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Online Marketing on Japanese Market

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis entitled Online Marketing in Japanese Market. I dully marked out all quotations. The used literature and sources are stated in the attached list of references.

In Prague on ……………..   **Signature**

                                                                        Student's name

<u>Acknowledgement</u>

I hereby wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to the supervisor of my thesis,

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Introduction

According to the Oxford dictionary, the word "globalization" started to be used commonly in the mid-1980s. In the private organizations, global expansion of business became inevitable to achieve their ever-higher ROI. In the 1980, Japanese private companies collectively conceptualize the global expansion with "Glocal" strategy meaning "Think globally, act locally". According to Steven Bleistein (2018), Japanese market is peculiar and needs exclusive localization. Marijeke de Mooji (2000) has conducted an analysis consumption behavior difference according to the different cultural background.

Research objective of this thesis is to find the localization activities in the private organizations and how impactful its strategy is. Moreover, attempts to find the optimum percentage of globalization and localization balance within a company. To achieve these objectives, this thesis conducted two qualitative research and one case study of IT company based in the Czech Republic that uses both globalization and localization strategy.

In the first chapter, prior literature will be discussed as well as the theoretical background of this master thesis. Mainly, Edward Hall and Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions are considered to be one of the influential factors for the consumption behavior in the current century. Marieke de Mooij has conducted step-wise regression analysis between the consumption behavior and cultural differences based on the Edward Hall's low and high context cultures.

In the second chapter, there comprised of one qualitative web analysis and one test sampling regarding electronic word of mouth. In terms of the qualitative web analysis, American and Japanese companies websites are chosen for the analysis. Based on the Edward Hall's low and high context culture classification, few points are hypothesized. These hypothesis were investigated by the author of this master thesis using web analytical tool. Another part of the second chapter is the test sampling regarding the electronic word of mouth. Geert Hofstede claims that cultural differences affect in wide spectrum on consumer behavior. Thus, author selected Czech national and Japanese national to find whether their electronic word of mouth behavior is different. Interviews were conducted by the author with two participants each from two nationalities. It aims to develop future qualitative research.

Third chapter discusses the case study of Avast software uses the localization strategy for Japanese market entry. Author of this master thesis has been employed at this company as market representative. Thus, author uses the opportunity to extract internal information for the case

study purpose. Localization operations such as IPM contents optimization, price strategy and graphical testing will be discussed.

Result of this thesis turns out to be in line with hypothesis that private organizations use both globalization and localization strategy for global expansion of their business. Moreover, as Edward Hall and Geert Hofstede mentioned, local elements in business operations differ. Thus, any private organizations, that aims to expand their business global, should implement localization strategy. However, in this research, no optimum level of localization was found. Rather, it is dependent on the market an organization attempts to penetrate.

This thesis, in qualitative manner, is useful for future quantitative research regarding the cultural difference and its impact on the business operations.

1.1 Theoretical background

In the 21st century, civilization of human being has been progressing incomparable pace. Consequently, we are surrounded by various innovative goods, services and technologies. Especially, one of the most necessities nowadays is the internet that connect anyone in the world regardless the distance instantly for various purposes from online shopping to telesurgery.

The internet, seemingly simple, was not invented by single genius but many hard workers and its history can bring us back to J.C.R Liklider's "Intergalactic network" or even Nikola Tesla in the early 1990s "world wireless system" (Nikola, 2011). According to the statistical data ("World Internet Users Statistics and 2018 World Population Stats," n.d.), the world average internet penetration rate is 55% in range between 35% in Africa and 95% in North America. Same statistical database shows that those low internet penetration regions such as Africa (35%), Asia (50%) have been an exponential growth trends accounting 9,941% increase in Africa and 1,670% increase in Asia within last two decades period. What even more surprising is that the average number of devices per consumer has. According to smart insights (Chaffey, 2016), in 2016 each consumer has got nearly 4 devices such as desktop PC, smartphone, tablet and additional device. Same study says that "We know that mobile devices have become far more important in recent years with many businesses seeing more than 50% of consumers website sessions on mobile devices". In other words, "mobile first" philosophy grabs business owner's attentions since its strategy brings enormous benefits in financial and various technical optimization aspects.

Magazine-format newspaper publisher The Economist ("A brand new game," 2015) reported that in 2015 BMW released an in-app advertisement on popular Chinese messaging app WeChat with around 550 million monthly users. BMW advertised its luxurious cars on specific WeChat users who has higher purchasing power. This advertisement campaign let some segments of consumers dissatisfaction with BMW. Those who did not get BMW advertisement complained since they are classified as lower purchasing power and simply did not get the same advertisement as others. "The carmaker's experience shows the complexities of advertising today, when it is so easy for dissatisfied customers to make their voices heard.

But it was also an example of how marketing chiefs are struggling to find the right way to reach consumers on new digital platforms, where they are spending ever more of their time." ("A brand new game," 2015). Likewise, many other companies struggle to build marketing strategies with such digitalization trends.

Boston Consulting group published a result of survey (Rose et al., 2016) comprised misuse of data, customer dissatisfaction and revenue loss from misuse of customer data. This study defined the definition of data misuse as "can cause customer to reduce their spending with a company by about one-third". All customers to acquire goods or services online must agree with the terms and conditions that are legally binding texts, which allows the company to store the customer data under the fair information practice principles. Aforementioned BCG survey was conducted for 8,000 consumers in the US and five European countries, which resulted 86% of all consumers said they are skeptical to share their personal data online and about 75% of all consumers were not convinced that all their data they have shared online are stored properly or used for the original purpose only. When customers believe that they are affected by the misuse of their personal data, they cut their spending by 56% on average (Rose et al., 2016). For instance, peer to peer ridesharing transportation company, Uber Technologies' "god view" software brought huge discussion in public how the personal data are misused in 2014 (Morgan, 2017; Romm, 2017). Many companies clearly go digitalizing their business activities regardless the industries and size but because of its capabilities, spread of technology and increasing profitability as already mentioned above.

So far, the digitalization of business activities and its pros and cons are explained. However, the difference between traditional marketing and digital or online marketing is not clear cut. Thus, the difference between two marketing categories will be defined hereafter. Definition of traditional and online marketing diverge from one researcher to others. In this research paper, Ken Franzen's definition (Franzen, n.d.) will be use as reference. Each definition as follows:

Traditional marketing

"Traditional marketing refers to those vehicles we are all familiar with and have been around for decades: television, radio, direct mail, billboards and yellow pages to name a few. With

exception of the yellow pages (which is directional advertising), is a form of creative advertising with the function of broadcasting a message to a target audience in hopes of attracting attention."

Online marketing

"Online marketing refers to the targeted, measurable and interactive marketing of a business' products and services through one or more forms of electronic media such as search engines optimization, search engine marketing, email marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, ebooks, blogs, games... this list grows by the minute."

Angela Hausman (Hausman, 2017) published web article on the topic of difference between traditional marketing and digital marketing. On her article, she specifies the difference between two marketing by social media and traditional media. Table 1 shows some of the elements specified in the article (Hausman, 2017):

Social media	Traditional media
Two-way conversation	One-way conversation
One-on-one marketing	Mass marketing
About you	About me
Brand and User-generated content	Professional content
Metric: Engagement	Metric: Reach/frequency
Community decision making	Economic decision making
Real time creation	Pre-produced/scheduled
Deep analysis	Poor analysis

*Table 1

Retrieved from: https://www.hausmanmarketingletter.com/differences-digital-marketing-traditional-media/

Some of those above-mentioned elements should be clarified furthermore because they simply deserve to be explained more.

One-on-one marketing is one of very important characteristics of digital marketing. Equivalent of one-on-one marketing in traditional marketing is the mass marketing. Although traditional marketing differentiated between mass marketing and targeted marketing by the

marketing channels such as TV, radio, Magazine for mass marketing and specific ad, sales promotion for the targeted marketing, one-on-one marketing go further in customer segmentation. For instance, So-net media networks (Sonet media networks, 2018) uses its own artificial intelligence and deep learning so as to find the best marketing contents where many companies still find the best marketing contents manually by mining data. This new technology-oriented innovation is not yet found in all industries. However, it is very fast-moving trend.

Another element which should be explained in this master thesis further is the community decision making. Having said that, it does not mean that customers did not have community decision making. It existed by the form of word of mouth (Groves, 2015) and its trend becomes significant so-called Electronic Word Of Mouth (Kremers, 2012). According to Kremers (Kremers, 2012), electronic word of mouth is not so different to traditional one. Two additional conditions make the word of mouth electronic: communication spread through internet and reach multitude of people instantly.

So far, importance of online marketing and difference between digital and traditional marketing focusing on mostly digital marketing. However, this master thesis is not a proponent of digital marketing only rather combination of both traditional and digital marketing so as to have biggest impact and synergy effect. Digital marketing will be more deeply analyzed in "New trends in online marketing" on next chapter.

1.2 New Trends in Online Marketing

Every year new model of PC, mobile phone, fashion appears, so does online marketing strategy. In this subchapter, major 3 new trends in online marketing will be discussed. Although they are not totally brand-new online marketing strategy, they are worth mentioned in this master thesis since those trends have got updates.

Big Data

Big data is the term that is repeatedly broadcasted in the mainstream media for public

education since beginning of 2000s. According to MIT technology review (MIT technology review, 2013), Big Data is defined as follows:

"Big data is a term describing the storage and analysis of large and or complex data sets using a series of techniques including, but not limited to: NoSQL, MapReduce and machine learning."

Marketing is the most widely applied area of business activities with big data starting from targeted marketing, online advertisement, recommendations for cross and up sell to customer relationship management. Big data is known to be managed by the data scientists who then write the data-mining algorithm. However, according to Chen (Chen et al., 2012), big data is not all about data-mining algorithm but also how to observe the potential business problems. Thus, he advocates that data scientists and all other business units should have basic data-analytic thinking such as statistical analysis, regression analysis, causal analysis and so on. Many other business practitioner and academic researcher (Provost and Fawcett, 2013; Shah et al., 2012) have same stance towards the very sophisticated and disruptive technology. Quoting Harvard Business Review (Shah et al., 2012), "**For all the breathless promises about the return on investment in Big Data, however, companies face a challenge. Investments in analytics can be useless, even harmful, unless employees can incorporate that data into complex decision making.**".

Amazon is one of the leading online shopping company that successfully implement the AI, big data, and deep learning. For instance, Amazon uses comprehensive collaborative filtering engine to identify personal purchasing habits. This personalized recommendation system is known widely in public and many online shopping company recently use the same approach. Little known fact is its ROI. According to Investopedia (Wills, 2016), **"this method increases the company's revenue by up to 30% annually.".**

Not only recommendation system, but also Amazon is known for its smart dynamic pricing model developed by its former Amazon employee. Business insider reports (D'Onfro, 2015) that Amazon's competitive price matching is not accurate. Although Amazon claims that their price is the lowest, they do not mean on all products. Dynamic pricing strategy is that setting the lowest and competitive price on most popular products, but higher and less competitive

price on less popular products since Amazon knew the less popular products would not be affect price perception from its predictive analytics.

Electronic word-of-mouth

Electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) is defined as follows:

"any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet."   (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004)

 Traditional word of mouth has been serving consumers as one of the unbiased product and company information, which influenced the consumer's purchasing decision making (Richins and Root-Shaffer, 1988). Due to the invention of the internet and increased number of information sharing platforms (e.g. Amazon Customer Review, Trip Advisor, Yelp et cetera), electronic word of mouth has become a powerful mean to reach many people and turn them into not only customer but also loyal customer (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

 A global measurement and data analytic company Nielsen conducted the Nielsen Global Survey of Trust in Advertising (Nielsen, 2013a) that collected more than 29,000 consumer's response in 58 countries throughout Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Africa and North America in order to investigate the consumer trust in advertising in 2013 (Nielsen, 2013b). Result of this survey shows a ranking of most trusted form of advertising, which top 3 out of 19 forms of advertising (e.g. ads on TV, Online video ads, Ads on social networks et cetera) are recommendations from people (84%), Branded websites (69%) and Consumer opinion posted online (68%). Since this survey based on only online forms of ads, two out of top 3 forms of advertising is electronic word of mouth that means marketers should pay attention to this part of marketing activities.

