Virpi Serita
Erik Pöntiskoski
(editors)

Seppo Mallenius
Vesa Leikos
Katariina Villberg

Tuua Rinne
Nina Yppärilä
Susanna Hurme

Marketing Finnish
Design in Japan

Virpi Serita – Erik Pöntiskoski (eds.)
Seppo Mallenius – Vesa Leikos – Katariina Villberg –
Tuua Rinne – Nina Yppärilä – Susanna Hurme

Marketing Finnish Design in Japan

Preface

This research report comprises four articles based on a research conducted in Finland and Japan. It includes interviews made over a period of 24 months in 2007-2009 in 25 companies involved in marketing and trade in Finnish design on the Japanese market (See Appendix 1). The research was implemented by a research group consisting of five students from the Helsinki School of Economics (HSE) and one student from Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences. The steering group included two lecturers from HSE who represented the Department of Languages and Communication and the Department of Marketing and Management.

All the student members of the project had studied Japanese for at least two academic years at HSE by the time the project was launched and were interested in utilizing their language skills in a way that would profit them and their interest in Japan. They were aware of an earlier project on Japan that had been implemented by the Department of Languages and Communication at HSE in 2004-2006 and decided to undertake a second research project. They chose Finnish design in Japan as the theme at their kick-off meeting in May 2007.

Later in summer 2007 the research crystallized around two main areas. Nina Yppärilä, Tuua Rinne and Susanna Hurme specified their interest in the marketing of Finnish design in Japan and Katarina Villberg together with Vesa Leikos were more interested in the current image Finland and Finnish goods have among Japanese customers. Later, when Seppo Mallenius joined the team in October 2007, we added a new research realm concentrating on fads and fashion trends in Japan. In the final phase, Susanna Hurme `s research questions concerned the distribution mechanism of design companies operating in the Japanese market.

As the decision from the Wihuri Foundation for the funding of the research project came in mid-October, we decided to go on with our plans, wrote four research plans on the research themes and started to contact companies in Japan and Finland. We also opened our website and published a pamphlet.

The Finnish companies were interviewed between January 1 and February 28, 2008. We contacted the companies via email and most of the Finnish companies agreed to take part in the research. We decided to make the interviews in Finland according to the research plans for the four topics, although there were also some common themes in the interviews. The

interviews in Finland were, however, only slightly structured so that the interviewees could tell quite freely of their experiences of working in Finnish-Japanese business environments.

The visits to the Japanese companies were made during a field trip to Japan just a year ago over a period of two weeks from March 23 to April 9, 2008 mainly in the Tokyo area and in Sendai. The companies were contacted again by email, and they were basically very cooperative and ready to give interviews, but we became quite worried as most of them had still not answered our requests to set exact dates for the appointments a few weeks before our planned field trip to Japan. We had a partner in Japan, **Mr Kiyohiko Takahashi**, who before his retirement had had a long carrier in a big trading company.

He decided to call all the companies contacted for interviews. Thanks to his persistence and direct contact by telephone to the companies, we had some 10 interviews scheduled over a period of one week in the Tokyo metropolitan area, when we arrived to Japan. (See Appendices 1 and 2). The last 5 interviews were set up by **Dr Merja Karppinen**, the Business Development Director of FINPRO at Sendai-Finland Wellbeing Center and the Japanese employees working at the center. The team felt strongly that without reliable partners in Japan and their direct telephone contact**s** to the informants it would not have been possible to conduct this research and we would not have had so many appointments with the informants.

The interviews in Japan were mainly conducted in Japanese, with Virpi Serita as the interpreter. In Japan we used a questionnaire that was in English and Japanese (See Appendix 3) and sent it in advance to the informants. We also arranged two group interviews with Japanese housewives and collected data with a questionnaire for consumers (See Appendix 4).

The HSE Foundation granted our group a scholarship in April 2008 which made it possible to continue effectively the research project to its later phase. The student group stored all the interviews and the written data in the virtual environment of the research project on HSE's Optima Platform. The interviews were digitalized and stored in Optima so that they would be accessible to the whole research group. The collected data were analyzed by the students during the summer of 2008 and the following four articles were written over a period of 7 months, from September 2008 to February 2009. All the results are compiled in this research report.

