td>Dark and white color</td>
<td>Metallic color as gold</td>
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<td>is connected to power</td>
<td>and silver are</td>
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<td>and luxury products</td>
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<td>Text is less important</td>
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<td>Achievement and website design</td>
<td>Well done website</td>
<td>The website design is</td>
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<td>design helps to</td>
<td>less important when</td>
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<td>achieve desired goals</td>
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<td>Advanced website</td>
<td>goals</td>
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<td>design presents safety</td>
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<td>and confidence</td>
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<td>Hedonism and website design</td>
<td>Enjoyment of the website design is depending on the situation</td>
<td>Enjoyment of the website design is depending on the situation</td>
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<td>Playful website design should include white background and light colors</td>
<td>Playful website design include the color red and many images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stylish website design should include dark blue and red colors</td>
<td>Stylish website design include exclusive products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Conclusion

The sixth and last chapter of the dissertation, the conclusion, begins with a summary of the dissertation. The discussion is further presented where the result of the dissertation is discussed followed by a critical review of the dissertation and practical implications. The chapter ends with an implication for further research.

6.1 Summary of the dissertation

The Internet has grown rapidly the latest decade and even become a new marketplace in the world. In view of the fact that the Internet has become a large part of the world companies now have to adjust their websites to different cultures, because the increasing growth on the Internet and in order to create a positive attitude towards the websites. The focus in the dissertation has been on the countries Sweden and China and their culture and cultural differences. The investigation in the dissertation is regarding how cultural influences affect consumers’ perception of online advertising and website design. The dissertation has further investigated the elements colors, text and image. Previous studies have merely investigated the element color and, therefore, our dissertation is relevant.

A conceptual model has been developed for a better overview of the theoretical review and it includes Schwartz cultural values which are used for the investigation. The dissertation is on individual level and, therefore, Schwartz’s cultural values are appropriate. For a better understanding of the individual when investigating website design, the factors motivation and perception were exploited. The data was collected by focus group interviews where there was one Swedish focus group and one Chinese focus group. The collected data was additionally applied on the conceptual model for analysis and discussion of the result in the dissertation.
6.2 Conclusion

The reason for why we investigated our topic is because the studies regarding website design are limited. Previous studies have investigated the availability for the customer on the websites rather than the appearance (Cyr, et al., 2005; Cyr, et al., 2008; Kabadayi & Gupta). The aim of the dissertation is to test if individuals from different cultures perceive the website design and the elements color, text and image in different ways. For that reason a research question was initiated: how cultural differences influence consumer perception of online advertising regarding website design? In general the participants in focus group 1 and 2 had different perception of online advertising regarding the website design. The website design was attractive for the participants in focus groups 1 and 2 and at the same time attractive in various ways. The website design including the elements color, text and image played a role for the focus groups. The elements color and image had the most importance regarding attracting the participants to the website design. The elements color and image constitute of the core of the website design for the participants; while the element text had a less importance for the focus groups. The results of our investigation measured that the consumer perception of the website design including the elements had sometimes no connection with the cultural aspects. The culture had not the same significance in focus group 1 as in the focus group 2.

In the process of the thesis we noticed that there is no direct impact of the cultural aspects regarding the participants’ motivation in the Swedish focus group. The participants were more motivated by other factors like trust, satisfaction and recognition of a website. On the other hand the Chinese participants in focus group 2 had a clear connection to the culture, when answering some questions in comparison to the Swedish participants in focus group 1. The cultural aspects influenced Chinese participants’ perception toward website design more than Swedish participants’ perception toward website design. The result indicated that Chinese participants were more traditional than Swedish participants. The participants in focus group 2 were mostly attracted to the website design including red color and nature images depending on cultural aspect as we mentioned in the analysis part. We can now answer our
research question in the thesis that demonstrates how culture differences influence consumer perception regarding website design. In our opinion the culture is motivating the participants unconsciously and therefore it was hard to capture the cultural differences in the perception of website design from the participants’ responses.

6.3 Critical review

The aim of this dissertation was to investigate how the culture influences consumers’ perception regarding online advertising and website design. The investigation implemented a qualitative study and focus group interviews were used and therefore the result in the dissertation could not be general, limiting the option. Hence there are few previous studies on the topic website design and there can be some parts in the dissertation unsupported of the theoretical review. The factors color, text and image were difficult to capture in connection to the culture, and therefore some parts in the investigation chapter are falling off.