 Not only trust can be formulated via electronic word of mouth, but also higher revenue is expected. HubSpot (Ewing, 2017) summarizes that there is correlation between trust of consumers on product/company and sales. If the product or company is referred, 71% of consumers would purchase. However, only 7% of consumers would purchase if product/company is not referred.

Mobile First philosophy

Digital marketing agency Acmium (Acumium, n.d.) defined mobile first philosophy as **"**it means first and foremost, the consideration of mobile user behavior and an analysis of the mobile user experience when developing digital marketing channel strategies to increase traffic and conversion." from digital marketing stand point.

In the beginning of the second chapter of this master thesis, increased mobile devices usage are described. Moreover, according to Ericsson ("Future mobile data usage and traffic growth – Ericsson," 2016), data usage and traffic generated by mobile devices will be 10 times higher within the period of 2016 and 2022. In other words, Company ought to respond this consumer trend for adjusting their business platforms.

Mobile first philosophy is not only theoretical concept but acknowledged as the practical and beneficial strategy. Content strategist at UXPin Ben Gremillion (Gremillion, 2015) stated that mobile first is not only good design on the mobile, but mobile first equates with content first concept. Rationale behind is simply because mobile has got the most limitations from screen size and bandwidth to name a few. One of the way succeeding the mobile first philosophy is the responsive design. From the technical standpoint, current versions of HTML 5 and CSS 3 made possible to create the responsive design smoothly (Coleman, 2014).

1.3 Literature Review

So far, we have discussed definition of online and traditional marketing and its differences. Likewise, many notable researcher and practitioner, online marketing should not be standalone marketing strategy but combination of both traditional marketing activities and online marketing activities. Moreover, to name few, we have identified new trends in online marketing such as big data, electronic word of mouth and mobile first philosophy (or strategy). All of new trends are not so new. However, they are in the process of developing and yet not many company and marketers find the way to deal with those new technology or method. Thus, we highlighted in this master thesis.

Focus of this master thesis is to answer the question, if a company and marketer should take consideration of cultural and traditional value in the marketing activities. This topic has been discussed namely as "globalization versus localization" or "convergence or divergence of consumer behavior" for decades and decades. However, due to its difficulty to quantify the effect of cultural and traditional value in the context of consumer behavior, marketing researcher and practitioner have been struggling to answer the question. In the next chapter, we attempt to investigate the importance of cultural and traditional value from the marketer perspective. Before doing so, we would like to define the model that are referred.

Convergence/Divergence of consumer behavior

Shortly after the World War II, due to the help of economic system reconstruction by several international organizations (e.g. World Bank, the UN, IMF, WTO et cetera), many countries recovered from the economic stagnation to this date. According to Mooij (Mooij, 2000), the discussion about convergence of consumer behavior and demand started appearing in the 1960s. For instance, two American marketing researchers (Erik, 1965; Levitt, 1983) have propagated the idea of globalization leads to the homogenized people's patterns (needs and desires). On the other hand, proponents of cultural and traditional value influence the consumers have advocated that there is danger to standardize the marketing activities because the consumer behavior and demand will diverge in time (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2002; Mooij, 2000). Geert Hofstede's work (Hofstede et al., 2010) is another well-known and good study supporting the cultural differences and its influences on the consumer behavior.

This discussion has not shown significant progress yet even though many known researchers attempt to prove their points. Most common reason why it has not been progressed is that **"culture is seen as a convenient catchall for the many differences in market structure and behavior that cannot readily be explained in terms of more tangible factors"** (Mooij, 2000)**.** Moreover, both sides lack in the empirical evidence.

Marieke de Mooij (Mooij, 2000) in her research paper "the future is predictable for future marketers" investigated the effect of cultural and traditional value on consumption patterns

over time. She found that over the time, income converges, and consumption behavior diverge across different culture segmented by well-known Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

She demonstrated **"diminishing effect of income persistence of cultural values by correlation and step-wise regression analysis using income (GNP/capita) and Hofstede's cultural variables as independent variables against data on products consumption and ownership as dependent variables."** (Mooij, 2000). She specifically has chosen mineral water consumption as fast-moving consumer goods, and cars and internet usage as durable goods for the period between 1970 and 1996. Table 2 shows the result of regression analysis.

	Product moment correlations					Step-wise regression predictors
	GNP/cap	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	
1970	0.31	0.32	−0.21	0.24	0.46*	None
1991	0.21	0.32	−0.05	0.53*	0.57*	UAI ($R^2 = 0.32$); GNP/cap ($R^2 = 0.57$); MAS ($R^2 = 0.75$)
1996	0.04	0.56*	−0.10	0.57*	0.73***	UAI ($R^2 = 0.53$); MAS ($R^2 = 0.69$); GNP/cap ($R^2 = 0.79$)

Notes: $* \ p < 0.05$; $*** \ p = 0.005$

Sources: Hofstede (1991);
Reader's Digest (1970): drink taken in the past year: mineral spring water
Reader's Digest (1991): drinking mineral water almost every day
Euromonitor (1997): litres/cap. sales total mineral water in 1996

Table 2, *Retrieved from: The Future Is Predictable for International Marketers

The most significant result from the regression analysis on mineral water is the uncertainty avoidance. Strong uncertainty avoidance countries such as Germany, France, Italy, Belgium have increased its mineral water consumption over time, whereas weak uncertainty avoidance countries such as the UK and Scandinavia show lower consumption growth. This positive correlation increases over time in the observation. Similarly, Power distance dimension and Masculinity dimension showed the positive correlation. As the author (Mooij, 2000) predicted, there was no correlation between the mineral water consumption and income level that over the time decreasing.

| | Product moment correlations | | | | | |
	GNP/cap	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	Step-wise regression predictors
1969	0.93***	−0.24	0.74***	−0.09	−0.50*	GNP/cap ($R^2 = 0.86$); IDV ($R^2 = 0.93$)
1978	0.73***	−0.10	0.62**	0.11	−0.19	GNP/cap ($R^2 = 0.53$)
1989	0.77***	−0.16	0.62**	0.12	−0.21	GNP/cap ($R^2 = 0.59$)
1994	0.42	0.19	0.13	0.36	0.37	None

Notes: * $p = 0.05$; ** $p = 0.01$; *** $p = 0.005$

Sources: OECD Economic Surveys[3]; Hofstede (1991)

Table 3, *Retrieved from: The Future Is Predictable for International Marketers

| | Product moment correlations | | | | | |
	GNP/cap	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	Step-wise regression predictors
1970	0.58*	−0.31	0.52*	0.43	−0.40	GNP/cap ($R^2 = 0.34$); MAS ($R^2 = 0.76$)
1997	−0.28	0.53*	0.27	0.62**	0.40	MAS ($R^2 = 0.38$); PDI ($R^2 = 0.67$); IDV ($R^2 = 0.81$)

Notes: * $p = 0.05$; ** $p = 0.01$

Table 4, *Retrieved from: The Future Is Predictable for International Marketers

Table 3 and 4 show the result of regression analysis on cars ownership per 1,000 inhabitants and percent households with two cars both in Europe. Table 3 shows that in fact there was very strong positive correlation between car ownership and income. However, this trend got weaken over time. Likewise income, individual metric also showed the positive correlation and declined over time. She pointed out uncertainty avoidance culture countries were early adaptors of cars. Thus, correlation between uncertainty avoidance and car ownership increase in the period negative (1969) to positive (1994). Table 4 shows the percentage households owns two cars. This regression analysis brings more precise consumer behavior (preference) result since owning more cars means that it is valuable for that culture. Income has not impact on the more than one car ownership again over time. However, more masculine culture countries such as Italy, the UK and Germany tend to have more than two cars per households compared to feminine culture countries such as the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. Mooji demonstrated the cultural value importance in the international marketing arena using the regression analysis. The results show that income equality convergence did not converge the consumer behavior and preference. Moreover, cultural value has more strong

influence on the consumption of both non-durable and durable goods choices. In other words, "localization" is promising direction of any business activities. From the companies perspective, there needs to be balance between standardization (globalization) and specification (localization) for their successful business activities.

Websites specifications

In the chapter 2.2 of this master thesis, we have mentioned that branded website is top 3 trusted advertising mean according to the survey (Nielsen, 2013). Therefore, a company and marketer should take care of the website from various perspectives. And one of the perspectives is cultural aspect. Geert Hofstede is one of the eminent professors on the cross-cultural communication contributing to identify the definition of cultural values. Marieke de Mooij cooperated with Hofstede to demonstrate the cultural and traditional values indeed influence the consumption behavior.

Equally important researcher is Edward Hall's theoretical framework of cultural dimensions (Hall, 1976) mostly known as high context and low context cultures. He defines the low context culture as the communication system that people translate a large part of the meaning into explicit code. In other words, people tend to get to the point without beating around the bush. Such cultures can be associated typically with the United States and Germany. On the other hand, high context culture is defined as the communication system that a large part of meanings is implied using facial expressions, different tone of voice and gestures. People do not prefer explicitly saying what they want. Such cultures can be associated typically with China and Japan.

Elizabeth Wurtz (Wurtz, 2005) attempted to investigate the following four hypothesis based on the Hall (Hall, 1976) and Hofstede (Hofstede et al., 2010) cultural dimensions regarding the websites design.

Hypothesis 1**:" HC cultures will, to a higher degree than LC culture websites, implement strategies for assimilating human presence on their websites."**

Hypothesis 2**: "High-Context cultures are likely to use more imagery and less text than their Low Context counterparts."**

Hypothesis 3**: "The imagery chosen on HC culture websites will reflect values characteristic of HC cultures, such as family values, whereas LC culture values will be present on LC culture websites."**

Hypothesis 4**: "The pages making up Low-Context websites are expected to be consistent in their layout and color schemes, whereas pages in High-Context websites are expected to be diverse."**

These four hypotheses were studied in qualitative analysis of websites from countries categorized as belonging to either high context or low context cultures (Wurtz, 2005). The author of this qualitative research has done the testing herself on the global fast-food restaurant McDonald's assuming that "**a successful and globe-spanning company such as McDonald's has done extensive focus group testing of their websites and consequently customized each website to appeal to its user group in each target culture, to ensure that product communication is as efficient as possible.**" (Wurtz, 2005)**.**

The result of the study supported all four hypotheses. The author (Wurtz, 2005) identified five parameters significantly differed in between high context cultures and low context cultures as follows:

- Animation

- Promotion of values

- Individuals separate or together with product

- Level of transparency

- Linear vs parallel navigation bar

However, he mentions the limitation of this study since it was conducted by the author herself, there might have been biased interpretation since she originated from the country of low context culture. Moreover, in her study, she neglected the linguistic comparative investigation since she is not simply the natives of those Asian (high context culture) countries.

In this master thesis, same methodology of qualitative analysis on websites will be applied. Japan will represent the high context culture country, and the USA represents the low context culture country in this master thesis. Furthermore, since the author of this master thesis is Japanese native, linguistic comparative investigation will be added to the five parameters mentioned above. In this way, this master thesis will bring further value to this field of study.

This master thesis attempts to also investigate whether the types of websites and country of origins of the websites will be influencing factors on the web specifications. In order to test the types of website factor, not only Macdonald's website will be investigated but also the electronics company Sony and General Electronics. Both mega electronics companies are different nature to McDonald where it is rather non-durable goods, which this thesis extend the prior research (Wurtz, 2005) (Hall, 1976). Furthermore, these electronics companies are treated as representatives of each high context culture (Japan) and low context culture (the United States). Thus, through the successful investigation, this thesis should bring value added findings to this field of study from the perspective of cross cultural differences in online marketing. Added hypothesis to this investigation will be shown in the next chapter.

