



UNIVERSIDAD DE ALMERÍA

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Brand-logos and taglines: The importance of  
corporate visual communication in  
international activity.

ALUMNO: Cristina María Escámez Hernández

DIRECTOR: David Jiménez Castillo

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## **Abstract**

*El propósito de este estudio es investigar las principales diferencias culturales en cuanto a identidad corporativa visual tomando como referencia el mercado estadounidense, el mercado alemán, y el mercado francés. Se analizan aquellos factores relacionados con el eslogan y el logo que resultan más atractivos en estos mercados en base al análisis de marcas de las 34 primeras empresas de cada mercado, en términos de ingresos. A partir de los resultados obtenidos a través de un análisis empírico, se proponen una serie de recomendaciones para aquellas empresas que desean expandir su actividad hacia los anteriores mercados en términos del diseño de su identidad visual corporativa.*

*The principal aim of this study is to explore the cross-cultural differences in corporate visual identity with reference to the USA, German and French markets. I analyze the factors related to the brand tagline and brand-logo that are more attractive in these markets based on the analysis of the 34 brands of top companies in each market, in terms of revenues. From the results obtained through an empirical analysis, it is proposed a series of recommendations for companies that want to expand their activity into the markers above-mentioned in terms of designing their visual corporate identity.*

## **1. Introduction**

One of the more important decisions that a company must make in terms of marketing is how its corporate image is supported through visual devices such as symbols, logotypes, taglines, typography and color. These components together provide a visual language to project a clear and consistent message addressed to consumers.

The aim of marketing in any firm is to seek ways to improve the image and power of their brands. Therefore, they need to develop a marketing strategy that clearly positions the brand in consumer's mind (Park et al., 1986).

The main problem, that I emphasize, is that as there are significant cultural differences among countries, companies face the problem of how they have to adapt their visual communication elements to each environment.

The principal objective of this study is to explain the cultural differences regarding corporate visual identity among the USA, Germany and France. This study is carried out from the top 34 companies, in terms of revenues, of each country in 2011.

Because of the need to expand the international operators, it has been under discussion whether the companies should adapt or standardize their visual communication elements with the purpose to create a balance between local and global markets. Therefore, each company must ask itself whether standardize its strategy using a common approach to communicate the same message in different markets or adapt it to each market.

Due to the continuous changes in the environment, companies must understand and adapt to variation in individual values and culture through developing efficient marketing and communication tools (Aaker, 2000). Some scholars claim the challenge of marketing professionals is to create a visual identity valuable to consumers that transcend differences among cultures (de Mooij, 2005).

Therefore, the cultural differences are an obstacle to develop and design a global visual identity. Many managers are not aware of the importance of cultural values in communication. While a message can have a certain meaning in a market, this same

message can transmit another meaning in another one. The visual identity plays an important role in this field as a non-verbal communication and an image can have different meaning in two different markets.

To solve this obstacle, it is important to be well informed to understand and find the similarities and differences that exist among diverse cultures regarding style of communication as well as to study corporate visual identity and ways to apply it (Tian and Borges, 2011).

The logotype is a key component in brand identity and its recognition by consumers can be instant. Logos communicate visually and they help transcend international boundaries and languages barriers (Kohli et al., 1995). A tagline is a short phrase that helps to set brand identity in a company and it is used to improve the brand recall.

In this study, I have analyzed the brand-logo and tagline as visual marketing communication elements of the top companies in terms of revenues for each country in 2011 to compare and examine them. Moreover, this study can be helpful for marketing professionals, since we examine specific differences in brand design elements and taglines among successful companies located in culturally different countries.

We tried to show professionals which visual corporate designs and message strategies will be more attractive in each country from the results of my analysis.

The study begins with an explanation of the theoretical background about general cultural differences in marketing communication. Next, I explain the binomial adaptation versus standardization in the domain of international communication strategies, as well as some key definitions in the study such as corporate communication and corporate identity, and the importance of logo and tagline in visual communication.

In the second part I present an empirical study using content analysis technique to content analyzed visual communication of each country.

Finally, I discuss the results and I present diverse implications for professionals from the results obtained for each country.

## **2. Cultural differences in marketing communication**

Communication is one of the most important business factors to get success in the major competitive markets nowadays, particularly for firms that want to do business internationally. The marketing communication strategies and skills are key points in the achievement of benefits. However, many companies are not concerned of the existence of invisible barriers that appear in the marketing communication. These invisible barriers are cultural differences that play an important role in marketing communication (Tian and Borges, 2011).

The globalization of the economy world requires that marketing managers understand the cultural differences as the focus of marketing efforts to do international business activities. The marketing communication has been to exert a strong impact on consumer behaviors and attitudes as fundamental social processes in every culture and moreover, it has been concern of many analysts (Tian and Borges, 2011).

The scholars argue that in spite of many cultural factors that may affect international business environment, these can be minimized when the managers are aware of the cultural differences and their impact in communication.

The culture has been studied in order to compare and contrast the effectiveness of persuasion across cultural, since cultural orientation has a considerable effect on the process of persuasion (Aaker and Maheswaran, 1997).

The marketing professionals define the culture as that which gives people sense of which they are, of belonging, how they should behave. Hofstede (1991) defines the culture as collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another.

The culture establishes different ways of conduct, standards of performance and ways of dealing with interpersonal and environmental relations, providing a learned, shared and interrelated set of symbols, codes and values that direct and justify the human behavior (Harris and Moran, 1987).

Therefore, the ability to communicate cross-culturally certain message to consumers is critical to achieve success. In order to get it in the international markets, the studies of cultural elements in each country reduce the uncertainty and increase predictability. However, the concept of culture in marketing communication has been minimal. Some scholars affirm that many marketers ignore the cultural importance in the marketing communication and do not concern in analyzing the human beliefs, behaviors, symbols in order to develop a visual identity accord to different markets.

Moreover, the firms tend to fall into the trap of the self-reference criterion when they enter in the foreign markets; this means that their business representatives apply their own experiences and cultural values on marketing communication in another culture. Research has demonstrated that the same execution of a brand can come to mean different things to different groups of consumers (Cova et al., 2007).

Once of the principal mistakes that ought to be avoided is the ethnocentrism, belief that the own culture is superior to any other, which ruin any effort at marketing communication.

The marketing communication influences in the culture, just as the culture influences in the marketing communication. The interaction between the marketing communication and the culture can be examined from three perspectives or ways (Tian and Borges, 2011):

First, the culture defines the acceptable purchasing and behavior toward a concern product for consumers and firms. Second, the culture is at the center of all social interaction, this means that the impact of culture on marketing communication is easier to identify than any other variable. The advertising, for instance, is strongly influenced by one of the key elements of the culture, the language. The advertising structure is based on consumers lifestyles and buying habits. Scholars such as Miller or Hofstede insure the culture affects the kind of role and choice of themes that are represented in advertising and they are related with the cultural norms and values, therefore each cultural element influences in each aspect of marketing communication. Third, the marketing communication also influence in the culture, contributing to cultural borrowing and change. There is not better field to observe the culture in action than business. As more markets become global, the rate of cultural change will increase.



The cultures vary in terms of formats, imagery, color and textual presentation. Thus, it needs to highlight the importance of cultural aspects in the design. Boor and Russo (1993) have developed a cross-cultural checklist that involves a series of different design elements such as symbols, colors, all of which vary across different regions of the world. All these studies have been associated to Hofstede's research.

Edward T. Hall is an anthropologist that, in his studies for understanding the huge influence of cross-cultural communication in business, understood the importance of the cultural influence in an effective communication, and the misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication can be counterproductive for effectiveness, profits, individual and organizational development, due to cultural factors influence in the people, purchasing behavior or brand comprehension. He explained the culture as communication involving more than just language.

The contribution of Hall in marketing communication generated a huge impact and international value regarding cross-cultural factors. In his studies, Hall concentrated, in each culture, a type of communication predominant within that and he distinguished between high context communication and low context communication.

In term of context, Hall classified US in a low cultural context that is understood as the transmission of explicit messages and, normally, it uses the direct style of communication with precise and fast messages which are easily decoded and interpreted, and non-verbal communication is unimportant. Furthermore, low context cultures have less-developed manuals and these manuals include more written rules and more rigid tone. Low context communication gives more importance to textual aspect of the brand such as name. Germany can classify in low context cultures as well while France is a high context culture. The high context cultures can explain as a type of context in which most of the information is already in the person, in his physical or internalized context. It tends to use a more indirect style of communication and the non-verbal communication is more important. The messages transmitted are ambiguous implicit and very little explicit. The high context cultures prefer slow messages that require more efforts to decode. The high context communication gives more important to graphic aspects of the brand such as symbol and

logotypes as well as the rules to use the brand regarding to decorative elements. Moreover, the manuals of high context communication are more complex (Jordá-Albiñana et al., 2008).

### **3. Adaptation versus standardization in marketing communication**

The communication styles vary greatly among cultures. Thus, the difficulties to choose standardize or customize the communication strategies increase.

There are many studies realized to research about those two concepts. Marketing managers and researchers have wrestled with the standardization versus adaptation issue as strategy of international marketing and the efforts to know more about these two concepts have been considerable in the recent years. Whereas Levitt (1983) defends the economies of scale, consistent messages and ability to attract common cross-national market segments through a global use, programs of standardized marketing; Douglas and Wind (1987) gives importance to cultural differences and adaptation in the international market. Sometimes, there is a little empirical evidence about when they should adapt their marketing programs and how their strategy of selection will affect to brand performance.

The managers must be aware of the importance to know the cultural differences across international market and socioeconomic environment to be successful internationally and the market conditions are prescribed as fundamental to determine when a firm must standardize or adapt his marketing programs (Jain, 1989).

But not all the element must be standardized or adapted. The firm should examine the market in which it wants to expand. In recent times, there is major tendency to adapt some elements and standardize others. Some scholars have tried to identify what element should be standardized and what not.

Globalization from marketing perspective is the standardization of many elements in communication across countries and regions. In contrast, the adaptation is to adjust one or more elements of the communication specifically to target markets (Gilani and Razegui, 2010).

Researchers have examined themes about standardization with regard to communication elements used when a company wants to do business in multiple markets. Environmental aspects must be taken into account in foreign markets to decide whether standardize or customized the marketing programs. The cultural differences across markets indicate the existence of different consumer's needs and hence the necessity to adapt the strategy (Jain, 1989).

Standardization can be a good option but there are barriers to this. It is important to know what market conditions moderate the effects of marketing strategies on performance. Standardization should be based on the meaning the brand in the mind of consumers that will be associated to the product in a certain market (Roth, 1995).

The cultural distance is the degree of difference between message senders and message receivers, so the standardization approach is more likely when the cultural distance is small (Samover et al., 1981).

Levitt (1989) explained that is not necessary to adapt every element because of globalization of markets. He is the main advocate of the standardization viewpoint. There are numerous advantages in order to choose whether standardize the marketing communication or not. We are going to mention some:

One of them is that standardization enables a brand to get a strong global presence easily identifiable and consistency with consumers in order to keep the image and identity (Ericson, 1996).