March 23, 2009 Espoo

Virpi Serita

Marketing Finnish Design in Japan - Project Manager
Part-time lecturer of Japanese, HSE

Foreword

For many global managers becoming "big in Japan" would be a dream come true. The purchasing power of the second largest consumer market in the world makes it a very attractive target for international expansion. Even a small slice of the market would do for many people.

However, making it big on the market is far from easy. And even if you manage to build the necessary partnerships and get customers, fostering and developing the relationships is challenging. With that in mind, this report aims at uncovering the marketing strategies and practices of Finnish design companies in Japan. In order to explain what really makes a difference in creating a business success, we need to go beyond the traditional guidebooks on "Doing Business in Asia". It is not enough to foster relationships with partners. This kind of strategic advice is self-evident for most managers and will not help anyone to be more successful in the marketplace.

A more pertinent question is how do you build a relationship in the first place and what are the everyday practices that advance partnerships?

This type of research focus is related to the broader practice turn that we have seen in social sciences and marketing research. We have sought to describe the stories told by managers about everyday work. We want to both analyse them and to discuss the very mundane marketing and management practices they conduct and then draw some managerial and theoretical conclusions.

Thus the primary focus of this report comprises the experiences and visions of seasoned design business practitioners and academics. We describe what they believe contributes to success and the basis of their strategic thinking. We present the views of people from both Japan and Finland in order to build a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena.

Six project researchers working in Finland and Japan during 2008 did the literature reviews of academic journal articles and news databases, and continued with fieldwork in Japan. The data was analysed back in Finland and all together four articles written based on the research. As an academic supervisor for the project, I sometimes tried to support the team in our research meetings by saying that if something is easy, everybody would already be doing it. This applies to both doing business in Japan and conducting research on it.

But even if it is hard to gain access to the market from a business perspective, or to gain access to experts who are willing to discuss their knowledge with researchers, this does not mean that the work cannot be fun and rewarding.

So this report combines the unique efforts of numerous people. First of all Virpi Serita, who initially envisioned this project, arranged the funding, recruited an enthusiastic team, and handled all the logistics and practical issues related to conducting the research and publishing the report. The project researchers, whose articles are presented in the report, managed to dig deep into the data and draw insight that is interesting and beneficial from both an academic and managerial point of view.

This report comprises four papers:

1. Diffusion of Fashion in Japan - Three approaches to marketing and selling fashion products by Seppo Mallenius
2. Design and Finnishness in Japanese Consumer Culture by Vesa Leikos and Katariina Villberg
3. Marketing Communication of Finnish Design Companies in Japan by Tuua Rinne and Nina Yppärilä
4. Finnish design companies in Japan - Distribution Strategies and Market Entrance by Susanna Hurme

Each paper provides its own contribution to a complete whole that can act as a guide for "Doing Business in Japan" for design business managers. In the first paper, everything starts with an understanding of the marketplace: how consumers think about fashion products and

consume them. Seppo Mallenius introduces three different approaches to forming meaningful relationships with Japanese fashion segments – fads, fashion, and basic products.

In the second paper, Vesa Leikos and Katariina Villberg discuss the shared aesthetic values of the Japanese and Finns. This is the basis for understanding the purchasing behaviour of consumers. Four central issues regarding Japanese consumer culture that influence who the Japanese feel about products are presented. These issues are group-centrism, appreciation of background information, high brand awareness and high quality demands.

The third paper by Tuua Rinne and Nina Yppärilä describes how Finnish companies have realized their marketing communication in Japan. The paper illustrates the everyday practices of planning and implementing marketing programmes with local partners from a standardization/adaptation point of view.

Finally, the fourth paper by Susanna Hurme focuses on distribution management of design products in Japan. For small and medium-sized Finnish companies, the challenge involves gaining access to the right marketing channels and developing partnerships.

March 23, 2009 in Hong Kong

Erik Pöntiskoski
Research Advisor
Marketing Finnish Design in Japan

Contents

Appendices

Diffusion of Fashion in Japan - Three approaches to marketing and selling fashion products

Seppo Mallenius

Abstract

Japan is creating new trends like manga, anime, extreme street fashion and high-tech products, which are adopted in the western world. This can give a biased view of Japanese fashion and trends because these factors are only part of the reality. This report contains observations on Japanese fashion and Japanese female and male fashion consuming behaviour based on literature and Internet sources as well as on interviews conducted in Finland and Japan. Although several fashion models are represented, the findings of the study reflect the 'fashion transformation process' in particular. Three types of fashion transformation are discovered - fads, fashion products and basic products. From a managerial perspective, each type of product is distinctive to what kind of success factors, marketing assets, and marketing actions can be associated.