E-word of mouth

Electronic Word-Of-Mouth (EWOM) has been obtaining marketing researcher and practitioner's attentions mainly because of increasing interpersonal communication, networking apps, increasing influence of such community and so on. The Word of mouth marketing association membership companies has been growing significantly last decade from about 300 to more than 700 in the period between 2007 and 2018 respectively ("Membership | ANA," 2018).

Traditional communication theory considers WOM as having a powerful influence on behavior, especially on consumer's information search, evaluation, and subsequent decision making (Brown et al., 2007). One of the key questions on word of mouth is that how message receivers find offline and online information relevant and useful for them.

For offline word of mouth, strength of network (tie strength) has been featured as the influential factor of word of mouth on sales. In other words, word of mouth will be more

influential when social tie is stronger such communication as in between family, friends' same demographics et cetera (Money et al., 1998). Bruce Money, Mary Gilly and John Graham stated that "tie strength is a multidimensional construct that represents the strength of the dyadic interpersonal relationships in the context of social networks" (Money et al., 1998). The tie strength depends on the frequency of contact between sender and respondent of WOM, intimacy between two, and number and type of resources they exchange et cetera (Brown et al., 2007).

 Another key word that has been discussed regarding the word of mouth by researcher is homophily. It is the group composition regarding the similarity of member characteristics sorting out the member by attributions such as age, gender, education and so on (Rogers, 2010). Individuals tend to trust and receive more in/from information shared by similar interests, demographics and thinking. Thus, higher the homophily means that increasing influence of WOM.

 Several researchers (Brown et al., 2007) found that traditional interpersonal communication theories may be inappropriate to describe electronic word of mouth behavior. Above mentioned factors tie strength and homophily obviously are lower in online due to in many cases anonymous information sharing. However, from the social psychological perspective, in the long run, individuals can associate themselves with specific WOM based on the written online review (EWOM) (Parks and Floyd, 1996).

 Burgee, Steffes, and Erin hypothesized 4 factors how consumer is influenced by the online word of mouth as follow:

1st hypothesis: "Given a choice between strong tie and weak or non-exisiting tie sources of information, strong tie sources are more likely to be use as a preferred or primary information."

2nd hypothesis: "Information from strong tie referral sources are perceived as more influential in the consumer's decision-making process than information obtained from weak tie or non-existing tie information sources."

3rd hypothesis: "Information from homophilous sources is more likely to be used as a preferred or primary information sources as compared to heterphilous information sources."

4th hypothesis: "Information from homophilous sources is more influential in the consumer's decision-making process than information obtained from heterophilous information sources."

 In this research paper, qualitative interview will be conducted on Japanese and Czech nationals to investigate the existing theories and inductive reasoning findings inspired by the research conducted in the similar method (Brown et al., 2007; Burgee and Steffes, 2009). Due to the location limitation, the qualitative interviews will be conducted on Japanese and Czech nationals 2 participants each. Successful interview would result in contributing the existing findings of prior research in this field of study.

2 Japanese specifications

2.1 Web comparative analysis: Japan and the USA

When one talks about the website, its meaning depending on the subjects one is talking to. It can be educational sites, commercial sites, forums, chat space et cetera. Techopedia (Techopedia, 2018) defines the website as "a collection of publicly accessible, interlinked webpages that share a single domain name. Website can be created and maintained by an individual, group, business or organization to serve a variety of purposes." In this master thesis, only ".com" domain in other words, a commercial website will be analyzed. Other domains such as org, info, edu, gov et cetera are not simply a good match for this analysis due to the following two reasons:

1) In terms of the website creatives, commercial websites are more given thoughts from different perspectives that gives reciprocally website more tailored to its local norms and standards.

2) Commercial sites are supposed to have done several focus group and extensive research and development on the web development from UX, design, sales perspectives.

As discussed in the first chapter, huge part (about 70% in the survey) of trusted online communication between buyer (consumer) and seller (producer/maker) still go through in the mean of branded websites according to the Global Survey of Trust in Advertising (Nielsen, 2013a). Two of the research methods frequently used are the statistical testing called content analysis (Gaye Akben et al, 2009) and qualitative comparative analysis (Wurtz, 2005) of the websites based on the cultural differences claimed and categorized by Edward Hall (Hall, 1976) and Geert Hofstede (Hofstede et al., 2010). In the previous chapter, one of the main prior research was taken to the consideration of further discussion in this master thesis as described above.

This master thesis will be focusing on the qualitative analysis mentioned above due to the fact that the author of this master thesis is native Japanese that can bring additional hypothesis to

the prior research to extend the view of the analysis from the linguistic perspective. This new hypothesis will be listed in the Table 6 below.

Addition to the new hypothesis of linguistic perspective, this master thesis will investigate the color usage on the websites. According to research paper "Colors Across Cultures" (Bortoli and Maroto, 2008), different nationalities have different perceptions of colors. In their words in the paper (Bortoli and Maroto, 2008), "The effects of culture on the meaning associated with marketing cues (such as color) are critical in international marketing. If the meaning associated with a color or combination of colors is different across cultures, it might be beneficial pursuing a customized strategy with respect to the color associated with the brand, package, web page and so on. In contrast, when color meanings are similar across markets, a standardized strategy is more viable." McDonald's has the customized strategy since it operates globally. The list of color perceptions of Japan and the US as follows in the table 5.1 and 5.2 below.

The USA	Color	Significance	Example
	Red	Excitement, warning, sex, passion, adultery, safety, spicy, hot	
	Yellow	Visibility, cautionary, happy, sunny, cowardice	Used in the US to signal police area; color od taxis, yellow ribbon as symbol for loved one to return home
	Blue	Trustworthy, official, business, philosophy, soothing	US mailboxes, Uniforms
	Green	Environmental, outdoorsy, masculinity, freshness, inexperience, jealousy	Money, nature, highway, signs
	Orange	Visibility, refreshing, danger	Highway, signs, prison uniforms

	Color	Significance	Example
	Purple	Nobility, bravely, law, excess	Bravely medal, college colors
	Pink	Feminity, childhood, fun, sweetness, homosexuality	Baby girls, candy, gay movement
	Brown	Dullness, boring, fertile, strength, unprocessed, poverty	National park signs, coffee packaging
	Gold	Money, wealth,	Jewelry, liquor, chocolate
	Black	Death, evil, sin, business, adult, formal, sexy	Clothing
	White	Clean, pure, elegant, antiseptic	Building walls, bedding
	Silver	Sleek, classy, modern	Products for men, tools, car parts
	Grey	Grief, depression, wisdom	Clothing, steel,

*Table 5.1 Retrieved from (Bortoli and Maroto, 2008)

	Color	Significance	Example
Japan	Red	Passion, Self-sacrifice, strength	Public phones, paint
	Yellow	Nature, Sunshine	Clothing, gardening
	Blue	n/a	n/a
	Green	n/a	n/a
	Orange	Love, happiness	Clothing
	Purple	Royalty	Flowers
	Pink	Spring, Femininity, youth, good health	Clothing, off-color humor, lingerie
	Brown	Strength, durability	Wood
	Gold	Decoration, wealth, prestige	Jewelry

	Silver	Masculinity, high-tech, strength, precision	Tools, weapons
	Black	Non-being night, unknown, mystery, anger	Electronics, clothing
	White	Death, mourning, pure	Cars

*Table 5.2 Retrieved from (Bortoli and Maroto, 2008)

Above table 5.1 and 5.2 show that Different nationalities have discrepant perceptions of colors. Thus, color difference on the commercial websites would be expected during this research. Therefore, the hypothesis regarding the color is that websites of each nationality use different colors except company logos since usually they are identical across cultures. In order to identify the color difference on websites, the color detection desktop application browser extension "Color Pick Eyedropper" (http://vidsbee.com/ColorPick/) will be utilized. This application has two main features that makes itself most suitable tool for this research purpose. The main features are below.

1) Zoomable color picker preview mode is included. It enables to detect colors on the websites for pixel perfect accuracy, especially when investigating the logo of companies needs to be same coordination of pixels on the web.

2) Color Pick Eyedropper has three color definition HEX, RGB and HSB. Therefore, investigating any similar color is easier and more accurate.

Hypothesis that will be investigated in this research paper are 7 hypothesis in the table 6 as follow:

Hypothesis 1	High Context cultures will, to a higher degree than Low Context culture websites, implement strategies for assimilating human presence on their websites.

Hypothesis 2	High Context cultures are likely to use more imagery and less text than their Low Context counterparts.
Hypothesis 3	The imagery chosen on High Context culture websites will reflect values characteristic of High Context cultures, such as family values, whereas Low Context culture values will be present on Low Context culture websites.
Hypothesis 4	The pages making up Low Context websites are expected to be consistent in their layout and color schemes, whereas pages in High Context websites are expected to be diverse.
Hypothesis 5	From the linguistic perspective, High Context culture website are expected to imply what they offer. On the other hand, Low context culture website should explicitly say what they offer and what they mean.
Hypothesis 6	Color perception across countries and cultures differ. Thus, different color is expected to be used in their websites. Especially, similar functional symbol and "call to action" such as company logo, buy button, promotional banner will be under investigation.
Hypothesis 7	A company originate in High Context culture influence its subsidy in the same manner as high context culture. And Low context culture company influence its subsidy in the same manner. In this master thesis, Sony (Japan: might influence the US Sony website similar to Japanese specification) and McDonalds' (The US: might influence the Japanese McDonalds' website similar to the US specification) will be investigated.

*Table 6

Method of verification

 Method used in this master thesis is the cross-cultural qualitative analysis based on the Edward Hall high context and low context cultures. According to Edward Hall's classification of high context and low context cultures, Japanese website has been chosen to represent the high context culture, and American website is the low context culture representative.

 Japanese electronics company Sony and American fast food company McDonalds' websites will be the scope of this analysis. Both websites in both Japanese and English will be

analyzed. Both Companies are well established brands globally. Thus, it is assumed that they have optimized their websites to some degree in line with globalization and localization balance.

The investigation was conducted by the author of this master thesis in the period between 10th of August 2018 and 15th of September 2018. Mainly visual features of websites are scrutinized as well as numbers of linguistic investigations. Because the investigation was conducted by author of this thesis, there is certain cultural biased interpretations during the investigation. So as to avoid the biased information extraction, findings from the investigation will be always matched with the hypothesis listed above in the table 6 which based on the Edward Hall's low and high context culture classifications.

Result

McDonalds'

McDonalds' is well known fast food company operating 34,000 restaurants in 118 countries approximately serves 70 million people in the world.

Hypothesis 1 and 3 on the McDonalds' case was supported by the website investigation. High context culture website was expected to use the human presence in contrast to the less human presence in the low context culture. Below captures 1 and capture 2 are extracted from Japanese and American websites on index pages.
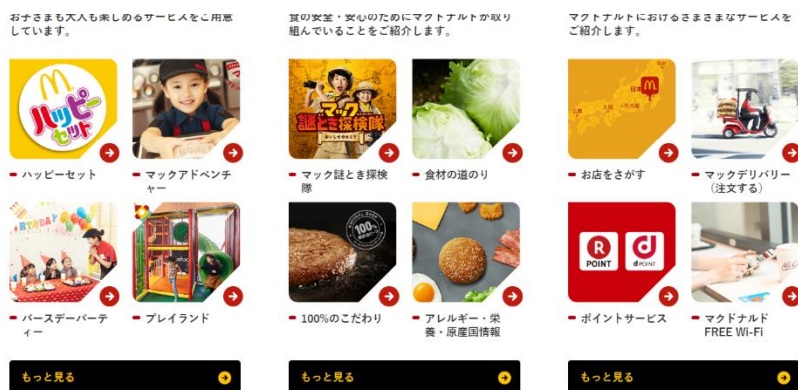
*Capture 1 higher human presence on the high context culture website
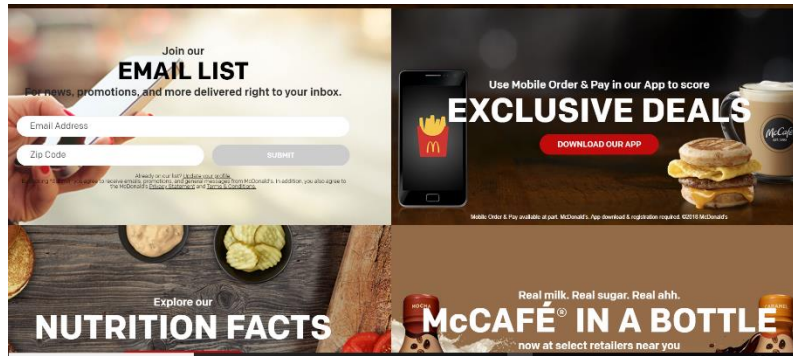
*Capture 2 Lower human presence on low context culture website

American website was expected to use less human presence on its website. However, during the investigation, any human presence was not found on the website. High context culture uses the human presence more often than low context culture that has been proven by the index page. Moreover, Japanese website uses human presence in all pages except one page in the whole website. Thus, this is not caprice usage of human presence on its website.