Another advantage to choose standardized approach is ability to take advantage of economies of scale that lead to cost saving and particularly product design. And finally, the standardization allows to improve the planning and control and to help the firm to develop good ideas in a certain context and extend these to other contexts (Chee and Harris, 1998).

Independent of global standardization, the consideration of corporate visual identity itself leads to centralization. The degree of centralization of control influences the degree of standardization of corporate visual identity of a multinational company (Topalian, 1984).

On the other hand, there are also disadvantages to choose standardized approach. The main fail is to not take into account the needs of the consumers that could lead to losses and disaster results due to different needs among some countries and others.

There are many cases in which firms have tried to introduce his brand to international markets without adapting (Douglas and Wind, 1987).

The opposite of standardization is adaptation. Because of many important differences among countries, in terms of culture, many firms decide adapt or adjust their communication strategies to each country. Therefore the marketers can improve the success in international markets being aware of responding to different cultural realities. The firms can obtain more benefits taking into account the demand in each country. A firm can get greater economic rewards through a major value delivery that can be achieved by adapting the needs of local markets (Gilani and Razeghi, 2010).

Due to the high customer heterogeneity within the same country, the firm should benefit from seeking similar segment across markets in order to standardize the marketing programs or adapt programs to different segment in different markets.

We can summarize the above information in the following propositions:

- The managers tend to customize or adapt his strategy when the cultural and socioeconomic variations across markets are higher. Conversely, the managers tend to standardize it when the cultural and socioeconomic variations across markets are lower i.e. when the cultural differences between markets are considerable, the customization may be appropriated. While customer conditions are similar, standardization may be preferable.
- When cultural and socioeconomic variations across markets are high, market share is greater when the strategy is adapted that when it is standardize and conversely, when the cultural and socioeconomic variations across cultural is low, the market share is greater when it is standardized than when it is adapted.

However, the empirical evidence about relationship between standardization/ adaptation and firm performance is limited.

#### **4. Corporate communication**

The literature distinguishes four theoretical areas or communication disciplines linked to organization, these are: business communication, organizational communication, corporate communication and managing communication (Miller, 1996). Although it seems difficult to establish the limits among them, several scholars have achieved to delimit them conceptually. We are going to focus this analysis on corporate communication. This concept has been applied in marketing area from studies that analyze the corporate strategy, corporate identity, and image and business reputation.

Dolphin and Fan (2000:100) define the corporate communication as the strategic management process through which an organization communicates with its different publics in order to achieve a mutual benefit and to improve the competitive advantage. Moreover, the corporate communication is made up of an important variety of internal and external communication forms or formats such as the public relations, the image and identity, the corporate advertisement, communication with employees, media relations and crisis management (Argenti, 1996).

In addition, corporate communication is characterized as a management function with the responsibility of overseeing, coordinating the work done in different disciplines. Therefore, the corporate communication is also defined as an instrument of management by means of which all forms of internal and external communication are harmonized effectively and efficiently as possible to create a favorable basis for relationships with groups of which the company depends (Van Riel, 1995).

Thus, corporate communication involves both managerial activities and tactical skills in order to produce and disseminate messages to relevant stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2008).

Nowadays, the corporate communication is considered as a strategic stool within the company that wants to achieve a good position in the market. Therefore, the choice of a good strategy and a good message is essential in order to the communication can be effective (Muñiz, 2010).

One consequence of corporate communication characteristics is that it may be complex in nature. This may happen in organizations with a wide geographical range or with a wide range of products or services. However, there are other challenges to develop effective corporate communication strategies and programs. An integrated approach is demanded by corporate communication to managing communication. Corporate communication transcends the specialties of individual communication professionals and crosses these specialist boundaries in order to harness the strategic interests of the organization at large (Cornelissen, 2008).

We can differentiate two principal communicative ways in an organization which make up the corporate communication: the Communicative Action and the Corporate Conduct (Capriotti, 1999):

In several occasions, the communicative efforts are focused on elaborating advertising campaigns, public relations or direct marketing. However, it is not to taken into account that this communicative activity is only a part of all possibilities of communication. The Communicative Action of an organization is what the company says about itself. The set of messages and communication actions are elaborated to be transmitted to the public in order to inform them about characteristics of the company, and influence about the corporate image that the public has of the company. In the Communicative Action, we can include: the internal communication and the external communication.

Moreover, an organization also communicates through its Corporate Conduct, through its activity and behavior. This acts as a communication channel saying things about the firm and communicating the principles and values that are identified. This ways of communication is shown in the “evidences”. Therefore, the Corporate Conduct is considered as a way of being of the company. It is made up in the fundamental basis on which the public build the organization corporate image.

Our analysis is focused in the external communication addressed to consumers. The external corporate communication includes the communication with investors, consumers and other corporate entities and this communication uses elements such as public relations or advertising. The external communication is responsible for the way in which the company shows itself to the entire corporate world, so it is instrumental in creating the brand image or brand identity (Muñiz, 2010).

There is a variety of concepts and terms that are used in relation to corporate communication. One of these concepts is the corporate identity and this analysis is focused in the corporate identity and more specifically in corporate visual identity.

## **5. Corporate identity**

There are several investigations about the definition of corporate identity. The research has been directed toward definitions that look at logos and other forms of symbolism used by companies. Numerous authors have defined corporate identity directed to the visual form.

The concept identity and image are frequently used in the communication strategies descriptions of the firms. Image is defined as the picture of an organization according it is perceived by target public; and identity is associated to the form in that a company is presented to the target public (Sanchez and Pintado, 2009).

Few years ago, an elevate number of companies recognize the importance of the corporate image. One of the reasons is the increase of interest in corporate image studies. The importance of the research in corporate image is extended over a broad field.

A positive corporate image is an indispensable condition for the continuity and strategic success. It is a strategic instrument of top management. A solid corporate image is an incentive to sell products and services. A strong corporate image provides authority to the company and form the base for its success and continuity. Moreover, a good image helps to attract necessary people in order to be successful (Blauw, 1994).

The study about corporate image covers the study of several areas from the analysis of different experiences of consumers, to their beliefs or the different information that they have about the firm. The studies of corporate image try to know and analyze the perception or mental image that the consumers have about the company (characteristics, products, brands, actions...). Thus, it needs to know in what variables must decompose this image in order to analyze its components (Sanchez and Pintado, 2009).

Now, the concept of corporate identity has been extended and it has become broader referring to the form that a company is presented through the use of symbols, communication and behaviors. These three elements provide the corporate identity mix. Every element may use to present the personality of the company both internal and external form, through the philosophy of the company (van Riel, 1997).

Some scholars such as Schmidt (1995) defined corporate identity as a set of corporate culture, corporate behavior, market conditions, strategies, products and services, communications and, finally, graphic designs.

Van Rekom (1997) defined corporate identity as a set of meanings that allow that people know, describe, remember and relate to certain firm.

Ackerman (1988) highlights the structural presentation of the firm as a key consideration in the use of corporate identification as competitive advantage. This involves the coordination of all elements that represent the corporate visual identity of the firm such as logos, symbols, and names.

A strong corporate identity is effective in the following form: increasing the motivation among employees, inspiring treat among external target public of the company, being aware about the important role of the clients, and being aware of essential role of the financial target public. A strong corporate identity increases the possibility of identification and link with the company (Olins, 1989).

The identity of a company is the names, logotypes, and colors that the company uses in order to distinguish itself, to its brands and its partners. Moreover, it may offer a standard



quality guarantee contributing to increase the customer loyalty and other target publics (Olins, 1989).

Olins distinguishes three types of corporate identity:

- Monolithic identity: the company uses a unique visual style. The company recognition is immediately. The same symbols everywhere.
- Supported identity: the subsidiaries companies have its own style but it is still recognized the parent company.
- Brand identity: the subsidiaries companies have its own style and they have no relation with the parent company.

### *5.1. The corporate identity program and the corporate visual identity*

There are five central elements of communication in a corporate identity program (van Riel, 1997):

- Determination of communicative objectives: the communication objective always derives from the organization objective. The communicative objectives are split into cognitive elements, affective elements and conative elements.
- Selection of target public: in order to choose communication target public, it may carry out two tasks. Firstly, distinguishing between target publics more and less important. Second, studying the characteristics of the selected target publics considered important for purpose of communication.
- Formulation of message: if the message is exceptional, another part of the marketing communication will be multiplied in its consequences. That is not only applied to the marketing communication but also all other communication areas. The decisive election of a "concept" for the message always presents two closely interrelated questions: 1) what should be said? (Promise, proposition, evidence); and 2) How should be said? (Languages, way, tone).

- Media selection and planning: an essential factor in the media selection is that it must be able to transmit the creative content of the campaign in order to satisfy the communication objectives. Scholars affirm that the media is elected according to four criteria: budget, scope, frequency of exposure and continuity.
- Organization of communication: this consists in establish the starting points to coordinate the output of external and internal communication and to control and manage actuations in the communication field.

Once defined the corporate identity, we can identify two aspects when applying the concept:

- The set of deep aspects that define the firm and
- The set of visual elements that identify the organization, it is also known as corporate visual identity.

Carter (1982) defined the concept of corporate visual identity as a logo or brand image and every visual manifestation of the company identity. But the growing of the research in this field has shown that the corporate visual identity is more just a logo.

Moreover, the corporate visual identity is considered as a strategic management tool used to be presented effectively to the market and it can affect long-term perceptions (Alessandri, 2001).

The Corporate Visual Identity System is a graphic design of the principal visual identity of a firm. The elements that make up the CVIS are corporate name, symbols or logotype, typography, color and slogan. It provides a graphic language for the consistent projection of visual identity (Henrion and Parkin, 1967).

Research field of corporate visual identity may be classified into three levels: the strategic, the operational and the design level. The strategic level is focused in the aims that organizations have regarding visual identity. The firms must decide how to release and to be different themselves from others (corporate branding). The operational level is focused on the development management of corporate visual identity systems. Firms are faced with the challenge to translate a corporate identity into a coherent, consistent, and effective visual self-presentation (Melewar, 1998). The challenge more important in this level is the process

of changing or modifying a corporate visual identity and to maintain a consistent use of the corporate visual identity system.

Finally, the design level is focused in the functionality and effectiveness of specific elements of corporate visual identity thinking in the use and effect of corporate logos, colors or corporate taglines (Henderson and Cote, 1998).

Developing a standardized corporate visual identity fitting with laws and regulations of every country is so expensive, complicated and it consumes time. Thus, the multinational enterprises have the option to develop a corporate visual identity that fits regulations everywhere or impose standardization regardless the local regulations (Wind, 1989).

## *5.2. Corporate visual identity strategies*

For its configuration, it can be carried out two processes by company: firstly, the identity strategies and then, visualization strategies (Sanchez and Pintado, 2009).