6.4 Practical implications

The results and conclusions of the study can be of value for Swedish and Chinese business managers. For practical purposes, the study can be used as guidelines when planning an expansion on the Internet. We desire that our finding will offer valuable help for further researchers. We also hope our result can be useful when the companies are dealing with Chinese and Swedish consumer in connection to website design. Moreover, when companies are willing to marketing their business by website design in Sweden or China, the companies may have interest in our study, since it shows that the Swedish and Chinese consumers have different ways of perceiving a website design. Finally companies may evaluate this study in order to get a deeper understanding of cultural values in connection to what customers want to see when entering a website to feel more comfortable and attracted.

6.5 Further research

Our investigation contained focus group interviews with a small group of 10 individuals, making the result difficult to generalize. In the dissertation we compared the two countries Sweden and China and the cultural differences in connection to
perceiving a website design. Some cultural values were hard to capture since the participants were not constantly motivated of the culture. For further research there could be more than two countries used in the investigation and more participants for the investigation to make a better overview.

The questions for the investigation should be more specific for each value. The motivation for the participants should be clearer in the answers and perhaps all the cultural values should not be investigated.

The participants probably need to be in a more traditional environment, example in their homes making the motivation for the actions clearer connected to the culture. The investigation regarding risks and satisfaction in connection to the culture is as well interesting to investigate for further researchers.
References


Appendix 1a – Focus group questions

**Self-direction**

- What kind of factors that make you choose a certain website?
- Which goal do you want to achieve when you are choosing the website?
- Did the colour, text, appearance or image design play an important role for you regarding choice of the website?
- Are there some persons that may affect your choice of the website?
- When choosing the website (example. To buy jeans from) are you choosing the website yourself? Do other people affect you, in the choice of website?
- (If yes) How?
- Is it important to you that your family or friends encourage you for some websites?
- What make you prefer some websites more than another?
- Do you change your choice of website while you get new experience; with other words is your experience influences your choice?

**Universalism**

- When you visit a website is it important for you, that the company that owns the website is environmentally conscious?
- (If yes) Why? And which environmental factors are important?
- How important is the companies’ ecological focus? That its sells ecological products?
- Supposing the website contains inappropriate images. Including sex, war, fraud, torture of animals and people. Would you still stay on the website? Or revisit it?
- Is it important that the website you visit contains of nice images; that are harmonious, relaxing and show good message?
- (If yes) what kind of images are you mostly attracted to?

**Conformity**

- Is it important for you that the website has rules and structure (for example that you cannot get access to a certain website until you are registered and confirm some conditions)?
- Is it important for you that the website is structured and the text is clear and softy for your eyes? What’s about the text size and even color of the text, does it plays a role for you?
- How important it is for you that your values, beliefs and attitude match the website content?

**Tradition**

- How traditional are you regarding celebrations in your family?
- In which way your tradition can determine the choice of the website? For example are there any specific color, image, text and appearance that symbolize something based on tradition?
- Do you follow any specific traditions?
- Would do like to be more traditional (if you are not)?
- Do you pick up a certain website with taking in account your traditions background?
- Are the color, text, image and appearance has some importance related to your tradition?

**Security**

- Are you choosing a website with specific color that may symbolize something important in your culture?
- (If yes) which types of color and why that color?
- When your are choosing website considering traditions, do you prefer hard or soft text in the web design? And why?
- Are you sometimes afraid of what can happen to your personal information? Sometimes you hear about hacking on other websites.
- In your culture, is security associated with some specific color?
- (If yes) which color and why?

**Power**
- Is it important for you that the website is combining both good price and good quality?
- It is important that the website have only expensive products to make you feel you are on prestige level?
- Do you believe that prestige on web pages is associated with strong colors?
- (If yes) Why?
- Do you believe that prestige on web pages is associated with hard and big text rather then small and soft text?
- (If yes) Why?
- Do you believe that prestige on web pages is associated with strong pictures?
- (If yes) Why?

**Achievement**
- Are the website elements like color, image, text and appearance helping you to achieve your desired goals?

**Hedonism**
- Would you prefer a playful website with ex. colors and images or a stylish website?
- (If yes) Why?
- How do you describe a playful website? Which elements are important?
- How do you describe a stylish website? Which elements are important?

**Stimulation**
- When choosing website, (example. When buying jeans) it the design/appearance for the website important or only the main purpose buying jeans regarding the web design?
- (Yes on web design) If the design is important, what on the page attracts you the mostly in the first appearance?
- Do you believe that any of the elements color, text or image gives you some pleasure when visiting the website?
Appendix 1b – Website design 1
Appendix 1c – Website design 2
Appendix 1d – Website design 3
Appendix 1e – Website design 4