Furthermore, human presence was used on promotional banner, company information, recruitment page, CSR page, discounting banner, quality assurance page et cetera. McDonalds' Japan promote the family lunch concept in Japan in TV ads, banner, main media. Thus, family or children were especially used across Japanese website. For instance, below capture 3 promote sports sponsorship and food education McDonalds' do in Japan.

The usage of family and non-individual human presence can be explained by the collectivism cultural specification of Japan defined by Geert Hofstede.

Hypothesis 2 was also supported by the investigation. It is vivid in the index pages for instance that high context culture website uses the image based on product promotion with limited number of text while low context culture website focuses more on the fact and value-added selling point in the form of text. Below capture 4 is the high context culture website significantly focuses on the image than the text.

*Capture 4 high context culture website uses image with less text

Below capture 5 is the low context culture website that has more text focused interface, which web visitors can read the explicit message. High context culture website only uses the product name on its website. However, low context culture website conveys the freshness and "order and made" feature of the product.

Both captures were taken in the same condition that both were in the index page with carousel animation with few promotional banners. Each banner was scrutinized in the same way as for the capture 4 and capture 5. Thus, from the hypothesis 2 perspective, McDonalds' localize the website according to the cultural differences.
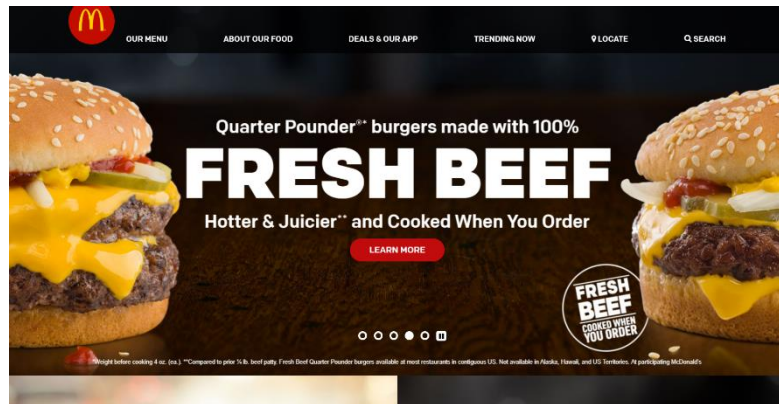
*Capture 5 Low context culture website uses more text than image

In relation to higher imaginary usage in high context culture website, positive correlation between length of the websites and imaginary usage was found additionally. Logical conclusion behind this finding is that more the images are used in the website, more the space are taken. Thus, high context culture website is relatively longer than low context culture website. However, this point of finding needs to be investigated quantitatively, which in this master thesis will not be dealt.

Moreover, the font size differs significantly in both low culture and high culture websites, which affects the size of the website. On this point, the font size will be discussed in the part of hypothesis 4 result finding since it includes the layout and color schemes.

Hypothesis 4 was supported to be true as well. This point is significant of all hypothesis stated in the table 6. Firstly, low context culture website was expected to have standardized layout in terms of shape in contrast to the random layout of high context culture website. On the low context culture website, which in this study case McDonalds' English website, has squared shape layout on all pages including the navigation bar on the index page. Only the exceptional usage of different shape to squared shape layout were the social media and brand icons, which usually take in different shape depending on the media and brand. On the other hands, high context culture website, which in this study case McDonalds' Japanese website, has various shapes layout on each page. Especially, combination of round shape and squared shape are found on index page but not in menu page or other pages.

Secondly, high context culture website uses non standard color variation while low context culture website uses few colors to standardize the general impression of website. This hypothesis also was also supported by investigating the websites. Capture 5 above is the index page image of American website, which simple dark background color is used and similar toned colors on top so as to differentiate the category of offers. On the other hands, high context culture website based on the white color background and use various colors. Worth mentioning here is the promotional banners. They use various colors not based on the product related colors but the seasonal colors. Capture 6 is one of many examples of seasonal color usage in the banners. Purple is associated with the sweet potato in the autumn season even though sweet potato is not purple. It is clearly the vivid color usage for sales purpose.

*Capture 6 high context culture website uses various colors

From the linguistic point of view, hypothesis 6 was not supported with slightly vague conclusion. High context culture website was expected to imply the core message even sales message by the mean of image, picture, and other type of non-linguistic forms while low context culture website uses explicit and clear-cut messages in this case sales messages. To identify this point of hypothesis, product page (Menu) and promotional page (seasonal and market specific offers) were specifically chosen for investigation.

Firstly, high context culture website (Japanese) has location specific offers while low context culture website has only standardized products with discounting codes through usage of company's own app. This strategy discrepancy leaves less space to investigate the contents

due to the different conditions in each site. Regarding the different offers (discount or seasonal specific), it relates to the price elasticity of the testing countries. Thus, this point (Price elasticity) is also the supporting evidence for regional specification. However, this discussion is neglected in this chapter to avoid the off-track analysis. Price elasticity will be discussed on the next chapter as part of the Avast case study.

Although the investigation on hypothesis 6 is incomplete, both low context and high context culture websites implicit messages. Low context website focuses on using comparatively more explicit messages on menu and promotional page. For instance, in case of premium products, the low context culture website specifically mentions why it is premium and usually priced higher. On the other hands, high context culture website has only the product name and the sentence say, "limited offers". Lastly, when product page (menu) was investigated, it was found that both low context culture and high context culture websites redirect website visitors to detailed pages.

Hypothesis 7 turned out to be true on all the pages. Firstly, the background color usage was completely was opposite. Low context culture website based on the black color while high context culture website based on the white color, which automatically limit their usage of colors on the "call to action" buttons that are the subjects of investigation of hypothesis 7. The reason why they based on different background colors is the answer of hypothesis 4, high context culture website uses variable color scheme on the website. To verify this reasoning is beyond the scope of this master thesis. Thus, this verification will not be concluded solely on this paper.

Another point of this hypothesis is the company logo. Initially the company logo was considered to be same all over the places since the company logo is a graphical, often include a product name, company, trademark and symbol to represent an organization. On the left is the capture of company logo from American website, and on the right is the capture of company logo from Japanese website on capture 7 below.

*Capture 7 company logo from low context and high context culture websites

 Color Pick Eyedropper was used to identify the precise color difference of the McDonalds' famous arch symbols from American and Japanese websites. Specific color information is as below table 7.

	The USA (Low context culture)	Japan (High context culture)
HEX	FFCE00	FFC400
RGB	(R255, G206, B0)	(R255, G196, B0)
HSL	(48%,100%,50%)	(46%,100%,50%)

*Table 7 Color specification of the company logo from low and high context culture websites

 RGB color identification is most valuable metric here. On the first look, it is surprising, even though the difference is fractional, that the color used on company logo differs by the different cultures. One of the reasons why it differs is the background color contrast. American (low context culture) website use the black background and red circle to identify the company logo as capture 7 above while the Japanese (high context culture) website based on the white background. Consequently, American website had to use more green color to make it brighter to make contrast to the red circle. TGB color specification explains in number where American website has same gradation of R255 (Red) and Blue0 (Blue) and make difference on Green, which American website uses 206 and Japanese website uses 196.

 Hypothesis 7, in terms of the McDonalds', low context culture website specifications so far have been discussed should influence the high context culture website. However, McDonalds' uses decentralized design on its website. In other words, it localizes the website to the target location standards. Although contents and major layout are identical to the country of origin

specification, a few local specifications found such as seasonal campaigns, color scheme, type of promotional products, news feeds and corporate social responsibility activity.
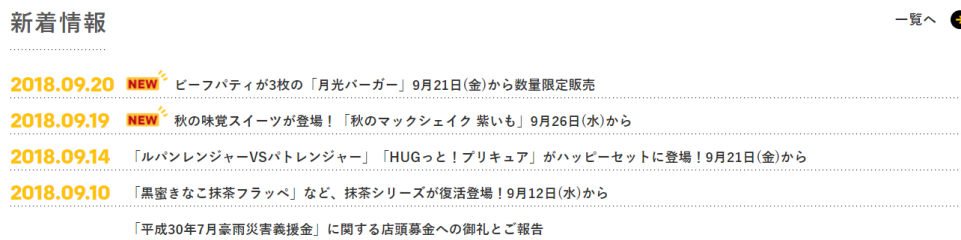
One point wort mentioning here is the news feed on Japanese (high context culture) website where differs from the country of origin website. Below capture 8 and capture 9 are the news feed on the Japanese website, that are Japanese specific website element.

| 特別なお知らせ | 北海道での地震に関するお知らせ(2018.09.18更新)
北海道地震 義援金店頭募金活動実施 |
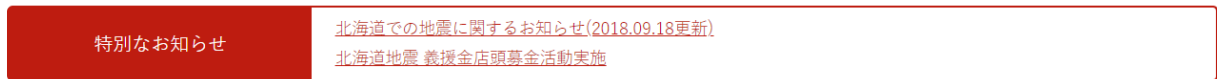
*Capture 8 Special notification regarding natural disaster in Japan

Capture 8 shows that Japanese website informs the web visitors about natural disasters happening in Japan. Since Japan is surrounded by the sea, and above the tectonic plates, there are many natural disasters and consequent injuries and even deaths. Thus, it is common for any companies to have their own foundations to support the disaster area for fast recovery. This sounds to many western culture "benefit from bad". However, in Asia not only in Japan perceive as the pure supporting activities.

Capture 9 is the news feed from Japanese website, that are found in many parts of Japanese website while the American website had no similar feature. Clicking any of these links leads to the internal pages. In other words, Japanese website is constructed to keep the web visitors on the website long as possible. On the other hands, American website is constructed more simply for easier user experience purpose.


新着情報   一覧へ ●

2018.09.20 NEW ビーフパティが3枚の「月光バーガー」9月21日(金)から数量限定販売
2018.09.19 NEW 秋の味覚スイーツが登場！「秋のマックシェイク 紫いも」9月26日(水)から
2018.09.14 「ルパンレンジャーVSパトレンジャー」「HUGっと！プリキュア」がハッピーセットに登場！9月21日(金)から
2018.09.10 「黒蜜きなこ抹茶フラッペ」など、抹茶シリーズが復活登場！9月12日(水)から
　　　　　　「平成30年7月豪雨災害義援金」に関する店頭募金への御礼とご報告

*Capture 9 News feed from Japanese website

Sony

Hypothesis 1, high context cultures will, to a higher degree than low context culture websites, implement strategies for assimilating human presence on their websites, was found to be false on the Sony (country of origin: Japan) websites. On the Japanese website, as expected, used many human presences on its website from the hero banner image, special review articles, product featuring the conventional usage of electronics to promotional banners.