### **1. Identity strategies:**

The organizations present how they want to be perceived. That may be:

- Unitary identity strategy: private or public companies that is focused in a space, service or particular product. If this unitary identity strategy is based on the product brand, we will talk about unitary identity strategy of brand. This is the case of Telefonica with Movistar in the mobile markets, or Coca-Cola, in which the global image is based on such product.
- Diversified identity strategy: it means breaking with the rigidity. We can distinguish two variables:
  - Endorsed: it is originated by mergers, acquisitions or the company is divided in new entities. The parent entity act as guarantee and each entity depend of that.

- Branded: the entity wants to be known only for its products. It can distribute its identity in several brands; it is also known as distributed strategy.

## 2. Visualization strategy:

Once determined the desired identity, it needs to study the different visual options:

- Closed image: it is elaborated with the minimum number of variations. That can be agreed with unitary identity organizations.
- Open image: it is elaborated with the introduction of variations in colors, graphics or compositions. It is appropriate for all type of entities although it is less convenient for unique identity firms.
- Poliform Image: it is obtained an own identity, but the principal problem in this type of strategy is the loss of identity, so it is important to avoid the dissolution of the image.

Basic principles (general orientations) originated by the corporate visual identity strategies (Sanchez and Pintado, 2009):

- Principle of representation: It is understood as a substitution process that represents the entity. This representation may be to indicate, to seem or to agree. The image is a convention with a natural and aggressive form.
- Principle of formalization: the idea that the meaning of an image represents to the public. It must select elements such as fast perception, easy retention or effectiveness in saturated contexts.
- Principle of integration: it is also called as principle of consistence. This principle is based on formal coherence and elimination of discordances.
- Principle of universality: the idea is not to leave out any perceptive situation in order to achieve a global image.

- Principle of standardization (global image) and principle of differentiation (different visual identities).

Different cultures interpret the same message of different ways regarding colors and shapes in logos and taglines with meanings that vary from certain country to another. The main blunders that occur in the marketing communication are due to failure to understand certain differences.

## **6. Importance of Brand-logo and taglines**

### *6.1. The brand as key corporate visual identifier*

Regarding studies conducted for experts, the results show that the consumers are more concerned in visual signals than the price or physical appearance of product or service (Dalwar and Parker, 1994). Furthermore, Zaltman and Wallendorf (1979) suggest the brand can count with more than 40 per cent of success or failure of the product. When the companies carry out a marketing program, the communication strategy is developed in order to position the brand in the customer's mind.

Brand marks are elements so important to design the marketing strategy. They help marketers to build brand awareness, communicate differentiation and positioning. Brand marks are useful in building brand equity and are usually used as a central element in integrated communication campaigns to visually tie various campaigns identity in a long period of time. Due to the importance of brand marks perform, their effective design is also an important task (Miller et al., 2007).

The best brand mark is easy to encode and memorable for long-term, transmits a sense of meaning and achieves positive affective responses (Henderson and Cote, 1998). In general, there are a set of suggestions to design brands, these are:

- Be distinctive.
- Transmit appropriate meanings.

- Suggest something about brand benefits.

The three brand marks which make up brand identity are: brand name, logo and tagline and these elements are displayed in marketing communications together. Content and style are the main aspects to design a brand mark. Content is referred to meaning of text and graphics, and style is referred to how the elements are represented visually showing an influence in the memorability and affective responses to logos (Miller et al., 2007).

Brand image could be considered as a new variety of old psychological variables that try to explain the customer behavior. One of the investigations that dominate the field of brand image research has been an attitude-based image research. Following some of the principles psychological approach about brand image investigations, we can define brand image as a group of perceptions about a brand reflected by the brand association in the consumer's mind (Keller, 1993).

There are two characteristics that influence in the cultural differences among countries in brand image: the impact of the brand image in the consumer behavior; and the brand dimension definition. In order to get that the brand succeed, it is necessary to have a set of consistent association and attributes.

Several elements of brand marks are integrated, and this integration should permit an easy interpretation and right encoding of information. The integration forms can include (Miller et al., 2007):

- Conceptual similarity between pictorial elements and verbal elements.
- Conceptual similarity between words and letter marks.
- Interaction among different pictorial elements.
- Interaction between verbal elements and pictorial elements.

Interactive images involve a combination of different pictorial information. It can distinguish several types of interaction of images identified by different authors (Miller et al., 2007):

The first type is called *picture interaction* and this type of image is made up of pictorial representation of the brand name with a pictorial representation of the product category.

Another type of interactive image combines verbal and non-verbal symbols. *Letter accentuation* involves a letter or various letters designed to look like attributes of the company. There are two other types of interactive images. They are called *superimpositions* and *physical interaction*. Superimposition combines a word or letter included within a pictorial figure with the letter fitted in size and shape to adjust the figure.

When pictorial and verbal elements are shown in a same context in which verbal aspects are positioned as if they were representational elements, it is termed physical interaction.

## *6.2. Logo and tagline as key brand visual elements*

The corporate visual identity includes the brand-logo, in which several aspects such as shape, image, style, size and color are essential to design it. This is an important decision that the firm must make but, the logo, a part of to be effective and easy to recognize, must be linked to the organization. (Van Riel, 2001).

Henderson and Cote (1998) state that design characteristics of logos evoke reactions before to any promotional activities implemented.

Logo is a graphic design that companies use joined with a name or not. A logo is constituted by stylized letter mark or words marks, by pictorial symbols or combinations of verbal and pictorial symbols. The pictorial symbols have been very common for many years because the pictorial information is more effective to recall information than the verbal information (Henderson and Cote, 1998).

Logo is beneficial for three reasons: the first reason is the first impression that the logo creates, being it very important in business. The logo is the first element that customers notice and it is the first element related to certain firm. The second reason is that it is part of the corporate branding. Probably, logo is the most important element or central element of corporate branding campaign. When consumers see certain logo, immediately they relate it to the company's characteristics. The last reason is that it tells its story, a graphical representation can best tell the story of the certain company. Thus, the message can be transmitted to consumers easily (Miller et al., 2007).

The logos act as a symbol of identification, as a quality mark and as a way to increase the company reputation. A right manage of logo creates a competitive advantage and simplifies the task of formal corporate communication (Baker and Balmer, 1997).

Logo is considered among the most common elements of marketing communication to be used in their original form when the company operates abroad. But it may have positive or negative effects. Both positive and negative effects can transfer from the logo to the company with little or no processing of information (Schechter, 1993).

Color and shape are two of the most important aspects of logo characteristics. Many firms pay more attention to shape of logo having a unique shape. Others prefer associate its logo with a particular color (Hynes, 2008).

Van Riel and Van den Ban (2001) distinguish between extrinsic properties of logos and intrinsic properties. The extrinsic properties are originated from associations with the firm. The power of extrinsic properties is high. The realism in the design is inversely related with the ability to give additional meanings, but there are little investigations about if it is more appropriate for certain company illustrative designs or abstract designs (Henderson and Cote, 1998).

Schmitt and Simonson (1997) propose that several cultures have more preferences for certain types of representations.

A research of Henderson and Cote (1998) has as conclusion that logos represented by objects with a familiar meaning or value are more effectives than abstract symbols; and the symmetric and balanced logos are more common than imbalanced or asymmetric logos.

It is important to take into account the importance of color because of it possess emotional properties and psychological as well. Therefore, the firm must know the meanings associated with different colors due to the tools used in the communication of brand image are mechanism of meaning transfer (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997).



Colors play an important role imparting information, creating more durable identity and symbolic value (Henderson, 1998). An image shown with vivid colors, for example reds or oranges, gives a completely different sense than an image shown in blues or greens.

The color performs an identification task. Several companies choose, in addition to its corporate color, other colors in order to identify or differentiate products of the same line but maintaining the design of its symbol (Sanchez and Pintado, 2009).

Some studies have focused in the preference of colors across cultural borders. The results have shown that people of different cultures have several preferences of color. These studies have also shown that there are different colors meanings for different cultures. Although reactions to color are considered highly individualized, the preferences of universal colors are thought to exist. When color meanings are not the same, the managers may benefit pursuing an adapted strategy with respect to the color associated with the brand. In contrast, when color meanings are similar in different markets, is more viable a standardized strategy. In addition, color can influence in the human behavior and human physiology (Madden et al., 2000).

According to research carried out by scholars, many firms study the color preferences in general, but few firms take into account the consumers perceptions regarding color in base on cultural differences. We may find more commonalities in color meanings across cultures than differences (Fraser and Banks, 2004).

Some scholars contend that certain colors are associated to particular images. Some of the examples are blue color that is associated with wealth, trust and security; gray color is associated with strength, exclusivity and success; and orange denotes cheapness. These associations explain why the banks are more likely to use blue and gray color in their logos rather than orange (Seitel, 1993).

Furthermore, Wexner (1954) associates the red color with exciting, stimulating; orange with distressed, disturbed, upset; blue with tender, soothing; purple with dignified, stately, yellow with cheerful, jovial, joyful; and black with powerful, strong, masterful.

On the other hand, the combination of colors selected for logos may be culturally joined to certain traditions or ideologies (Geboy, 1996).

Brand-name is a secure brand identity. It carries with it all the brand equity essentially. The companies can change their names but the brand-name cannot be changed without risk to loss all equity. Thus, the brand-names must be a decision made in a long term. The brand-name must have the same characteristics than its graphic form: original, meaningful, simple, memorial, aesthetic and instant. A brand-name is a concentration in a sound space as well as a logo is in the graphic space. Thus, sound and graphic are complemented in the brand (Sanchez and Pintado, 2009).

When we talk about brand mark, we cannot forget that it often contain brand slogan in form of taglines. Brand tagline is a short phrase that helps to set brand identity in a company although it is used to improve the memorability of brand (Miller et al., 2007). When a company has an effective tagline, this can help to reinforce the brand image and communicate brand benefits.

Moreover, the taglines are communicational elements that pretend to penetrate and remain in the memory of consumers. The problems with the taglines occur when the company wants to extend its offer to foreign markets with different cultures where the original tagline is misunderstanding or it has not the same meaning in a culture and in another.

On the other hand, a tagline plays an important role in advertisements, it captures the essence of positioning, provides continuity across advertising campaign. The tagline is more susceptible to the variations of market-place and lifestyle changes; therefore, its span is shorter than visual elements (Wheeler, 2003).

In conclusion, the tagline is a link between long-term brand identity and day to day of marketing communication activities. The key of successful tagline is a strong linkage to the brand-name and brand-logo.

Focusing on the visual elements of brand design, we are going to analyze the corporate visual elements used by USA, German and French firms and the differences among them.

## **7. Method**

Due to the previous information about the cultural dimensions, I have carried out a content analysis as an exploratory step in order to examine the brand-logos and brand-taglines of USA, Germany and France firms. Content analysis is often used especially to analyze messages, however, the scientific agreements required for the development of a coding scheme are difficult to achieve. In this regard, I have adopted *Riffe et al. (1998)* guideline with the purpose of making more reliable the content analysis based on that the procedure of that is a multi-step process that requires developing categories for coding thematic, content, training coders, coding the categorical data, and statistically analyzing the coded data (Cho et al., 1990).