Key Words: fashion, Japan, fashion theory, fad, street fashion, marketing, Finnish design

1 Introduction

This report discusses some fashion-related phenomena in Japan. Twenty-one interviews on marketing Finnish design in Japan were conducted in Finnish and Japanese companies that design, manufacture and do business in Japanese markets. To find out whether Finnish companies were able to transform their products into fashion in Japan, fashion-related questions were included in the interviews.

The first part of the article presents the theoretical background of fashion and introduces some basic concepts and theories of fashion. The article continues by presenting Japanese fashion phenomena like street fashion and its extreme forms and the hectic rhythm of Japanese fashion, which creates the need for fast fashion or pronto moda. It also reports some characteristics of Japanese female and male fashion consuming behavior and trends.

The theoretical and managerial implications are discussed at the end of the report. The findings are based on both interviews and on literature and Internet sources. Although the interviews were conducted in Finland and Japan, the findings can be relevant for companies representing other nationalities.

2 Fashion

We stumble onto fashion everywhere, whether we want to or not. Fashion can be seen in clothing, accessories, jewellery, cars, and interior design, even in ideologies such as green values. Dichter (1985) mentions in his article that fashion started when the fig leaf was used, and the psychology of fashion has remained the same ever since. He thinks that fashion has two psychological aspects: discovery and life. When we try something new, we feel different or fresh. Fashion is an expedition into the unknown. With respect to life, fashion tries to make us younger. The role of the fashionable commodities, clothes, cosmetics, and groceries is to make us look younger and feel younger; fashion often succeeds in fulfilling that role.

2.1 Properties of Fashion

Nowadays fashion is regarded as a complex phenomenon that consists of fashion objects and the fashion process (Sproles 1974). He states that fashion objects can be a material, stylistic object or service or even a non-material behavioural practice or ideological philosophy. The fashion process is the flow of fashion objects from creation to the public, how they diffuse in the social system and eventually how they fade away. Sproles has defined fashion as follows:

"A fashion is a culturally endorsed form of expression, in a particular material or non-material phenomenon, which is discernible at any given time and changes over time within a social system or group of associated individuals"

The fashion process, which can also be regarded as the product life cycle, has speed and duration. Figure 1 shows four phases of product life cycles and how basic product, fashion and fad relate to them.
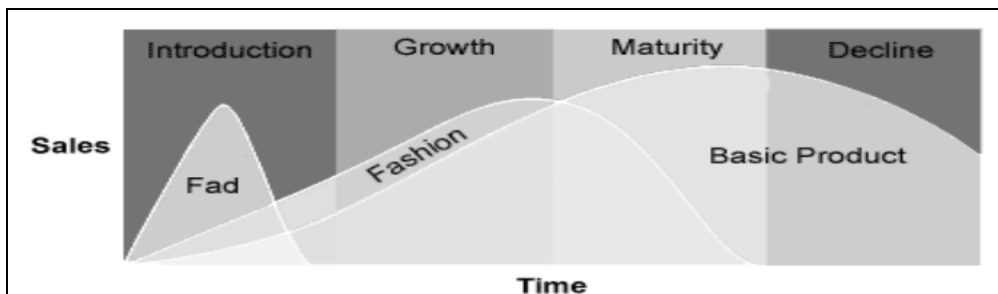
Figure 1. Product life cycles (http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/cuttingedge/lifeCycle)

During the introduction phase, a small group of individuals adopt a new product or style and they often act as change agents to disseminate it to the public during the growth phase. In the maturity phase, the popularity of the product is greatest until the decline phase, when sales start to decrease, because people want to have something else, new products.

Fashion life cycles are shorter than those of basic products. Sproles (1981) writes that fashion cycles have long-run and short-run perspectives. In the long run, the fashion cycle can be several decades or even a century. For instance, skirt lengths change very slowly. The short-run perspective depicts the cycle of single fashion, which is typically a few years. Inside the fashion cycle there are continuous smaller changes in the details of clothes and accessories, like changes in ornamentation, colours and fabric, but the basic design remains the same. Fashion designers and retailers want to launch one or two collections every year, but classic styles maintain their position year after year.