The US Sony website uses also human presence on its website in the similar forms of usage. Only the difference is the nationality of human presence. Evidently, on the Japanese website, Japanese human presence is used while the western looking human presence is used on the American website. Below capture 10 is the image of human presence on the American website (low context culture).
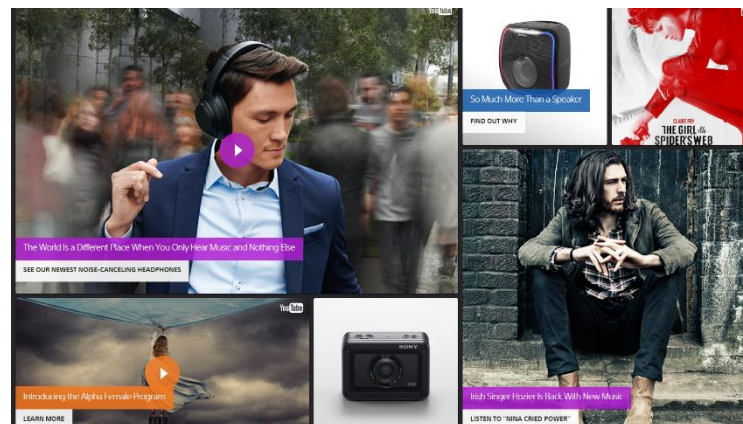
*Capture 10 human presence on the low context culture website

Unlike McDonalds' case, the US Sony uses heavily human presence. This has high potential of country of origin influence. In other words, Japanese head quarter might choose how website is constructed for the US market. Thus, Sony takes standardization strategy on the branded website for foreign countries. This point will be more explored in the hypothesis 7 of this Sony website investigation.
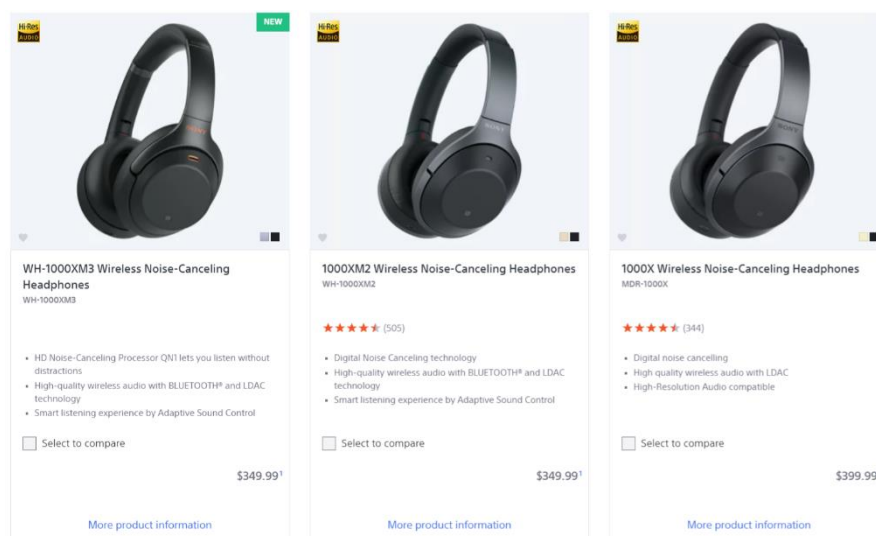
Hypothesis 2, high context cultures are likely to use more imagery and less text than their ow context counterparts, turns out to be positive result. However, Sony uses relatively more standardization strategy on its website, only product pages were the relevant pages that can be

analyzed for this hypothesis. Regarding the other pages, more analysis will be discussed in the hypothesis 7. Below capture 11 and capture 12 are product page from Japanese and American websites respectively.

On the low context culture website, main features of product such as noise cancelling technology and Bluetooth compatibility and high-resolution sound are mentioned in the form of texts as can be seen in the capture 12 below. On the other hands, on the high context culture website, main features of product such as the Bluetooth, high resolution sound, and noise cancelling technology are mentioned by the mean of image icons as in the capture 11.

*Capture 11 product page of Japanese website

*Capture 12 product page of American website

Hypothesis 3, the imagery chosen on high context culture websites will reflect values characteristic of high context cultures, such as family values, whereas low context culture values will be present on low context culture websites, is also proven to be positive. Below capture 13 is the banner that has high context culture characteristic.

High context culture website, similar to McDonalds' Japan, uses family images and concepts. Capture 13 is the two banner images extracted from Japanese website. They both have family concepts. Especially, all electronics company websites in Japan tend to use the child image or picture. The rationale behind it is that all from elementary school to high school, there are big school P.E. events and typically the parents film their children. Because electronics companies in japan has solid target in this segment, they use family values in their websites to have significant response on the websites.


*Capture 13 high context culture characteristic reflected in the website

Hypothesis 4, the pages making up low context websites are expected to be consistent in their layout and color schemes, whereas pages in high context websites are expected to be diverse, is false in the Sony's case.

In terms of the layout scheme, in the Sony's case, American website localization should be the scope of investigation how much difference to the country of origin website, which is Japanese website (high context). In the coming hypothesis 7 part, this point will be more discussed. From the other perspective on layout scheme, there are two points worth mentioning.

Firstly, the shape of banners and call to action button on both websites are same. However, the significant difference, that can influence other elements of websites, is the size of the banners. American website uses larger squared shape banner on its website while Japanese website uses same squared shape banners, but smaller size also uses higher number of banners. Consequently, the length of the website is longer on the high context culture website comparing to the low context culture website.

Secondly, the web pages are compiled on the low context culture website. For instance, on the navigation bar on the low context culture website, there are sub categories of main categories while high context culture website has only main category call to action button leading to the sub category page. This scheme was same in the McDonalds' case. Below capture 14 is the image extraction of navigation bar from the low context culture website.
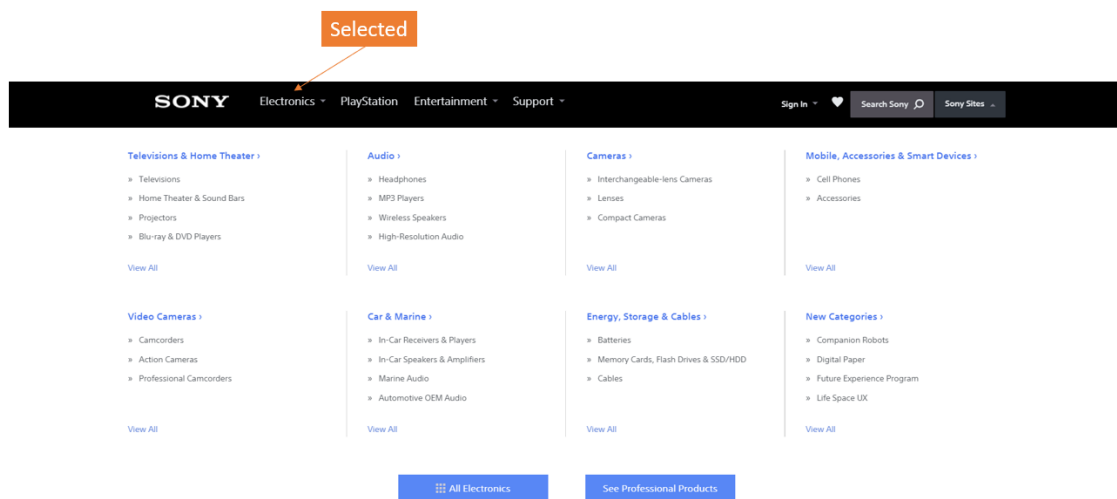
*Capture 14 navigation bar image from the low context culture website

In terms of the color scheme, both websites have the similar color usages. It was expected that the American website uses more standardized color compare to the Japanese website. Only the difference between Japan and American websites is the background color. American website uses the black color background while Japanese website bases on the white color. This point is the same result as McDonalds' case.

In the hypothesis 7, discussion regarding the color usage will be more developed.

Hypothesis 5, from the linguistic perspective, high context culture website is expected to imply what they offer. On the other hand, low context culture website should explicitly say what they offer and what they mean, had no difference between know and high context culture websites.

Hypothesis 6, color perception across countries and cultures differ. Thus, different color is expected to be used in their websites. Especially, similar functional symbol and "call to action" such as company logo, buy button, promotional banner will be under investigation, turns out to be no difference between two cultures.

Likewise, McDonalds' case, Japanese website (high context culture) uses white color background while the American website (low context culture) uses black color background. On the McDonalds' website, company logo color was affected because of the background color difference. However, on Sony's case, the company logo color was not affected even though the background color is different.

Finally, hypothesis 7, a company originate in high context culture influence its subsidy in the same manner as high context culture. And low context culture company influence its subsidy in the same manner, turns out to be positive result. In the case of McDonalds', the US McDonalds' has chosen to localize the Japanese website to its local standards and values as investigated above. Japan Sony has taken middle path in between globalization (standardization) and localization (customization).

Worth mentioning is that, the layout and color scheme they use are the same on both websites. Most reasonable explanation is that Sony Japan uses standardization strategy in this website element. Although the contents are localized, highlighting color and the location of the sales strings are exact position. Background color usage leads to remarkable finding as well. Because, high context culture was expected to use random color scheme, Sony Japan rather uses white color background while the US Sony uses black color since low context culture website has standardization color scheme.

The findings on hypothesis 7, on both McDonalds' and Sony, are not investigated fully in qualitatively and quantitatively. However, it is enough finding for the future researcher to verify this theory in more depth analysis solely on the hypothesis 7.

2.2 Online word of mouth – Japanese and Czech nationals

As briefly discussed, in this subchapter, electronic word of mouth and its impact on the good and service quality rating and consequent purchasing decision making, will be tested through the face to face interviews on both nationalities.

The questionnaire was conducted between 15th of September 2018 and 30th of September in Prague. Each questionnaire lasted 45mins to maximum 90 mins on Japanese national and Czech national. 2 participants are interviewed for each national via face to face meeting

Questionnaire formulated according to the hypothesis proposed by the prior research on the online word of mouth (Burgee and Steffes, "Social Ties and Online Word of Mouth.") mentioned in the literature review of this master thesis. Author of this master thesis interviewed all participants and same format and under same condition to reduce the biased information gathering due to the variable interviewing conditions.

These questions will need to be further developed for the qualitative research. Thus, author of this master thesis attempted to test whether those questions are in favor of the testing purpose.

Below table7 and 8 in the annex are the Czech national answers and Japanese national answers to the questionnaire respectively.

Result

On both nationalities, online shopping is common method of shopping. Type of goods and services they purchase online are similar. On the Czech nationality, it was found that longer time for the decision making online spent and tend to make decision on their own. On the other hands, Japanese nationality, they tend to take less time in case of the online shopping. In contrast to the Czech nationality, they tend to make their decision with their peers or second opinions.

Regarding the hypothesis 1, given a choice between strong tie and weak or non-exisiting tie sources of information, strong tie sources are more likely to be use as a preferred or primary information, both nationality show positive especially Japanese nationality. The rationale behind this difference can be explained by the collective culture characteristic.

No.5 question leads the hypothesis 2, information from strong tie referral sources are perceived as more influential in the consumer's decision-making process than information obtained from weak tie or non-existing tie information sources, be true in Japanese nationality but not Czech nationality.

Hypothesis 3, information from homophilous sources is more likely to be used as a preferred or primary information sources as compared to heterphilous information sources, in this study is found to be false. Both nationality participants did not consider the homophilous as preferred source of information. Rather they more emphasize that information sources are friends, family or specific person who knows the best of the product which is intended to buy.

Hypothesis 4, information from homophilous sources is more influential in the consumer's decision-making process than information obtained from heterophilous information sources, found to be false as well. However, only the Czech nationality responded that they consider the influencer's opinion which is nearest to the homophilous relationship.

In this study, some hypothesis found to be true in case of the online consumer behavior and have found difference between nationality. However, for more accurate data, quantitative analysis will be needed to verify this point of view.

3. Case study – Avast market entrance to Japan

The author of this thesis is employee of Avast Software at head quarte office in Prague as e-commerce specialist (Japan market representative) and have been working on the project to enter Japanese market. The author of this master thesis and Japanese natives located in Tokyo have set up Japanese entity Avast Japan and Tokyo office in 2017.

Since Avast Japan just started to enter the market, there are many start-up phase operational activities such as localization of contents, layout, web, SEO, optimization of contents, and so on. Avast uses localization strategy for the global operations. Thus, there is a whole business unit dedicated to the local operations at headquarter. Japan is the new strategic country for the company to entre.