### *7.1. Sample*

The sampling is constituted by brand-logos and taglines from the top 34 companies in two European countries, Germany and France, and one North American country, the USA. The top 34 companies sampled are really multinational corporations, and the brand is an essential component in international marketing communication for multinational corporations. The USA, Germany and France sample of companies was collected from the *Fortune Global 500* list of the largest corporations in 2011 (see Annex I). Brand-logos and taglines were captured from the home page of corporate websites (see Annex II), which normally show their corporate identity at the top of the webpage.

### *7.2. Coding Scheme*

All USA (n=34), German (n=34), and French (n=34) companies brands were coded in order to refine the categorization scheme. This coding was carried out through an informatic statistical program called SPSS Inc., applying different statistic techniques to get clear results in order to elaborate definitive conclusions.

As I have mentioned previously, the brand-logo is defined as a symbol of corporate identity. When the corporate identity has additional pictorial design elements, this pictorial element

represents the brand-logo. When the corporate identity only shows typography, this typography represents the brand-logo. On the other hand, the tagline is defined as a short phrase depicting a company's brand essence, positioning and personality and differentiates from its core competitors (Wheeler, 2003). Tagline generally has a shorter life span than visual identities because the taglines are more susceptible in advertising campaign to the variations of market-place and lifestyle changes (Wheeler, 2003). The tagline is also called as slogan that summarizes a company's interest (Traverso, 2000). Following Jun and Lee (2007), the tagline can be defined operationally as a sentence attached to the corporate identity or the first sentence which is shown on the homepage of the company website.

The first variable that I have used is "Additional value", which is defined as a company's appeal to family, friends, country name, future, dreams and emotional expressions that are beyond the scope of a culture's core values such as price, quality or trust (Jun and Lee, 2007). Moreover, additional value reflects the diffusiveness of brand value in the taglines, and it was measured as either absent (coded as "0") or present (coded as "1"). The present categories include family (coded as "1"), friend (coded as "2"), country name (coded as "3"), future (coded as "4"), dreams (coded as "5") and emotions (coded as "6").

The second variable that I analyze is "Direct Speech". Wheeler (2003) classified the tagline expressions into four categories and I have considered that this classification is appropriate for our content analysis. These categories are imperative (coded as "1"), superlative (coded as "2"), provocative (coded as "3"), and descriptive (coded as "4"). The first three categories represent the direct speech. The imperative expressions command actions and normally start with a verb. The superlative expressions identify the company position as the best in its industrial class. The provocative expression is thought-provoking, and can be presented in question form (Wheeler, 2003).

In the brand-logo, the direct speech variable was measured by logo shapes. This analysis defined a *word mark-letterform* as direct expression of creative design, and *pictorial-symbolic* design as an indirect expression. These two categories were used to measure the logo shape: in the first category are included brand-logos with *word mark-letterform* design (coded as "1"), and in the second group the brand-logos show pictorial- abstract or symbolic design (coded as "2"). Each category is represented by ordinal values.

The classification of creativity is subjective and delicate, so I have used the Wheeler's definition of brand-logo classification:

The first category, *word mark-letterform*, is defined as a freestanding letter, word or words. It is normally the company name, an acronym, or, in the case of a single letter, it is used as a distinctive graphic focal point for a brand-logo. The second category is the *pictorial-symbolic* style, and it can be used as a literal and recognizable image alluding to the company name or its mission; or as a visual form to convey a big idea or a brand-attribute. These marks, for their nature, can provide strategic ambiguity, and effective work for large companies with unrelated and numerous divisions.

On the other hand, this study has also analyzed the creative motif utilizing the general motif that brand design adopted since creative motif is a subjective concept. The creative motif classification includes circle (coded as "1"), triangle (coded as "2"), square (coded as "3"), human (coded as "4"), animal (coded as "5"), nature (coded as "6"), amorphous expression (coded as "7"), star (coded as "8"), national flag (coded as "9"), and letter (coded as "10").

Among groups *t*-test, *ANOVA* test and *chi square* ( $x^2$ ) tests were used to identify the differences among USA, German and French brands. In addition, multiple discriminant analysis was used to determine the linear combination of independent variables that best classify cases per country.

## **8. Results**

### *8.1. Brand taglines for the USA, Germany and France*

At first, I have carried out a statistic analysis to evaluate the association between independent variables used in the taglines analysis and the dependent variable which includes the three countries selected in the study. I have analyzed and compared the distribution means of the independent variables in each country that make up the dependent variable in order to examine the cultural differences among countries in brand-taglines.

I have used two statistic methodologies: t-student and ANOVA. The first one is used to compare two categories, in our case, two of the three countries. However, with ANOVA we have compared all the categories (countries) used in the study. The independent variables used are: the presence of additional value and the use of direct speech in taglines.

The Table 2 shows the *Levene contrast* (F) about equally of variances. The result of this contrast allows us to decide whether I can or not suppose that the variances of the countries are equal. If the probability associated to the Levene statistic is higher than 0,05 I can suppose that the countries variances are equal; if the probability associated to the Levene statistic is less than 0,05 I refuse the hypothesis of equal variances and it is supposed that are different.

In the case of the USA and Germany, the direct speech value for the USA is higher than that of Germany. This result suggests that USA taglines rely on direct speech, such as imperative, superlative or provocative, more than the German counterparts.

The T-statistic has a value 1,315 and it is associated a bilateral critical level of 0,195 ( $p > 0,05$ ). This explains that I cannot refuse the hypothesis of means and, consequently, the differences are not statistically significant.

In the case of additional value, the mean of Germany is higher than the mean of the USA. Thus, German taglines contain more cultural values such as family, friends, country, future, dreams, and emotional expression than US taglines.

The t-statistic has associated a critical level less than 0,05. This suggests that the differences are statistically significant.

**Group Statistic. USA-Germany (TABLE 1)**

		N	Mean	Std. Desviation	Std. Error Mean
Direct speech	USA	32	0,94	0,246	0,043
	GERMANY	29	0,83	0,384	0,071
Additional value	USA	32	0,38	0,492	0,087
	GERMANY	29	0,66	0,484	0,090

**Independent Samples Test. USA-Germany (TABLE 2)**

		Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for Equality of means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Direct speech	Equal variances assumed	7,905	0,007	1,343	59	0,184	0,110	0,082	-0,054	0,274
	Equal variances not assumed			1,315	46,807	0,195	0,110	0,084	-0,058	0,278
Additional value	Equal variances assumed	0,233	0,631	-2,239	59	0,029	-0,280	0,125	-0,531	-0,030
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,241	58,592	0,029	-0,280	0,125	-0,530	-0,030

The Tables 3 and 4 show that the use of direct speech in USA taglines is lightly greater than in French companies but the mean difference is not statistically significant ( $p > 0,05$ ). Therefore, because of the tagline analysis reveals no difference between the use of direct speech in USA taglines and French taglines, I cannot support that USA taglines contain more direct speech than German brand taglines.

On the other hand, the presence of additional value in French taglines is greater than in USA taglines, and the mean difference is statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ). Thus, due to these appeals are characteristics of a diffusive culture, the result supports that French taglines contain more additional cultural values than the counterparts.

**Group statistic. USA-France (TABLE 3)**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean
Direct speech	USA	32	0,94	0,246	0,043
	FRANCE	31	0,90	0,301	0,054
Additional value	USA	32	0,38	0,492	0,087
	FRANCE	31	0,90	0,301	0,054

**Independent Samples test. USA-France (TABLE 4)**

		Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for Equality of means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Direct speech	Equal variances assumed	0,998	0,322	0,496	61	0,622	0,034	0,069	-0,104	0,172
	Equal variances not assumed			0,495	57,948	0,623	0,034	0,069	-0,104	0,173
Additional value	Equal variances assumed	37,195	0,000	-5,123	61	0,000	-0,528	0,103	-0,734	-0,322
	Equal variances not assumed			-5,161	51,581	0,000	-0,528	0,102	-0,734	-0,323

Finally, as show the Tables 5 and 6 comparing German and French taglines, the second one shows means higher in both variables: direct speech and additional value. However, in the case of direct speech, the mean difference is not statistically significant ( $p > 0,05$ ), while, in the case of additional value, it is statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ). This suggests that I cannot be supported that French taglines contain more direct speech than German taglines, but the French taglines appeal culturally more additional values, such as emotional expression, than German taglines.

**Group statistic. Germany-France (TABLE 5)**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Direct speech	GERMANY	29	0,83	0,384	0,071
	FRANCE	31	0,90	0,301	0,054
Additional value	GERMANY	29	0,66	0,484	0,090
	FRANCE	31	0,90	0,301	0,054

**Independent Samples test. Germany- France (TABLE 6)**

		Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for Equality of means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Direct speech	Equal variances assumed	3,002	0,088	-0,852	58	0,398	-0,076	0,089	-0,253	0,102
	Equal variances not assumed			-0,845	53,000	0,402	-0,076	0,089	-0,255	0,104
Additional value	Equal variances assumed	27,866	0,000	-2,403	58	0,019	-0,248	0,103	-0,455	-0,041
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,367	46,245	0,022	-0,248	0,105	-0,459	-0,037



The result obtained in the Tables 7, 8 and 9, applying ANOVA statistic, takes into account the three countries illustrating that the use of direct speech in the USA taglines is lightly higher than German and French taglines. However, the critical level exceeds 0,05 and, therefore it is not statistically significant. Therefore, the taglines analysis carried out, in terms of using direct speech, does not difference among USA, German and French taglines. This indicates that I cannot claim that USA taglines rely more on the direct speech than their counterparts.

**Descriptives (TABLE 7)**
**Direct speech**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
USA	32	0,94	0,246	0,043	0,85	1,03	0	1
GERMANY	29	0,83	0,384	0,071	0,68	0,97	0	1
FRANCE	31	0,90	0,301	0,054	0,79	1,01	0	1
Total	92	0,89	0,313	0,033	0,83	0,96	0	1

**Test of homogeneity of variances (TABLE 8)**
**Direct speech**

Levene's Statistic	gl1	gl2	Sig.
3,942	2	89	0,023

**ANOVA (TABLE 9)**
**Direct speech**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0,190	2	0,095	0,972	0,382
Within Groups	8,723	89	0,098		
Total	8,913	91			

On the other hand, the result obtained with the same statistic method (Tables 10, 11 and 12) shows clear differences among countries regarding the use of additional value in their taglines. The French taglines designate a greater use of additional value in their taglines with a mean higher than the US and Germany. Unlike the direct speech analysis, the additional value variable illustrates a critical level less than 0,05 and thus, it is statistically significant. This result suggests that French companies give more importance to their characteristic cultural values when elaborating taglines than German and USA firms.