Recently the tempo of fashion cycle has accelerated substantially. Modern communication, like the Internet and mobile phones, plays an important role in spreading information about new trends. This phenomenon is also called "fast fashion" (Rath et al 2008, p. 304). Fast fashion retailers, like Swedish H&M, create new collections and trends in a few weeks.

Fads are a special form of fashion. Their duration is very short, like one year or one season. Because they are of short duration, fads do not necessarily have enough time to spread widely. Fads can also be extreme or strange so that only a small group or subculture adopts them. Some examples of fads are pet rocks or platform shoes (Rath et al 2008, p. 304). Fads can be very similar to fast moving trends, which can be difficult to distinguish. It is possible that inside a fashion, the main theme remains the same, but its manifestations change continuously (Letscher 1990).

The dissemination and adoption of fashion can take place in many ways, word-of-mouth, idols' examples, magazines, and television. There are several theories about how fashion styles are spread and why fashion consumers accept new styles.

2.2 Fashion Models

As a phenomenon, researchers have tried to explain the diffusion and importance of fashion in society. Researchers have put emphasis on various fashion models depending on their own area of expertise, which proves that fashion and fashion behaviour are complicated systems. There are several types of fashion models presented in the following paragraphs. Finally, there are some modern models that bring out the dynamics of fashion.

2.2.1 Types of Fashion Theories

Sproles (1985) has presented a summary of existing fashion models. The main types of models are listed in Figure 2. The most popular and most referenced representatives of those models are presented here. Sproles' original list is more complete.

➢ Sociological models	➢ Geographic models
➢ Communication models	➢ Historical models
➢ Psychological models	➢ Aesthetic models
➢ Economic models	➢ Business-Marketing models
➢ Cultural models	

Figure 2. Fashion models (Sproles 1985)

Sociological models originate from sociology. The trickle-down theory (Simmel 1904) is one of the oldest and best-known fashion theories. It suggests that fashions are adopted first in upper social classes, from where they descend to lower social classes. When the fashion has trickled down to the lowest level, a new fashion is already on its way. Another famous sociological model is called the collective behaviour model (Blumer 1969), in which fashion is regarded as a wave that passes over the social system. This implies that the members of the group have mutual conformance; they want to show that they belong to the same social structure.

Communication models emphasize the mass media, interpersonal communication and change agents as tools for spreading fashion among people. The adoption and diffusion model, which is based on Rogers' (1962) model of diffusion of innovations, suggests that individuals can be classified in five types based on their eagerness to adopt new fashion (Figure 3).

Innovators are the pioneers; they are the first to go for new trends; they have the courage to try new things. They are followed by early adopters and so on. Innovators are fashion-conscious opinion leaders or change agents and they persuade their friends and other people to follow the trend. Another theory of this category is the symbolic communication model. The idea of symbolic communication is very similar to the trickle-down theory, but in it fashion delivers symbolic meanings such as prestige, which is then accepted more widely.
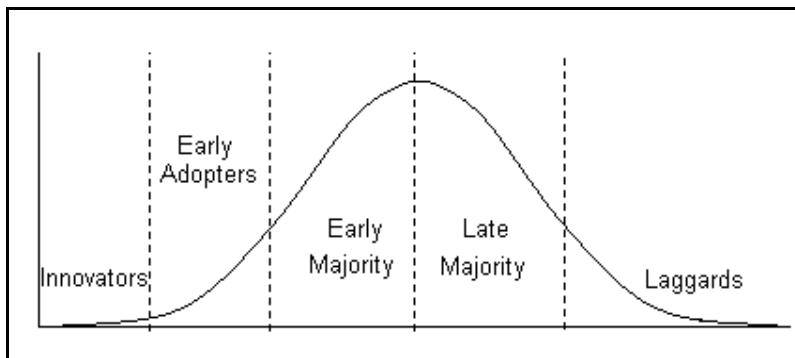
Figure 3. Adopting innovations or fashion (Rogers 1962)

Sproles (1985) continues his summary with psychological models that explain the changing fashions by human feelings and characteristics like individuality. Individualism-centred models are used to explain how people look for and initiate new fashion so that they can satisfy their need for excitement, exhibitionism or fun. The individualist view also explains why fashion becomes obsolete; when fashion has spread too much, it stops being interesting, fashion-conscious individualists become bored and they want something new. Conformity-centred models complement individualist-centred models. Conformity acts as social pressure and it takes care that an initiated fashion or trend will continue spreading, because people want to please the group they belong. However, people tend not to use exactly the same clothing or other accessories. The uniqueness motivation model states that people want to conform to other people, but at the same time they want to find differences that are still at a socially acceptable level (Snyder and Fromkin 1977). This explains why inside a trend or fashion there are many variations, for instance in the colours or details of garments.