In terms of the information in this chapter, it comprises two parts. First information source is the publicly available information mainly extracted from the factsheet, company white paper, analytical paper available on the website ("Results, Reports and Presentations | Avast."). The second information source is the internal database. This internal data usage is permitted internally under a condition, that exact number of metrics will not be displayed in the contents.

This chapter is a case study of Avast localization strategy to Japan and supporting real evidence of localization importance. Firstly, briefly company information will be introduced. Then secondly, Japan specific campaigns, optimization and localization initiatives will be introduced. And finally, future projection and challenges will be discussed.

3.1 Company information – Avast

Introduction to Avast software

Avast Software is a successful Czech anti-virus company, that base in Prague HQ has 25 offices worldwide. Internet security and cybercrime are most frequently feared crimes of all in the 21st century. Most of the consumers are afraid of the ID theft and financial information stolen by hackers. In 2017, $172 billion was lost by consumers dealing with cybercrime

globally, and 53% of consumers experience cybercrime or know someone who has. The threats of the cyber space are more popular among new crime occurrence. Thus, consumers and business ought to be prepared for such a significant threat.

To counteract this new threat, Avast Software protects more than 435 million consumers and business' online safety which comprises 67% of desktop, and 23% of mobile. Because of the technological innovation of the company, freemium model, and successful business acquisition of AVG, Avast software become the No.1 anti-virus company for consumer segment in the world in terms of number of users.

In the anti-virus software industry, only 3 major companies use the freemium model, which are AVG, Microsoft and Avast. Because of the successful business strategy, Avast software has grown not only the number of customers, but bookings and size of the company. In 2017, bookings was accounted $811 million with more than 1700 employees worldwide, which grown more than 35 times bigger bookings $23 million with 65 employees in 2008. Moreover, between 2015 and 2017, EBITDA margin grown to 58% and compounding annual growth rate was 9%, which are tremendously excellent result.

Furthermore, not only the success in the acquisition of users and high profitability, but also Avast software has been given honorable trust marks and evaluations from various organizations such as "Best free Anti-virus" by PC editors' choice, "Perfect score Anti-virus for Androids" by AV test, and "highly downloaded security app" by Google play and so on.
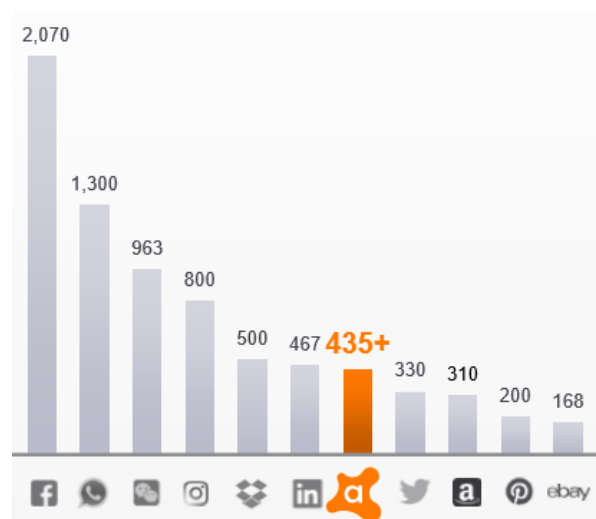

Avast vs competitors

Avast software is one of the leading anti-virus company with its unique sales model, that brings the company at the top of various rankings and evaluations. Even compared to its competitors such as McAfee, TrendMicro, Norton, Kaspersky and ESET, Avast software keeps its unique and strong position in the anti-virus market.

Firstly, the freemium model is getting more and more accepted each year by consumers. Below capture 15 shows the traditional paid anti-virus and free product users by consumers between 2005 and 2017. As can be seen, free product is acceptable and even stronger than the paid products already in 2010.
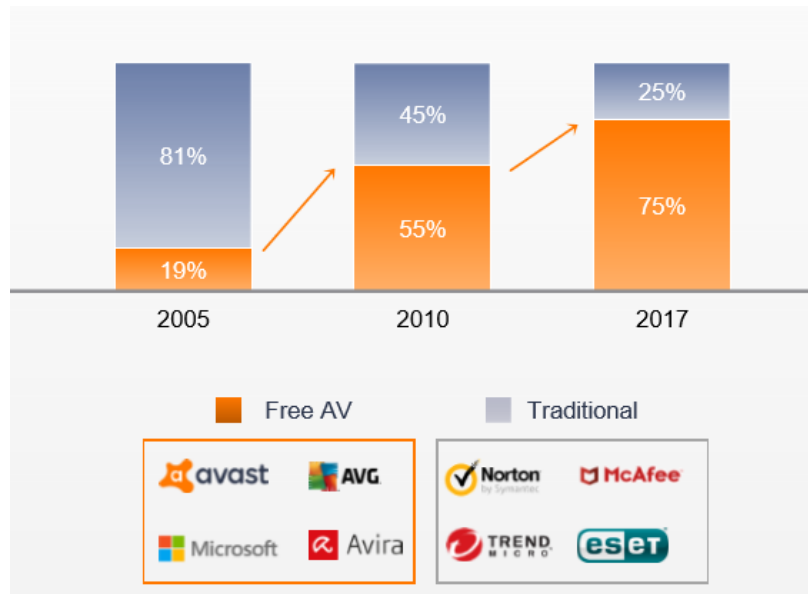
Avast large consumer user base (290M), comparing to the competitors such as Symantec (50M) and McAfee (47M), will surely keep the company at the top position. Avast's use base (active users: >430M) is even significant number when compared to the consumer internet platforms. Capture 16 shows the size of each internet platforms.

Avast freemium, as said above, is a successful model as well as differentiation to the competitors. However, not only the freemium is the success factor, but brand awareness and customers relationship is another Avast's success factor. There are two metrics, which are worth mentioning here: brand awareness in named search and geek score.
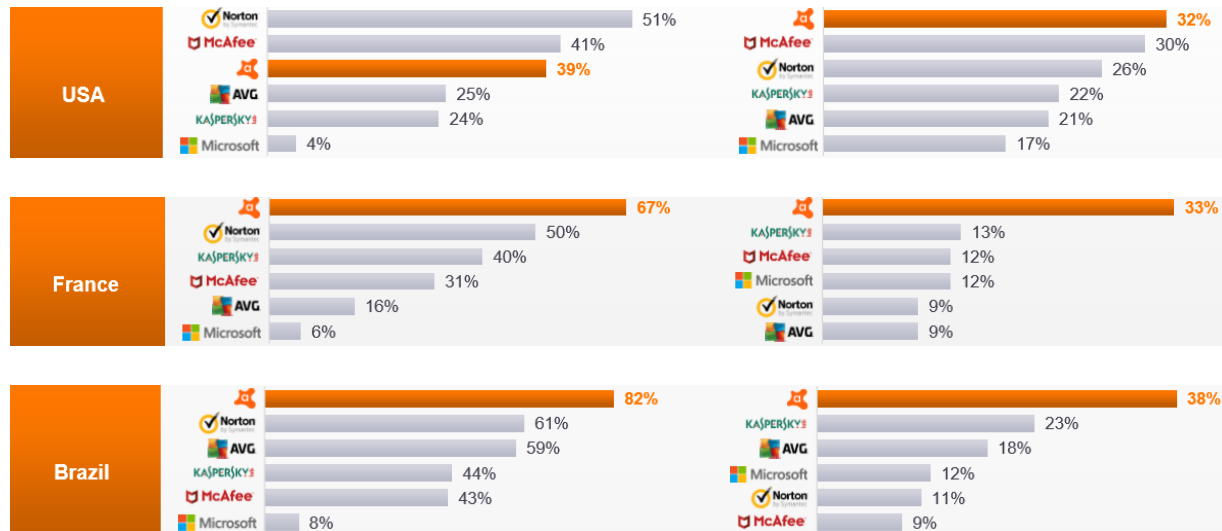
Brand awareness in named search is the metric explains how much the brand is searched compared to the competitors. When consumers are on the search engine, which brand is the most searched is relevant to the most known brand from the perspective of the organic search. Capture 17 shows the named search volume comparison of Avast and its competitors. This brand awareness in named search is rather by the usual consumers.
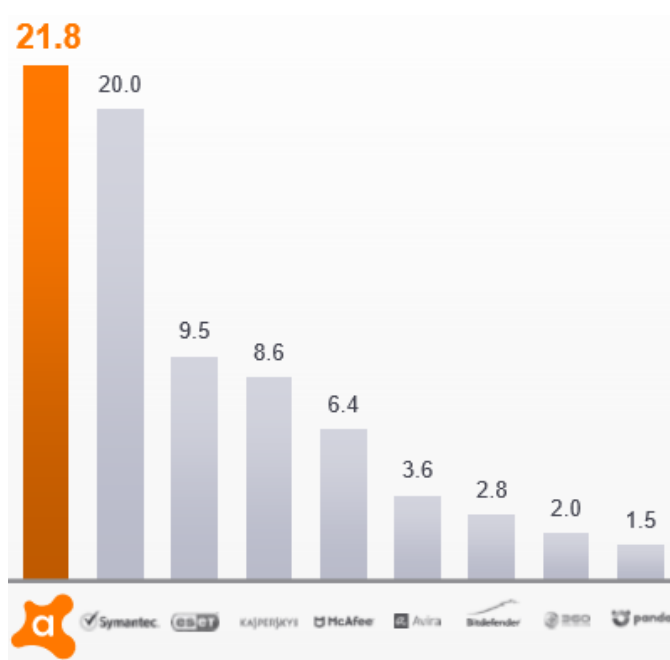
*Capture 17 retrieved from analyst presentation 2018: Avast

Another metric is the geek scores. One geek score is the geek brand awareness, and another is the geek recommendation score. Geek score simply is the evaluation of the products by the geeks (definition of geek: geek identified if they work in certain IT roles). These geek scores serve the brands to know which position or awareness in relative term they are in. Moreover, these scores could potentially the promotional metric because the geek score will be perceived positive and supportive evidence of the good products of the brands by non-geek consumers.

Below capture 18 is the geek scores of the leading market (the USA, France and Brazil) of Avast. The left score is the geek score of brand awareness and the right score is the geek score of recommendation. In the case of the USA, geeks who know the product recommend among the other brands and strong awareness as well. Avast is known and recommended by the geeks at the best rate in France and Brazil. In other words, not only Avast is known for "Free", but also better product to the competitors.

USA
Brand	Awareness
Norton	51%
McAfee	41%
Avast	39%
AVG	25%
Kaspersky	24%
Microsoft	4%

Brand	Recommendation
Avast	32%
McAfee	30%
Norton	26%
Kaspersky	22%
AVG	21%
Microsoft	17%

France
Brand	Awareness
Avast	67%
Norton	50%
Kaspersky	40%
McAfee	31%
AVG	16%
Microsoft	6%

Brand	Recommendation
Avast	33%
Kaspersky	13%
McAfee	12%
Microsoft	12%
Norton	9%
AVG	9%

Brazil
Brand	Awareness
Avast	82%
Norton	61%
AVG	59%
Kaspersky	44%
McAfee	43%
Microsoft	8%

Brand	Recommendation
Avast	38%
Kaspersky	23%
AVG	18%
Microsoft	12%
Norton	11%
McAfee	9%

*Capture 18 retrieved from analyst presentation 2018: Avast

Future of Avast

Future of Avast software is bright with potential paid customers, innovative products, and home security IOT.

Firstly, Avast software has the strongest competitive advantage to its competitors, that is the largest user base which is the potential customers of paid products in the future. Avast software monetize its products by upselling from the "free anti-virus" to premium "paid anti-virus" and then cross selling to non-antivirus products such as VPN, cleanup, Passwords, and driver updater and so on.

Especially VPN and Utilities (performance) products are the key products that Avast software has high estimation of growth which VPN CAGR 14% and Utilities CAGR 13% between

2017 and 2021. These products will be converted from paid anti-virus products meaning cross selling model.