**Descriptives (TABLE 10)****Additional Value**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
USA	32	,38	0,492	0,087	0,20	0,55	0	1
GERMANY	29	,66	0,484	0,090	0,47	0,84	0	1
FRANCE	31	,90	0,301	0,054	0,79	1,01	0	1
Total	92	,64	0,482	0,050	0,54	0,74	0	1

**Test of homogeneity of variances (TABLE 11)****Additional Value**

Levene's Statistic	gl1	gl2	Sig.
26,189	2	89	0,000

**ANOVA (TABLE 12)****Additional Value**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4,402	2	2,201	11,686	0,000
Within Groups	16,761	89	0,188		
Total	21,163	91			

**8.2. Cross tabulation of country by shape of brand-logos**

As shows the Table 13 of *Shape of Brand-logo*, in general, although the difference is small between both categories, the shape of brand-logo most frequent in the analysis is the *word mark- letterform* category showing a result of 55 per cent approximately in total among the three countries.

Nevertheless, the results obtained in the brand-logos analysis of the 34 most prominent companies of the USA, Germany and France show the *pictorial-symbolic* design as the category less repeated (45 per cent).

Over 60 per cent in USA brand-logos are *word marks-letterform* design compared to 38,2 per cent approximately of *pictorial-symbolic* design in brand-logos. In the case of Germany, as happens in the USA, *word mark-letterform* design category shows higher percentage than *pictorial-symbolic* design. However, the difference between both categories is smaller in Germany than in the USA. The first category categories consisted of 53 per cent in Germany

and the second category shows 47 per cent. The result in France is different to USA and German brand-logos. Both categories show the same result in the analysis: 50 per cent of French company's logos present *word mark-letterform* designs, as happens in the second category.

(TABLE 13)

BRAND-LOGO SHAPE	COUNTRY			TOTAL
	USA	GERMANY	FRANCE	
WORD MARK- LETTER FORM DESIGN	21 61,80%	18 52,90%	17 50,00%	56 54,90%
PICTORIAL – SYMBOLIC DESIGN	13 38,20%	16 47,10%	17 50,00%	46 45,10%
TOTAL	34 100,00%	34 100,00%	34 100,00%	102 100,00%

The *chi-square* is a nonparametric test for comparing two independent samples: the countries chosen in this analysis and the brand-logo shape design. The principal function of this statistic method is to compare these proportional distributions and determine whether the difference is statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ).

This tool helps us to know if the design of brand-logo shape influences in the different countries that are analyzed.

The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) says us that there is no difference among the countries in terms of brand-logo shape. If p-value is less than 0,05 the null hypothesis is refused.

Firstly, I have decided to carry out the chi-square comparing countries two by two, and finally, I have also obtained the chi-square results comparing the three countries in order to ensure or verify the previous results.

The first result obtained, in the Table 15, between the USA and Germany is not statistically significant ( $X^2 = 0,24$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ), therefore, there are not significant differences to the design of brand-logos in a country and another.

**(TABLE 14)**

BRAND-LOGO SHAPE	COUNTRY		TOTAL
	USA	GERMANY	
WORD MARK- LETTER FORM DESIGN	21 61,80%	18 52,90%	39 57,40%
PICTORIAL – SYMBOLIC DESIGN	13 38,20%	16 47,10%	29 42,60%
	34	34	68
TOTAL	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

**Test of Chi-Square. USA-Germany (TABLE 15)**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Exact. Sig (2-sided)	Exact Sig (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	0,541	1	0,462	0,624	0,312
Continuity Correction	0,240	1	0,624		
Likelihood Ratio	0,542	1	0,462		
Fisher's Exact test					
Linear by linear Association	0,533	1	0,465		
N of Valid Cases	68				

The minimum expected count is 14,50.

To compare the USA and France, the chi-square analysis shows in the Table 17, as in the previous comparison, that the results are not statistically significant, thus there are not significant differences in the brand-logo shape between both countries ( $\chi^2 = 0,537$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

**(TABLE 16)**

BRAND-LOGO SHAPE	COUNTRY		TOTAL
	USA	FRANCE	
WORD MARK- LETTER FORM DESIGN	21 61,80%	17 50,00%	38 55,90%
PICTORIAL – SYMBOLIC DESIGN	13 38,20%	17 50,00%	30 44,10%
	34	34	68
TOTAL	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

**Test of Chi-Square USA-France (TABLE 17)**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Exact Sig (2-sided)	Exact Sig (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	0,954	1	0,329	0,464	0,232
Continuity Correction	0,537	1	0,464		
Likelihood Ratio	0,957	1	0,328		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear by linear Association	0,940	1	0,332		
N of Valid Cases	68				

The minimum expected count is 15,00.

According to the Table 19 about the result of chi-square analysis between Germany and France, this is very similar to previous tables. Therefore, the result obtained is not statically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0,059$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

**(TABLE 18)**

BRAND-LOGO SHAPE	COUNTRY		TOTAL
	GERMANY	FRANCE	
WORD MARK- LETTER FORM DESIGN	18	17	35
	52,90%	50,00%	51,50%
PICTORIAL – SYMBOLIC DESIGN	16	17	33
	47,10%	50,00%	48,50%
	34	34	68
TOTAL	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

**Test of Chi-Square. Germany- France (TABLE 19)**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Exact. Sig (2-sided)	Exact. Sig (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	0,059	1	0,808	1,000	0,500
Continuity Correlation	0,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	0,059	1	0,808		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear by linear Association	0,058	1	0,810		
N of Valid Cases	68				

The minimum expected count is 16,50.

Finally, I have made a comparison among the three countries in the same analysis (Table 20), and the final result verifies the previous comparisons ( $\chi^2 = 1,030$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

This final result indicates that there is not a significant relationship among the USA, Germany and France in terms of brand-logo shape. In conclusion, this variable does not show clear differences among these countries to design brand-logos.

**Test of Chi-Square (TABLE 20)**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0,598</b>
Likelihood Ratio	1,036	2	0,596
Linear by linear Association	0,941	1	0,332
N of Valid Cases	102		

The minimum expected count is 15,33.

### *8.3. Creative motif and used colors in brand-logos*

General information about brand-logos in terms of creative motif and design style reveals, in the Table 21, that the most frequent creative motif in the USA, Germany and France is the circle followed closely by square and amorphous expression, but over 25 per cent of USA, German and French brand-logos don't use motif, this rank is higher in the USA (32, 4 per cent). In this country, the use of amorphous expression in their brand-logos is more frequent than other types of motifs. However, the German brand-logos are characterized by circles and squares motifs.

The creative motif of French brand-logos is similar to both Germany and the USA, it is frequent circles and amorphous expressions in the brand-logos design.

The use of human or animal forms in the logo design is very unusual in these countries although few French companies include these motifs to their brand-logos.

Contingency Table. Creative motif (TABLE 21)

	CREATIVE.MOTIF									TOTAL
	NO CREATIVE MOTIF	CIRCLE	TRIANGLE	SQUARE	HUMAN	ANIMAL	NATURE	AMORPHOUS EXPRESSION	LETTER	
USA	11	6	0	5	0	0	4	7	1	34
%	32,4%	17,6%	0,0%	14,7%	0,0%	0,0%	11,8%	20,6%	2,9%	100%
GERMANY	8	10	2	7	0	0	0	4	3	34
%	23,5%	29,4%	5,9%	20,6%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	11,8%	8,8%	100%
FRANCE	7	7	0	5	1	2	3	7	2	34
%	20,6%	20,6%	0,0%	14,7%	2,9%	5,9%	8,8%	20,6%	5,9%	100%
TOTAL	26	23	2	17	1	2	7	18	6	102
%	25,5%	22,5%	2,0%	16,7%	1,0%	2,0%	6,9%	17,6%	5,9%	100%

As illustrates the Table 22 of *used colors*, the most frequently used color in USA, German and French brand-logos is blue, nearly 50 per cent. In the case of the USA, the second color most frequent in brand-logos is red. However, other colors have a minimum frequency. In German brand-logos, the red color has a great frequency, as occurs with the US, followed closely by yellow color. Other colors become important in German logos, such as green, grey or black. The case of France has some difference compared to USA and German brand-logos. Blue is also the most important color in its brand-logos; however the second color more repeated in French brand-logos is green followed closely by red and black. Other colors are also frequent in French logos such as grey or purple.

According to the Table 23, over 57 per cent of USA, German and French brand-logos use two colors in their design. In USA brand-logos design is generally most frequent the use of two colors to design their logos. However, the use of one or two colors is very similar in German brand-logos. Finally, in France are often used two colors in the design of their logos. Moreover, the use of over two colors has greater frequency in French brand-logos than German and USA designs.

**Main color of logos (TABLE 22)**

	MAIN COLOR									TOTAL
	BLUE	RED	YELLOW	GREEN	GREY	BLACK	ORANGE	PINK	PURPLE	
USA	23	8	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	34
%	67,60%	23,50%	2,90%	2,90%	0,00%	0,00%	2,90%	0,00%	0,00%	100,00%
GERMANY	16	5	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	34
%	47,10%	14,70%	11,80%	5,90%	5,90%	5,90%	2,90%	2,90%	2,90%	100,00%
FRANCE	11	5	1	6	3	4	1	0	3	34
%	32,40%	14,70%	2,90%	17,60%	8,80%	11,80%	2,90%	0,00%	8,80%	100,00%
TOTAL	50	18	6	9	5	6	3	1	4	102
%	49,00%	17,60%	5,90%	8,80%	4,90%	5,90%	2,90%	1,00%	3,90%	100,00%

**Number of colors in logos (TABLE 23)**

	NUMBER OF COLOR			TOTAL
	ONE COLOR	TWO COLOR	MORE COLORS	
USA	9	24	1	34
%	26,50%	70,60%	2,90%	100,00%
GERMANY	16	15	3	34
%	47,10%	44,10%	8,80%	100,00%
FRANCE	6	20	8	34
%	17,60%	58,80%	23,50%	100,00%
TOTAL	31	59	12	102
%	30,40%	57,80%	11,80%	100,00%

#### 8.4. Results of multiple discriminant analysis

The discriminant analysis is a statistic technique that shows what variables allow to obtain differences among groups and how many of these variables are necessary to achieve the highest possible classification. This analysis helps to identify the characteristics that differentiate (discriminate) to two or more groups and create a function that can distinguish them with the major possible accuracy to the member of one group and another. The main objective is to find a linear combination of the independent variables that best classifies cases into country groups. The independent variables, that I have used, include brand-logo shape and tagline value. The dependent variable is brand-logo's country.

To carry out this technique, firstly, I have analyzed these variables including only two of the three countries: USA-Germany; USA-France; and Germany-France, in order to obtain results



more detailed in each independent variable. Finally, the discriminant analysis has been carried out with the three countries as dependent variable in order to obtain a general result of all discriminant analysis.

To start the analysis, the Table 24 shows a summary of cases processing for the analysis: the number of valid cases and the number of lost cases or out of range.

On the other hand, the group statistics, Table 25, show the results of the means, standard deviations, and number of weighted cases and no-weighted (number of valid cases in each discriminant variable).

**Processing Summary for the analysis of cases**

**USA-Germany-France (TABLE 24)**

Unweighted cases		N	%
Válid		92	90,2
Excluded	Group codes for missing or out of range	0	,0
	Lost at least one variable discriminant	10	9,8
	Missing or out of range both the code and at least one group of discriminating variables.	0	,0
	Total excluded	10	9,8
Total Cases		102	100,0

**Group Statistics. USA-Germany-France (TABLE 25)**

COUNTRY		Mean	Std. Desviation	Valid N (Listwise)	
				Unweighted	Weighted
USA	Logo Shape	1,38	0,492	32	32,000
	Addit.value	0,38	0,492	32	32,000
GERMANY	Logo Shape	1,52	0,509	29	29,000
	Addit.value	0,66	0,484	29	29,000
FRANCE	Logo Shape	1,55	0,506	31	31,000
	Addit.value	0,90	0,301	31	31,000
Total	Logo Shape	1,48	0,502	92	92,000
	Addit.value	0,64	0,482	92	92,000

As show the previous tables, the total number of cases are 102 (34 logos analyzed per country), the number of valid cases are 92 and the rest of cases have been excluded. In addition, the group statistics table shows the means of each country in each independent variable.

The Tables 26, 27 and 28 show the eigenvalues and canonical correlation. The eigenvalue is the ratio of the variation due to differences among the groups and the variation that occurs within combined group in the same amount. Its principal interest is to compare how is distributed the dispersion inter-groups when there is more than one function. Although an eigenvalue has a minimum of 0, it has not maximum, which makes it difficult to interpret by itself.

The canonical correlation is the relation between the linear combination of the independent variables (the discriminant function), and a linear combination that collects membership groups of subjects, in our case, the groups are the countries. A high canonical correlation indicates that the discriminant variables allow differentiating among groups. I have analyzed the eigenvalue and canonical correlation each two countries and finally, with the three countries:

In the case of USA-Germany, Table 26, the eigenvalue is very close to zero, and the canonical correlation is not high, thus the discriminant variables analyzed do not allow obtaining great differences between countries.

**Eigenvalues. USA-Germany (TABLE 26)**

Function	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	0,108	100,0	100,0	0,312

In the analysis of the USA and France, Table 27, the eigenvalue is higher than the previous case, and the canonical correlation value is more moderate. Therefore, it is not possible distinguish very well between groups from the independent variables, but there are major distinction between the USA and France than between the USA and Germany.

**Eigenvalues. USA-France (TABLE 27)**

Function	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	0,459	100,0	100,0	0,561

The case of Germany- France, Table 28, is very similar to the case USA-Germany, the canonical correlation is not high and this does not allow seeing great differences between groups in both variables jointly.

**Eigenvalues. Germany-France (TABLE 28)**

Function	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	0,102	100,0	100,0	0,304

Now, I am going to show the Table 29 with the result including all the countries (the USA, Germany and France) in order to verify whether we can distinguish great differences among countries in terms of brand-logo shape and tagline value.

**Eigenvalues (TABLE 29)**

Function	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	0,275	99,2	99,2	0,465
2	0,002	0,8	100,0	0,046

The two discriminant functions included in the analysis are very unequal. The first function explains the 99,2 per cent of the variability available in the dates, while the second function only explains the 0,8 per cent. The canonical correlation is moderate in the first function and very low in the second function, therefore, the discriminant variables included in the analysis do not allow distinguishing too well differences among the countries, although the first function allows distinguishing better among them.

Because of the eigenvalue is difficult to interpret, it get used to caring out the Wilk's lambda statistic, that is closely related to the eigenvalues.

Wilk's  $\lambda$  is also called U-statistics. When considering variables individually, the  $\lambda$  is equal to the ratio between the sum of squares within groups and the total sum of squares (without distinguishing between groups). That is equivalent to the deviations to the mean within each group, among the deviations to the mean total without distinguishing groups. If its value is small, the variable discriminates much (great difference): the total variability is due to differences between groups, not differences within groups. The values close to 1 indicates a great similarity among groups. In the function, it is contrasted the null hypothesis (there are no differences among groups).

On the other hand, in the F-statistic, each variable is compared to the deviations of the means of each one of the groups to the total mean, between the deviations to the mean within each group. If F is high for each variable, then the means of each group will be far apart and the variable discriminates well. If F is small, the variable discriminate bit, since there will be little homogeneity in the groups and they are very close.

The Tables from 30 to 45 show the values of Wilk's lambda and F-statistic in each independent variable and the Wilk's lambda and chi-square of the discriminant function.

In the Tables 30 and 31, the Wilk's lambda indicates that there are not great differences in both variables between logos and taglines groups of the US and Germany. However, in the case of additional value in taglines, the null hypothesis that the groups have equal average in this discriminant variable, is refused because  $p\text{-value} < 0,05$ ; thus, it is statistically significant. F-statistic shows that additional value in taglines discriminates more within groups; the differences within them are greater.

The discriminant function contrast both discriminant variables, thus it verifies that there is a great equality between groups of countries. The critical level is slightly higher than 0,05 and, therefore, the null hypothesis must not be entirely no refused.

**Tests of Equality of Group Means. USA-Germany (TABLE 30)**

	Wilk's lambda	F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
Logo Shape	0,980	1,232	1	59	0,272
Additional value	0,922	5,014	1	59	0,029

**Wilk's Lambda USA-Germany (TABLE 31)**

Contrast Functions	Wilk's Lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	0,903	5,940	2	0,051

The Tables 32 and 33 show the brand-logo shape and tagline value classification of each country in the discriminant function.

**Standardized Canonical Discriminant**

**Function Coefficients**

**USA-Germany (TABLE 32)**

	Function
	1
Logo Shape	0,460
Additional value	0,898

**Functions at Group Centroids**

**USA-Germany (TABLE 33)**

COUNTRY	Function
	1
USA	-0,307
GERMANY	0,339

Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means.

The table 32 indicates that additional value variable discriminates more than logo shape variable because it shows a higher value. It indicates that tagline value presents more differences. In the Table 33, Germany presents a positive value, so Germany discriminates more in tagline value and it has a major presence of additional value in taglines than the US. On the other hand, the USA presents a negative value in the discriminant function; therefore it is more important the words and letters design in brand-logos than pictorial and symbolic images design.

In the case of the USA and France, Tables 34 and 35, there is a distinction between variables. According to values of Wilk's lambda, there is a great similarity between the brand-logos design in terms of shape. In the case of tagline value, the similarity between taglines of the USA and France is moderate. The F-statistics values indicate that there is a great discrimination within the groups in terms of tagline value. The difference within each group in terms of logo shape is more similar.

The discriminant function indicates us that Wilk's lambda is moderately high but its critical level is lower than 0,05 so it is statistically significant. The groups do not present equal average in both variables.

**Test of Equality of Group Means. USA-France (TABLE 34)**

	Wilk's Lambda	F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
Logo Shape	0,970	1,903	1	61	0,173
Additional value	0,699	26,250	1	61	0,000

**Wilk's Lambda. USA-France (TABLE 35)**

Contrast functions	Wilk's Lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	0,685	22,660	2	0,000

According to the Tables 36 and 37, as occurs in the previous case, the Additional value variable discriminates more than another. Therefore, in these countries, as USA-Germany, the differences between countries about whether to include additional value in their taglines or not, are greater. On the other hand, France shows positive value in the discriminant function, so the taglines in this country present a greater additional value in them.

**Standardized Canonical Discriminant**

**Function Coefficients**

**USA-France (TABLE 36)**

	Function
	1
Logo Shape	0,249
Additional value	0,965

**Functions at Group Centroids**

**USA-France (TABLE 37)**

COUNTRY	Function
	1
USA	-0,656
FRANCE	0,677

Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means.

In the tagline and logos analysis of Germany and France, the Tables 38 and 39, the results are similar to the previous cases. There is also a great similarity between groups in both variables according to Wilk's lambda but the critical level associated in terms of additional

value is statistically significant. The F-statistic indicates that the differences within groups are greater in the tagline value.

The discriminant function shows that Wilk's lambda is not statistically significant ( $p > 0,05$ ), therefore, the differences are minimum and I can contrast that both groups has similar averages in the discriminant variables.

**Test of Equality of Group Means. Germany-France (TABLE 38)**

	Wilk's Lambda	F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
Logo Shape	0,999	0,057	1	58	0,813
Additional value	0,909	5,774	1	58	0,019

**Wilk's Lambda. Germany-France (TABLE 39)**

Contrast Functions	Wilk's lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	0,908	5,518	2	0,063

In the Tables 40 and 41, I can see that the results are similar to the other cases too. The additional value variable discriminates more because it presents higher value, hence I can appreciate a greater presence of additional value in the French taglines than in the German taglines. The German companies give more importance to words and letter forms in the design of brand-logo in terms of shape than French companies.

**Standardized Canonical Discriminant**

**Function Coefficients**

**Germany-France (TABLE 40)**

	Function
	1
Logo Shape	-0,148
Addit.value	1,025

**Functions at Group Centroids**

**Germany-France (TABLE 41)**

COUNTRY	Function
	1
GERMANY	-0,324
FRANCE	0,303

Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means.

Considering the three countries, the Tables 42 and 43 show the same result than the previous cases. The value of Wilk's lambda in the logo shape variable is high, this explains that the differences to design brand-logos, in terms of shape, are minimum comparing the

three countries. The critical level is higher than 0,05 and thus, the countries have equal average in this variable. Additional value variable shows different results, the Wilk's lambda is moderately high, which there is a considerable overlap among groups, but it is associated a critical level less than 0,05 and thus, the null hypothesis is refused ( $p > 0,05$ ). F-statistic indicates us that the differences within the groups are greater in terms of tagline value.

In the function 1 to 2, is contrasted the null hypothesis. In this case, Wilk's lambda has a value moderately high and its critical level associated is not statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ). In the second function are contrasted whether the means of the groups are equal. This case confirms that the second function differentiates, at least, two of the three groups.

**Tests of Equality of Group Means. USA-Germany-France (TABLE 42)**

	Wilk's Lambda	F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
Logo Shape	0,977	1,067	2	89	0,348
Additional value	0,792	11,686	2	89	0,000

**Wilk's Lambda USA-Germany-France (TABLE 43)**

Contrast functions	Wilk's Lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1 through 2	0,782	21,722	4	0,000
2	0,998	0,189	1	0,664

According to the Table 45, the first function distinguishes the USA as the groups that more discriminates, it presents negative values. In the second function, it is highlighted the German and French groups, locating the US in the center part according to associated values.

On the other hand, I can affirm that the additional value in tagline discriminates more than logos shape, therefore the additional value is the variable that more contribute to differentiate the groups of countries. However, in the case of logo shape variable, it is more difficult the classification of logo shape for each country.

Because of the table 45 shows that France presents the highest value, the importance of additional value to elaborate taglines is greater in France and thus, the French companies incorporate more additional value in its tagline than US and German companies. Moreover,



the US companies give more importance to incorporate words and letter in the logos shape design than German and French companies.