Avast's upselling and cross selling based on the IPM (In-product Messaging), IPD (In-Product Discovery) and email campaign. Unlike other competitors, Avast software has unique sales model that uses its own product for the monetaization. Moreover, machine learning is used for the optimum monetaization. Because of the large number of user base (430M), Avast has capacity to optimize conversion prediction, pricing, campaign muting and churn prediction and so on.

One of the successful machine learning used case is that revenue growth rate of VPN and Utilities. Their revenue growth are 5 times (VPN) and 13 times (Utilities) for last 4 years. What is significant here is the optimization process of sending messages through IPM. Thanks to the machine learning engine, IPM was reduced 50% per month. Thus, each IPM value increased twice as 4 years ago.

Secondly, Avast software innovates its products every months and release new products such as "Avast Browser" and "Avast AntiTrack". Avast browser is the browser that contains security alerts and many features like bank mode, anti-phishing, anti-tracking, stealth mode and HTTPS encryption and so on. AntiTrack is also the new product released in 2018 categorized as anonymization, which protects against aggressive tracking by advertisers.

Finally, home security IOT is the one of the most important product of Avast software upcoming years. Home IOT is getting popular since the electronics makers optimize the compatibility of their products to the IOT environment. However, the security vulnerability is underestimated in general. Thus, Avast software takes its step to IOT security product.

Because of the large data stored in the company, machine learning capacity and AI usage, home security IOT of Avast has great potential. And Avast software is currently developing the technology and home security architecture for both B2C and B2B2C channels.

Increasing globalization and mobility of people make not only world better, but also greater chance of cybercrimes. Thus, internet security industry including Avast software has huge potential and obligation to increase its business activity leading the consumer's online safety.

3.2 Japanese specific initiatives and its results

Avast software started to use localization strategy in Japan since February 2017 when Avast Software Japan entity has been established. There is an Avast office in Tokyo because of business convention differences, and resources shortage for such a unique market.

To properly localize from strategy to content management, Japanese natives ranges from junior level position to senior level positions were employed and located in both Tokyo office and Prague head quarter.

All sales and marketing activity started to be localized such as contents optimization, SEO, Web optimization, Japan specific in-product campaign, media conference, partnership, PR activity and so on. In this part of the master thesis, Japan original campaign, IPM contents optimization and price display testing will be discussed. In the end, impact of the localization strategy will be presented.

IPM contents optimization

IPM stands for In-Product Messaging intending to upsell or cross-sell Avast's products for the current product users. Avast Software has unique selling model and major part of the revenues are generated by IPM which has very high ROI (return on investment). The number of IPM is immense and its flows are very complex and well-thought.

To maximize IPM efficiency, there is one whole business unit dedicated to the IPM optimization through AB and multiple testing. Data such as Google Analytics and Power BI (Microsoft) are used to make variable testing to optimize the flows of IPM. Additionally, statistical modelling and machine learning methods are implemented recently in the IPM optimization process.

In terms of the contents of IPM, all news flows were tested in the main locale first and better result (IPM) of testing will be full scaled to major regions and in the end the rest of the countries. Thus, there has not been local specific testing or initiatives on both linguistic and graphical perspectives.
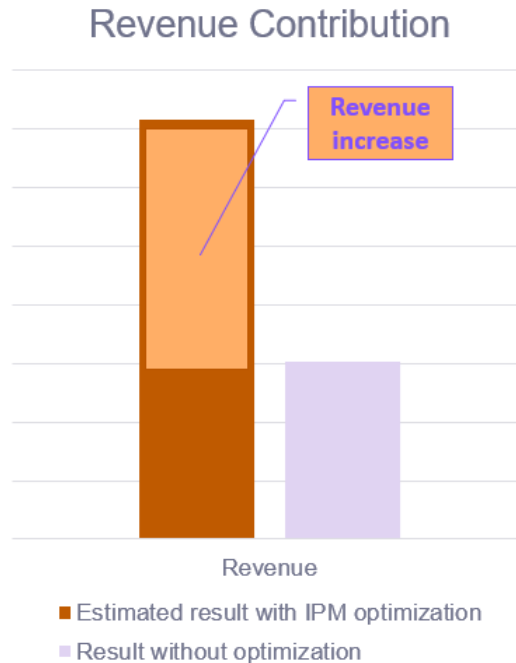
Author of this thesis therefore started IPM contents optimization from the linguistic perspective as following method. Firstly, methodology used in the Japan specific IPM optimization is the linguistic review on the top 20% IPM according to the pareto principle. It was assumed that all IPM should be translated into industrial text, which is usually readable but not natural or impactful text from the native perspective. Thus, secondly, only IPM text (contents) was the subject that would be optimized. Whole optimization was conducted within two months.

Left graph of capture 19 shows one over forth IPM of top 20% of IPMs were classified and implemented changes. Right graph of capture 19 shows two findings: firstly, IPM contents optimization brought 42% of IPMs CVR (conversion rate) drop and 58% of IPMs CVR increase. Secondly, those improved IPMs result outweigh the IPMs that have drop in CVR. In other words, the total impact in revenue term improved for Japanese market. Moreover, after the optimization period, those IPMs were observed and found that this increase and drop were not seasonal but solely the impact of the optimization.

Capture 20 below shows the result of optimization in revenue term. Revenue improved just above 2 times in the optimization period.

Revenue Contribution

Revenue increase

Revenue

■ Estimated result with IPM optimization
■ Result without optimization

*Capture 20 Result of IPM contents optimization: Avast

Japan original campaign

 IPM contents optimization was reviewed and result was significant as above. Also, graphical optimization is worth mentioning because Japanese image association is different to the other cultural background in this case English speaking country (due to the global screens will be applied for all regions after AB testing).

  In the summer 2018, Avast Japan has released one of Japan original IPM screens based on the consideration of Japanese seasonal promotion and association with summer theme using summer style graphics.

 Below capture 21 and 22 are the global screens and Japan original screens that have been released on the Avast product. Expectation of this slight graphical changes on the screens are: 1) higher conversion rate 2) higher revenue 3) increasing the awareness of the user on Avast local friendly contents.

Toaster screen   Interstitial screen
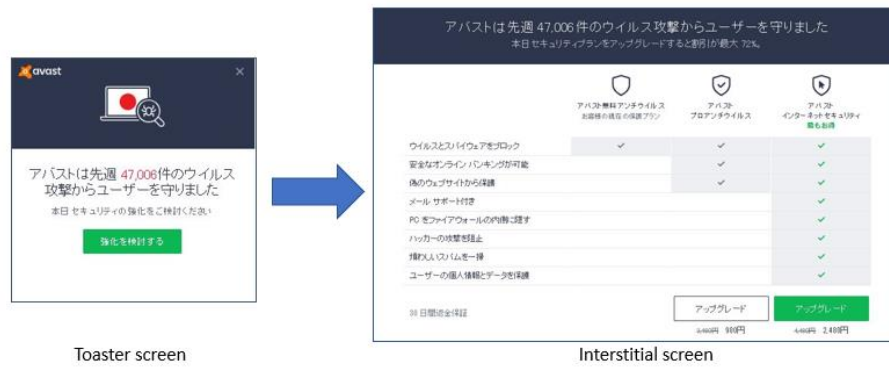
*Capture 21 global screens IPM

Japan original screens

Toaster screen   Interstitial screen

*Capture 22 Japan original screens IPM

 IPM screens usually start with toaster and banner and then going to interstitial as shown above. In the end, if user decided to upgrade their product or buy new product they go to the in-product cart.

 As can be compared above two capture (21 and 22), global screens uses minimum graphics and keep the virus-related icon on toaster screen while Japan original screens uses many graphics with summer theme in it.

 This campaign resulted in positive effect on the KPI (Key performance indicator) metrics that initially set for the performance tracking purpose. Below table 9 shows the comparison between above two IPM flows in the same period.

Global	PV	Transactions	Revenue	RPM	CNV
toaster	144,927	15	$ 292	$ 2.01	0.0001
Japan	PV	Transactions	Revenue	RPM	CNV
toaster	608,964	170	$ 3,529	$ 5.80	0.0003

*Table 9 KPI metrics comparison of Japan and global IPM screens

The data shown above in the table 9 is extracted from Google analytics in the same period. However, there is huge difference in data especially PV (Page View). It is because of the priority setting internally. Thus, RPM (Revenue per mile) value and CNV (conversion rate) is computed so as to find the real impact of the Japanese elements.

Firstly, higher CNV was expected after the Japanese elements implementation that become positive. CNV improved 0.0002 % to the global screens. Secondly, higher revenue was expected with Japanese elements. Because of the reason above, simple revenue comparison is misleading. Thus, in this case, RPM was compared. Japan original screens RPM outweigh the global screen RPM by $3.79.

From both CNV and RPM, this localization (japan original campaign) brought better result than the standardized one. Thus, it can conclude that localization in terms of the graphics and concept bring positive impact on company.

Price Display Testing

Similar to the linguistic and graphical representation, price has to be optimized according to some metrics such as, competitors' price (market price), purchasing power of the country, price sensitivity and so on.

Price sensitivity of Japanese customers on anti-virus products are considered to be inelastic. Thus, fractional price change would not shift the quantity of product demanded as predicted in the basic macroeconomic theory.

Author of this thesis conducted AB test on the price display on the IPM. Hypothesis was that lowering discounting rate on the IPM for Japanese customers would not drop the sales but rather increase the sales. Reason behind it is when customers recognize the high discount on

the IPM, they might consider the discounted product as defect or company has not been doing well.

Higher discounting

*Capture 23 IPM screen with higher discounting rate

Lower discounting

*Capture 24 IPM screen with lower discounting rate

As the screens can be seen above capture 23 and 24, on this AB test two elements are changed. First change was the promoting product on the banner screen. Higher discounting screen promotes "Pro" version and lower discounting screen promotes "Internet Security". Second change was the discounting price display. Higher discounting screen has 72% off price display and lower discounting screen has 45% off price display and ceteris paribus.

Higher discounting screen	PV	Transactions	Revenue	CNV
Banner	235,472	3	$61.38	0.05%
Lower discounting screen	PV	Transactions	Revenue	CNV
Banner	235,309	5	$135.32	0.08%

*Table 10 KPI metrics of lower price display AB test

The AB test resulted in line with the hypothesis that lower discounting rate brings higher sales in Japan. Above table 10 is the result of this AB test. Revenue and CNV both improved. However, limitation of this AB test was that low transactions. Because of the internal priority, it was not possible to have the significant result in this AB test. Thus, it is positive that KPI improved but in the long run, it is vague still.
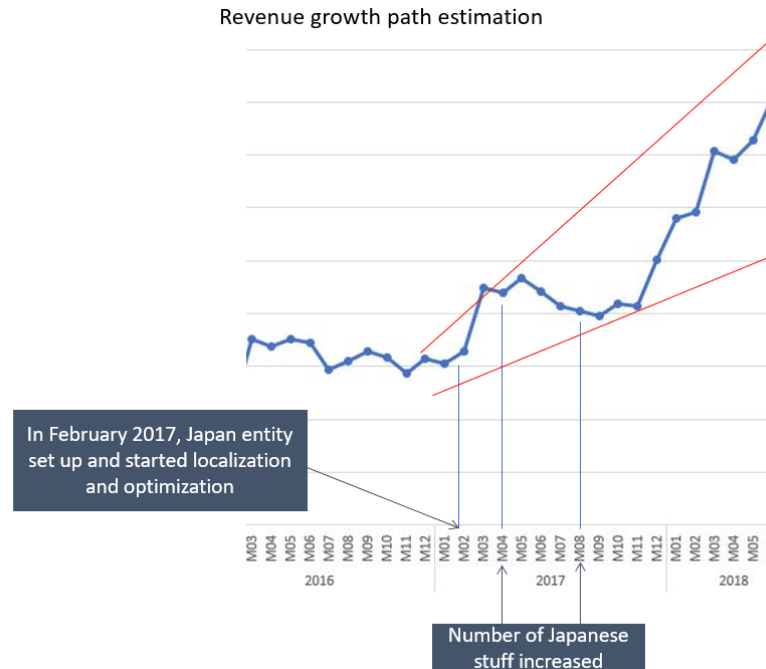
3.3 Growth projection with localization strategy

IPM contents optimization, price test and Japan original campaign are discussed above. They are only part of Avast Japan's localization activity. However, they were enough evidence that localization and optimization from the native perspective is very effective and bring positive impact to the organization.