The second function, shown in the Table 44, attributes positive value to logo shape variable, the same occurs with Germany. Therefore German companies consider more essential the design of logos in terms of shape than French companies, while these last companies still considering more important the additional value in taglines.

**Standardized Canonical Discriminant  
Function Coefficients  
USA-Germany-France (TABLE 44)**

	Function	
	1	2
Logo Shape	0,217	0,978
Additional value	0,961	-0,283

**Functions ar Group Centroids  
USA-Germany-France (TABLE 45)**

COUNTRY	Function	
	1	2
USA	-0,635	-0,027
GERMANY	0,048	0,067
FRANCE	0,611	-0,034

Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions  
evaluated ar group means.

### 8.5. Classification matrix

The Tables from 46 to 49 are classification matrixes. These tables are a validation process of the function. It sums the predictive ability of the discriminate function.

The results indicate that the French logos and taglines were better classified than USA and German logos and taglines (90,3 per cent). In the case of the USA, 62,5 per cent of the total cases were correctly classified. In the comparison of USA-Germany and Germany- France, the German logos and taglines were not correctly classified 10 cases of 34.

In conclusion, the total German cases were not correctly classified and the majority of cases are classified as French companies. On the other hand, 37,5 per cent of the USA is classified as French companies. The same occurs with France, its 9,7 per cent of cases are classified as USA companies.

Finally, according to the Table 49, the function gets to classify correctly the 52,2 per cent of the total cases.

(TABLE 46)

	COUNTRY	Predicted Group Membership		Total
		USA	GERMANY	
Original	USA	20	12	32
	GERMANY	10	19	29
	USA	62,5%	37,5%	100%
	GERMANY	34,5%	65,5%	100%

Note: 63,9 per cent of original grouped cases correctly classified.

(TABLE 47)

	COUNTRY	Predicted Group Membership		Total
		USA	FRANCE	
Original	USA	20	12	32
	FRANCE	3	28	31
	USA	62,5%	37,5%	100%
	FRANCE	9,7%	90,3%	100%

Note: 76 ,2 per cent of original grouped cases correctly classified.

(TABLE 48)

	COUNTRY	Predicted Group Membership		Total
		GERMANY	FRANCE	
Original	GERMANY	10	19	29
	FRANCE	3	28	31
	GERMANY	34,5%	65,5%	100%
	FRANCE	9,7%	90,3%	100%

Note: 63,3 per cent of original grouped cases correctly classified.

(TABLE 49)

	COUNTRY	Predicted Group Membership			Total
		USA	GERMANY	FRANCE	
Original	USA	20	0	12	32
	GERMANY	10	0	19	29
	FRANCE	3	0	28	31
	USA	62,5%	0%	37,5%	100%
	GERMANY	34,5%	0%	65,5%	100%
	FRANCE	9,7%	0%	90,3%	100%

Note: 52,2 per cent of original grouped cases correctly classified.

## **9. Managerial Implications**

The study of corporate identity has an increasingly key role in the strategic policy of organizations due to the need of firms to create a differentiated positioning in foreign markets and to achieve that targets recognize and feel identified with the company and its brands.

Based on several aspects included in the theoretical background, this study has analyzed differences and similarities in corporate visual identity (brand-taglines and brand-logos) of firms in the three countries (the USA, Germany and France). Scholars such as Han and Schmitt (1997) and marketers recommend taking into account the importance of visual components as a critical part of corporate communication strategy.

The results of the empirical analysis allow us to propose the type of corporate communication strategy that may help firms to be successful in the international markets.

Therefore, some implications and recommendations for companies can be suggested.

### *9.1. Additional value and direct speech in taglines*

Between the elements analyzed, the brand-tagline is worth studying because taglines represent a company's core message (Dodson, 1989).

The results reveal that the differences in corporate visual identity across cultures are greater in the brand-taglines design than in brand-logos design. Generally, French brands present more additional value in taglines than US and German brands, however it was not found significant differences in direct/indirect speech among US, German and French brands, although US brands have a slightly higher tendency to direct speech than the counterparts.

According the results, French taglines use more additional values giving more importance to its cultural values than those from the USA and Germany, alluding particularly to emotional expressions that the company or the product makes feel or future results that can be achieved. However, the absence of additional value in US taglines is very high.

The results coincide with the features more valued in each culture. While French culture is classified as a high context culture, giving greater importance to their traditions and values, German and US cultures are classified as low-context cultures, with greater emphasis on textual features and fast and direct messages.

However, the use of direct speech in taglines is extremely high in the three countries, particularly in the USA, emphasizing the use of provocative style in them.

Hence, an adapted design of brand-taglines is recommended for the French market as an effective brand management strategy, that reflects local cultural values of this country, alluding to their traditions and customs, and also the use of direct speech with provocative expressions; unlike US market, that is recommended also adapt its corporate communication strategy in terms of taglines emphasizing the direct speech and giving it more importance than its cultural values. USA taglines not only use provocative expressions but also use imperative expressions and superlative in order to transmit precise and fast messages.

In the case of German market, results are similar to the USA and France, although this country is classified as a low context culture such as the USA. The results of the analysis for taglines are quite different respect to both US and French features. German taglines incorporate the cultural values to a lesser extent than France and the use of direct speech is very high alluding to provocative expressions but also superlative expressions.

Thus, a corporate communication strategy addressed to German market could take into account their cultural values, but mainly, it should be elaborated direct messages with precise information. To develop an appropriate brand management is recommended to follow this practice in selecting and directing corporate visual identity in terms of taglines design.

## *9.2. Logo shape, creative motifs and used colors in brand-logos.*

The similarities are greater in the design of brand-logos. USA brand-logos present slightly a greater use of words marks and letter form in terms of shape than French logos that present a balance between both aspects.

These results, as occurs with the taglines, coincide with the cultural orientations of each country. As I mentioned previously, countries with a low context cultures give more importance to textual features. Therefore, in US and German logos, the presence of words marks and letter form in logos is more usual than symbolic or pictorial design. However, although high context cultures such as France should present more symbolic and pictorial design in logos giving importance to typography, the findings show a balance between French companies which use words marks and letter forms in their brand-logos and French companies which use symbolic and pictorial designs.

In this sense, the study of this variable does not show significant differences that force to adapt the corporate communication strategy in each country.

The same occurs in the creative motif findings. In the three countries there is a balance between using or not creative motif in brand-logos. In the case of using it, circles, squares and amorphous expression highlight among the rest in the three countries. There are some small differences among countries but they are not significant to adapt the corporate communication strategy in each country in terms of creative motifs in brand-logos.

Regarding the color variable, this can be an important and controllable marketing variable for managing standardized strategy. Certain colors manifest multicultural meaning association. In this sense, strategic use of colors has a consistent meaning cross-culturally. This will help to develop the logo standardization in the different markets. However, in cultures with different meanings in colors, the choice of an inappropriate color to brand-logo can lead to send conflicting messages and it would need to make extra efforts to reinforce the corporate visual identity (Balmer and Gray, 2000). Contrarily to this assertion, the countries analyzed in this study present cultures with meanings association in certain colors. An example of this is the blue color that internationally represents calm, but also authority, success and safety.

The findings, as occurs with the creative motifs, are also very similar in the three countries with greater use of the blue color followed by red color, although French logos use more variety of colors than the counterparts.

Regarding the number of colors in logos, France uses a greater combination of colors, while the USA and Germany tend to use between one and two colors in their brand-logos, but these differences are not significant enough to adapt the corporate communication strategy in terms of colors in brand-logos. Therefore, I recommend firms to use a standardized strategy for logos when leading their activity to the USA, Germany and France.

Because logos are the most common brand element in corporate visual identity to be used in unaltered form, it is essential to managers to select logos that are effective to appeal to a multitude of cultures (de Mooij, 2005). This occurs with the countries analyzed in this study. Therefore, according to findings, a standardized corporate communication strategy in the creation of a visual identity in terms of brand-logos is recommended to enter in these markets.

In conclusion, managers who want to enter in these markets are recommended to follow the same practice to design brand-logos.

### *9.3. Corporate visual communication plan*

Based on the findings, we could state that a visual corporate communication plan would be critical to operate abroad. This plan would be essential to analyze the market to know which operational elements of the visual message can attract the target segments effectively, showing a clear, coherent and effective image that reflects its purpose, objectives and strategies. That is an image that allows differentiation and recognition in markets and leads to gain a competitive advantage.

Corporate communication is becoming increasingly strategic. Therefore, it gains importance the need of developing a Corporate Visual Communication Plan that responds to a visual translation of its corporate personality, in addition to fit it to the target visual preferences in order to achieve an optimal positioning in terms of communication with its environment (Alessandri, 2001).

A corporate visual communication plan is relatively easy to implement and its management is necessary to ensure consistency (Van den Bosch et al., 2004). The development of this

plan starts with a process of discovery that reveals the organization's current corporate identity, cultural values of the target markets, strategy and structure.

In this sense, companies must consider that the corporate visual identity allows to show their corporate identity to consumers through a total visual image (Camacho and Franch, 2004), implemented following a set of design rules, such as colors and shapes, that create a coherent and coordinated image improving the company's communication with the market.

Moreover, this plan should be well managed because it provides plenty of scope for differentiating the company from its competitors and it can be associated with reputation. In this sense, corporate visual communication has a great importance in creating and maintaining a solid, sustainable and unambiguous reputation (Van den Bosch, de Jong and Elving, 2005).

Some models of interest to companies that want to design a corporate visual communication plan are proposed by Baker and Balmer (1997), Stuart (1999), and van Riel (1995).

## **10. Limitations and further research**

The findings must be interpreted within the context of the limitations of study. Content analysis cannot show the direct inferences for the differences in corporate visual identities among the USA, Germany and France, nor does it suggest what type of designs is effective in the three countries.

Only the 34 most successful companies of each country have been analyzed because of more companies are not available in the rankings provided by Fortune 500. This limits the research and it may not be representative enough.

Moreover, this study only investigates the corporate visual identity of USA, German and French firms, so the findings may not be applicable to other markets or countries. Therefore, in future research, it is recommended to extend the corporate visual identity study to other countries or markets in order to achieve more generalized findings.

The study could be applied to other marketing communication elements, for example, the brand names are also important elements of the design to be analyzed in order to complement the study. However, as we have discussed, the analyzed elements are the more appealing for consumers.

Finally, corporate visual identity may be studied in the context of advertising in terms of investigating the application of taglines to other marketing communication messages and the tagline-advertising relationship.

## **11. Conclusions**

The principal objective of this study has been to analyze the main elements of the corporate visual identity, brand-logos and taglines, from the top companies in terms of revenues in 2011 of the USA, Germany and France; in order to investigate to what extent the corporate visual identity is similar or dissimilar in the three culturally different countries above-mentioned. In this study, I have also explored the potential applicability of standardization vs. adaptation strategy to corporate visual identity in each country.

The results of this study have shown that the differences in some corporate visual identity (brand-taglines and brand-logos) elements in the three countries lead to adapt these elements to each market, but there are also similarities that lead to standardize some concrete aspects.

The main differences that I have found are related to the design of taglines, thus the adaptation of this element in each market is essential. French taglines emphasize their cultural values when designing taglines, while USA taglines give more importance to the use of direct speech in them. On the other hand, the results regarding brand-logos design do not show significant differences in terms of color, creative motif and shape. Therefore, I propose a standardized strategy to this corporate visual element.

The findings highlight the importance of designing an appropriate corporate visual communication plan to each market for companies in expansion.



Summarizing, the effective development of communication tools and strategies to internationalize, specifically, the corporate visual elements analyzed in this study, brand-taglines and brand-logos, is key to enhance the communicational impact on consumers in positioning the brand in foreign markets, as shown in this study.

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## **Annexes**

### **- Annex I**

<b>USA Rank</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Revenues (\$ millions)</b>
<b>1</b>	Wal-Mart Stores	421,849.0
<b>2</b>	Exxon Mobil	354,674.0
<b>3</b>	Chevron	196,337.0
<b>4</b>	ConocoPhillips	184,966.0
<b>5</b>	Fannie Mae	153,825.0
<b>6</b>	General Electric	151,628.0
<b>7</b>	Berkshire Hathaway	136,185.0
<b>8</b>	General Motors	135,592.0
<b>9</b>	Bank of America Corp.	134,194.0
<b>10</b>	Ford Motor	128,954.0
<b>11</b>	Hewlett-Packard	126,033.0
<b>12</b>	AT&T	124,629.0
<b>13</b>	J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.	115,475.0
<b>14</b>	Citigroup	111,055.0
<b>15</b>	McKesson	108,702.0
<b>16</b>	Verizon Communications	106,565.0
<b>17</b>	American International Group	104,417.0
<b>18</b>	International Business Machines	99,870.0
<b>19</b>	Cardinal Health	98,601.9

20	Freddie Mac	98,368.0
21	CVS Caremark	96,413.0
22	UnitedHealth Group	94,155.0
23	Wells Fargo	93,249.0
24	Valero Energy	86,034.0
25	Kroger	82,189.4
26	Procter & Gamble	79,689.0
27	AmerisourceBergen	77,954.0
28	Costco Wholesale	77,946.0
29	Marathon Oil	68,413.0
30	Home Depot	67,997.0
31	Pfizer	67,809.0
32	Walgreen	67,420.0
33	Target	67,390.0
34	Medco Health Solutions	65,968.3

*Source: Fortune 500*

German Rank	Company	Revenues (\$ millions)
1	Volkswagen	168,041
2	Daimler	129,481
3	Allianz	127,379
4	E.ON	125,064
5	Siemens	102,657
6	Metro	89,081
7	BASF	84,597
8	Deutsche Telekom	82,674
9	BMW	80,099
10	Munich Re Group	76,220
11	Deutsche Post	71,121
12	RWE	67,179
13	Robert Bosch	62,593

14	ThyssenKrupp	57,586
15	Deutsche Bank	55,314
16	Bayer	46,473
17	Deutsche Bahn	45,575
18	Franz Haniel	36,333
19	Lufthansa Group	36,190
20	Continental	34,498
21	DZ Bank	33,611
22	Commerzbank	32,420
23	Edeka Zentrale	29,392
24	Heraeus Holding	29,172
25	Phoenix Pharmahandel	28,641
26	Hochtief	27,334
27	Energie Baden-Württemberg	23,190
28	TUI	22,091
29	Bertelsmann	21,791
30	Evonik Industries	21,545
31	Fresenius	21,154
32	Landesbank Baden-Württemberg	21,035
33	Henkel	19,989
34	KFW Bankengruppe	19,585

*Source: Fortune 500*

France Rank	Company	Revenues (\$ millions)
1	Total	186,055
2	AXA	162,236
3	BNP Paribas	128,726
4	Carrefour	120,297
5	GDF Suez	111,888
6	Crédit Agricole	105,003
7	Électricité de France	86,309

8	Société Générale	84,350
9	Peugeot	74,251
10	Groupe BPCE	69,297
11	France Télécom	61,965
12	CNP Assurances	59,320
13	Groupe Auchan	56,279
14	Saint-Gobain	53,136
15	Renault	51,616
16	Veolia Environnement	47,170
17	Sanofi-Aventis	45,056
18	Vinci	44,205
19	Bouygues	41,547
20	SNCF	40,575
21	Foncière Euris	39,449
22	Vivendi	38,248
23	La Poste	31,378
24	Air France-KLM Group	31,200
25	Christian Dior	27,977
26	Alstom	27,635
27	Schneider Electric	25,933
28	L'Oréal	25,821
29	Michelin	23,696
30	Groupama	23,144
31	PPR	23,101
32	Danone	22,529
33	Lafarge	21,415
34	Alcatel-Lucent	21,186

*Source: Fortune 500*



- Annex II

USA COMPANIES	BRAND-LOGOS	TAGLINES
1. Wal-Mart Stores		<i>Save money. Live better</i>
2. Exxon Mobil		<i>Taking on the world's toughest energy challenges</i>
3. Chevron		<i>Finding newer, cleaner ways to power the world</i>
4. ConocoPhillips		<i>Energy for tomorrow</i>
5. Fannie Mae		<i>Our Business Is the American Dream</i>
6. General Electric		<i>Imagination at work</i>
7. Berkshire Hathaway		<i>We treat you right</i>
8. General Motor		<i>People in motion</i>

9. Bank of America Corp.



*Bank of opportunity*

10. Ford Motor



*Feel the difference*

11. Hewlett-Packard



*Everybody on*

12. AT&T



*Rethink possible*

13. J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.



*The right relationship is everything*

14. Citigroup



*City never sleeps*

15. McKesson



*Empowering healthcare*

16. Verizon Communications



*Join in*

17. American International Group



18. International Business Machines		<i>I think, therefore IBM</i>
19. Cardinal Health		
20. Freddie Mac		<i>We make home possible</i>
21. CVS Caremark		<i>For All The Ways You Care</i>
22. UnitedHealth Group		<i>Helping people live healthier lives</i>
23. Wells Fargo		<i>Together we will go far</i>
24. Valero Energy		<i>The energy to take you anywhere</i>
25. Kroger		<i>Right store. Right price</i>
26. Procter & Gamble		<i>Touching lives, improving life.</i>

27. AmerisourceBergen		<i>The best medicine for healthcare</i>
28. Costco Wholesale		<i>Simplifying family and life</i>
29. Marathon Oil		<i>Fueling The American Spirit</i>
30. Home Depot		<i>More saving. More doing</i>
31. Pfizer		<i>Working for a healthier world</i>
32. Walgreen		<i>The Pharmacy America Trusts</i>
33. Target		<i>Expect more. Pay less</i>
34. Medco Health Solutions		<i>Making medicine smarter</i>

**Source:** own elaboration

GERMAN COMPANIES	BRAND-LOGOS	TAGLINES
1. Volkswagen		<i>Das Auto</i>
2. Daimler		
3. Allianz		<i>Versicherung. Vorsorge. Vermögensaufbau.</i>
4. E.ON		<i>Wir gestalten die Zukunft der Energie.</i>
5. Siemens		<i>Global Network of Innovation</i>
6. Metro		
7. BASF		<i>The Chemical Company</i>
8. Deutsche Telekom		<i>Life is for sharing</i>

9. BMW



*Aus Freude am fahren*

10. Munich Re Group



*Leading experts on risk  
solutions worldwide*

11. Deutsche Post



*Menschen erreichen*

12. RWE



*The energy to lead*

13. Robert Bosch



*Invented for life*

14. ThyssenKrupp



*Wir entwickeln die Zukunft für  
Sie.*

15. Deutsche Bank



*Leistung aus Leidenschaft*

16. Bayer



*Science for a better life*

17. Deutsche Bahn



*Mobility Networks Logistics*

---

18. Franz Haniel

**HANIEL**

---

19. Lufthansa Group



*Nonstop you*

---

20. Continental



*Making tomorrow's mobility possible today.*

---

21. DZ Bank



*Zusammen geht mehr*

---

22. Commerzbank



*Gemeinsam mehr erreichen*

---

23. Edeka Zentrale



*Wir lieben Lebensmittel*

---

24. Heraeus Holding

**Heraeus**

*Transforming Lives*

---

25. Phoenix Pharmahandel



---

26. Hochtief



*Bright minds for the construction sector*

---

27. Energie Baden-  
Württemberg



*Energie braucht impulse*

28. TUI



*Zeit für neue ziele*

29. Bertelsmann



*Creativity meets  
entrepreneurship*

30. Evonik Industries



*Kraft für Neues*

31. Fresenius



32. Landesbank Baden-  
Württemberg



*Rendite mit gutem Gewissen*

33. Henkel



*A brand like a friend*








34. KfW Bankengruppe



*Wir fordern deutschland*

**Source:** own elaboration



FRENCH COMPANIES	BRAND-LOGOS	TAGLINES
1. Total		<i>Notre énergie est votre énergie</i>
2. AXA		<i>Réinventons / notre métier</i>
3. BNP Paribas		<i>La banque d'un monde qui change</i>
4. Carrefour		<i>Le positif est de retour</i>
5. GDF Suez		<i>Redécouvrons l'énergie</i>
6. Credit Agricole		<i>Le bon sens a de l'avenir</i>
7. Electricite de France		<i>Changer l'énergie ensemble</i>
8. Societe Generale		<i>Développons ensemble l'esprit d'équipe</i>

9. Peugeot



*Motion & emotion*

10. Groupe BPCE



*Des banques plus humaines et plus proches. Ça fait toute la différence*

11. France Telecom



12. CNP Assurances



*L'assurance de toute une vie.*

13. Groupe Auchan



*Demain, c'est déjà chez Auchan*

14. Saint-Gobain



*Saint-Gobain construit votre futur*

15. Renault



*Drive the change*

16. Veolia Environment



*Inventer pour l'environnement*

17. Sanofi-Aventis



*L'essentiel c'est la santé*

18. Vinci



*Les vraies réussites sont celles  
que l'on partage*

19. Bouygues



*Bouygues Telecom, en faire plus  
pour vous*

20. SNCF



*Donner au train des idées  
d'avance*

21. Fonciere Euris



22. Vivendi



*Le monde prend de la valeur*

23. La Poste



*La confiance donne de l'avance*

24. Air France-KLM Groupe



*Faire du ciel le plus bel endroit  
de la terre*

25. Christian Dior



26. Alstom



*Nous façonnons l'avenir*

27. Achneider Electric



*Le spécialiste mondial de la  
gestion de l'énergie*

28. L'Oreal

L'ORÉAL

*Parce que vous le valez bien*

29. Michelin



*Une meilleure façon d'avancer*

30. Groupama



*Toujours là pour moi*

31. PPR



*Entreprendre, notre grande  
aventure*

32. Danone



*Danone, c'est bon et c'est sain*

33. Lafarge



*Les matériaux au coeur de la vie*

34. Alcatel-Lucent



Alcatel·Lucent

*At the speed of ideas*

**Source:** own elaboration