As being said, no significant overall impact to the business is mentioned. To look at this localization effectiveness in wider spectrum, revenue growth and number of user growth will serve as good indicators.

Firstly, capture 25 below shows the revenue growth from 2016 till May 2018 for Avast Japan. As it is written in the capture, February 2017, Avast started full localization setting up local entity and hiring Japanese employees. And on the same year, additional Japanese members were employed so as the localization/optimization initiatives.

It is apparent that localization initiatives contribute the Avast Japan revenue growth correlating with the number of Japanese employees. At the end of the year, it was proven that it is not seasonal hike on revenue but persistent revenue growth due to the localization efforts.

Revenue growth path estimation

In February 2017, Japan entity set up and started localization and optimization

Number of Japanese stuff increased

*Capture 25 Revenue growth path of Avast Japan

Two red lines on the capture 25 shows the estimation of the revenue growth path in case there is no additional Japanese employees hiring.

Corresponding to the revenue growth data above, number of Avast users in Japan expand in high rate. However, in terms of the number of users in Japan did not growth at the same speed as the revenue growth. Below capture 26 shows the actual number of Avast users in Japan from 2016 till August 2018.

Circled in orange color is the phase where Japanese members joined the company and started localization and optimization. Unlike revenue growth, number of users did not grow. That is because of main two reasons: 1) monetization initiatives was higher priority in the first phase of the localization 2) although there was optimization on web, IPM, contents, emails et cetera, the impact was reflected in time especially under usage of freemium model.

In the end of 2017, the result of both localization and optimization started to be reflected in the number of users as well and have observed the exponential growth from the first month of the year 2018 circled in red color on the capture 26. Thus, the revenue growth during the last quarter of 2017 in Japan was derived from the up-sell and cross-sell.

Avast users growth path

Number of Japanese stuff increased
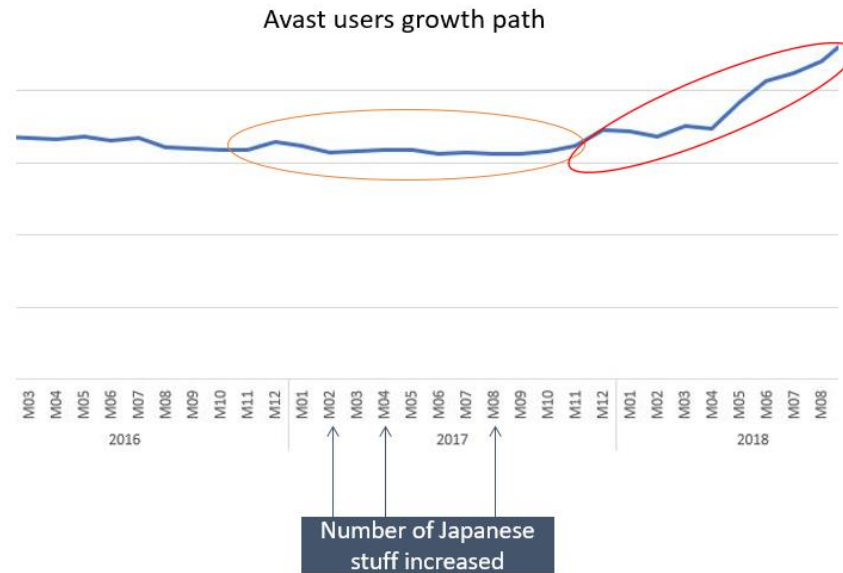
*Capture 26 Avast Japan user growth

Avast Japan has been proving that localization strategy works well. Thus, for the future, further expansion of the business will be expected due to the snowball effect and impact of non-monetary initiatives (mainly the PR activities conducted in Japan).

4 Conclusion

 In the 21ˢᵗ century, rapid expansion of global private organizations occurred, and globalization was the key for the success business expansion to international market. However, some researcher and practitioner (Steven Bleistein, Marieke de Mooji, Edward Hall et al) proposed the "localization" strategy for the international business expansion. At the same time, in Japan new concept "Glocal" occurred optimizing to local business customs with global vision.

 This thesis attempted to find whether a global private organization uses localization strategy in their business operations and what is the level of localization to globalization strategy.

Methods of research

 Firstly, web qualitative analysis of global companies McDonalds and Sony was conducted based on the Edward hall's theory of high and low context cultures. A web analytical tool called Color Pick Eyedropper was used to find the color usage by different contexts. Hypothesis was made according to the Edward Hall's theory and were all investigated by the author of this thesis.

 Secondly, face to face interview was conducted for the electronic word of mouth testing. Two of each from Czech and Japanese nationals were invited to the interview and asked questions in terms of the online recommendation process. This helps future development in this field of research by based on these questionnaire.

Finally, case study of Avast software was carried out based on the internal data allowed by the company. This case study serves as the model of a globally operating company that has localization strategy and its impact to the business. Data is AB test result, Google analytics, some sales models used internally and publicly available information.

Findings

 In terms of the web analysis, turns out to be McDonalds uses localization strategy exclusively in wide spectrum. For instance, color scheme usage was thought to be consistent in the low context culture country (the USA) and random in the high context culture country (Japan). McDonalds Japan therefore used chaotic color scheme across the website in contrast to the

consistent color scheme on American website. Regarding the color usage, it was found that McDonalds logo color is also different by different cultural contexts. For the future research, it would be beneficial to expand number of countries and cluster them in high and low contexts to find whether this applies in large sample.

Another interesting finding from the web analysis is that localization and globalization balance of website can be dependent on the different cultural contexts. American company McDonalds uses localization strategy fully. On the other hands, Japanese company Sony uses more global strategy and minimal adjustment for the global websites. It may be occurred by the hierarchy of company structure and management board of the company. Because Japanese companies usually are owned and operated by Japanese nationals. Thus, it might be the case that decision makers of Japanese companies are more rigid in the strategy.

With regard to the questionnaire interview research, two of each from Czech and Japanese nationals was invited for an interview. Participants were asked questions related to the online recommendation. One of the interesting findings is that Japanese national tend to trust and search online recommendation relatively more to the Czech nationals. Thus, both professional and peer recommendation online is effective business activity for Japanese customers. However, it is only sampling the responses of the questions. In order to find the solid result, further research with qualitative and quantitative methods should be implemented.

In terms of the case study of Avast software, some Japanese original initiatives were presented including IPM contents optimization, graphical testing, and price display testing. All localization and optimization made by Japanese employees resulted positive impact to the company in both number of user and revenue. The company expands higher number of regions, due to the success in Japan and other regions that has been localized, for further localization.

Overall, it was found that in all cases including web, recommendation process, and contents management, localization strategy of online business activities are effective. However, the level of localization is not defined in this thesis.

Limitations

Limitations of this thesis are as follows:

1) Due to the nature of qualitative research, conclusion is not significant statistically except Avast case study. Thus, for the further development, these findings from this thesis can be used to develop quantitative method-based research to verify some vague points of conclusion.

2) First qualitative research was fully conducted by the author of this thesis, thus, there was subjective and biased information interpretation even though it was carefully conducted. For the further development, other method of research such as focus group would be suitable for this analysis.

3) Finally, number of participants in the second qualitative research was limited due to the difficulty finding people who are willing to participate. Thus, for the future study, it needs higher number of participants to have more significant result.

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Annex

Questions	Answers
What kind of goods and services do you purchase online?	Goods: Supplements, electronics, cosmetics, grocery, and cloths Services: Accommodation (hotel, hostel), airplane ticket, train ticket, food delivery (Dame jidlo: Czech food delivery app)
Please describe your usual buying process in offline case.	• In case of offline purchase, I usually buy spontaneous base at the stores and it does not take much time to consider alternative options. Also, I would usually not take second opinions from shop assistant, friends, family or the influencer. • On offline, I would ask my friends and family mostly for the second opinions.
Please describe your usual buying process in online case.	• Online shopping takes relatively more time considering alternative options visiting branded websites and ecommerce site. In the end, I would not ask other for the second opinions. • In case of the online shopping, I check the social media who is classified as influencer or the person I usually follow (on YouTube and Instagram) and decide what to buy.

When you are on the ecommerce platforms or branded website for online shopping, do you read customer review (or comments) of the goods you are thinking to buy? And is the rating of the goods important for your decision making? (*in this question, Amazon customer review page was displayed in front of the question participants)	• I would not really check the customer reviews and comments. But Star rating is important. When the star rating is more than average or higher, I will consider the good as one of the options. If not, I would not even consider it as option. • I sometimes check both the customer reviews and start rating. Star rating helps me finding generally accepted goods for my searched goods. And When I selected few goods I will start comparing the goods by features, price, and so on. At this phase, customer reviews is helpful since all the reviews are raw comments by the current or previous users. Usually I read 5 customer reviews on bad and good.
When you seek for the second opinions of the goods or services you intended to buy, who is the most likely person you ask?	• I would not ask for the second opinions • In case I would like the second opinions, firstly I would ask my friends or family. And in case of the specific sophisticated goods or services, I would ask the friends who knows the best of the goods or services. In the end, I will decide what to buy regardless their opinions usually.
When you bought goods or services online, would you leave your review on the platform you used for purchase? If so, what makes you decide so?	• I would not leave my review • I would not leave my review but I would talk about the goods and services with my friends in case I am really satisfied with the goods and services.

Table 7 Questionnaire of Czech national

Questions	Answers
What kind of goods and services do you purchase online?	Goods: Electronics, cosmetics, grocery Services: Accommodation (hotel), airplane ticket, train ticket, food delivery (Demae-kan: Japanese food delivery app) house cleaning
Please describe your usual buying process in offline case.	• I take long time until reaching the point that I decide the purchase. I do not purchase anything new by its first sight and try comparing with other stores. • I would spend time in each stores and try finding the best offers in the area I live in. I tend to make purchasing decision on my own.
Please describe your usual buying process in online case.	• Online shopping is more preferred option for me because of the easy of purchase and value-added (delivery) service. I use Rakuten (Japanese ecommerce site) and Amazon usually and firstly search what I want and check all the descriptions and customer reviews and make decision relatively in short time to the offline purchase. • When I go to the online shopping, I usually already know what I look for. So, I just search the goods and services and check the customer reviews right away. And then in case I cannot decide, I will sometimes ask my friends for second opinions.

When you are on the ecommerce platforms or branded website for online shopping, do you read customer review (or comments) of the goods you are thinking to buy? And is the rating of the goods important for your decision making? (*in this question, Amazon customer review page was displayed in front of the question participants)	• I always check the customer reviews am star rating. On branded website, I tend to find more of product feature and special factor of the products. On the other hands, on the ecommerce site, customer review helps me to decide which product I should choose. I take both good and bad comments. • Star rating only helps me to find the products not I want to buy or consider. But Customer review usually are the influencing factor for the decision making online.
When you seek for the second opinions of the goods or services you intended to buy, who is the most likely person you ask?	• I firstly ask my surroundings such as friends, family and acquaintances who know the products better than me. They influence my decision making in daily base. • My friends and family usually talk about the products they bought and try (in case of possibility).
When you bought goods or services online, would you leave your review on the platform you used for purchase? If so, what makes you decide so?	• I leave my review when I get notification email from the ecommerce site when it is the right timing. Right timing is when I just used a product and can write something about it. Otherwise, I do not necessary intentionally log in to the ecommerce site and write the review. • I usually do not write review. When the product is extremely bad or good, I will write it. Regardless the products, I usually rate the products when there is an option to simply click to rate.

*Table 8 questionnaire result of Japanese national