Economic models approach fashion from a macro-economic perspective. They try to interpret fashions based on concepts such as demand or scarcity. The higher prices are, the more

limited the demand for fashion is, and when prices sink demand increases. Scarcity increases the prices of fashionable products in the same way and they offer prestige for the users.

Among cultural models the sub-cultural leadership model explains how specific groups like teenagers, black Americans, Japanese schoolgirls or Hell's Angels can become leaders of fashion. They start the trend and it may become accepted by the public. The culture production systems model is built on the assumption that the creation and dissemination of a cultural symbol, or in this case fashion, is a calculated phenomenon. Someone creates a new symbol (a rock star), someone manages the distribution (a record company) and someone communicates the symbolic meaning to consumers (an advertising agency).

Geographical models predict that fashions spread from larger centres (urban) to smaller (rural). For instance, according Sproles (1985), in the United States fashion come from Europe to US coastal cities and then continues inland.

Historical models explain how retro can become fashionable again; there is a long, slow cycle with certain fashion phenomena. Another historical theory has explained how changes in fashion are seldom radical, for instance, the length of skirts has changed slowly, inch by inch.

Aesthetic models seek the roots of fashion from aesthetics, art and the concept of beauty. The art movement model finds relationships to art movements. It recognizes the impact of neoclassicism, cubism, romanticism, pop art and other trends on fashion. The 'ideals of beauty model' uses the current standard for what is beautiful. International models, television, movies and magazines shape our idea, what is beautiful.

Finally, the business-marketing models are the last category of fashion theories listed by Sproles. The mass marketing model combines mass production with mass marketing and thus creates a fashion that is available to all social classes at all prices. The market infrastructure model claims that fashion designers, retailers and the media can decide what will be marketed as fashion. However, they must create a marketing strategy, listen to customers and determine how to make products easily available to fulfil consumers' needs.

2.2.2 Modern Theories of Fashion

A more recent fashion theory is symbolic interactionist theory of fashion by Kaiser et al (1995). The starting point of their theory is the ambivalence of human beings (Figure 4).
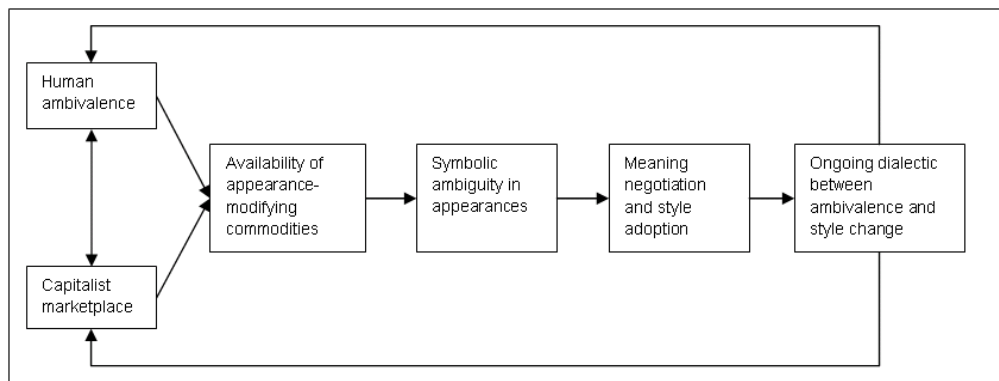
Figure 4. Symbolic Interactionist Theory: fashion process (Kaiser et al. 1995, p.176)

People tend to hesitate in deciding whether to conform to society or to be different from others. When the market offers different commodities to change appearance (fashion or style), people start to negotiate in their social environment (friends, family) to determine whether a particular style suits them. This is why the styles are said to be symbolically ambiguous. People think what the style means to them and adopt the style or choose another one. The next step in symbolic interactionist theory is the ongoing dialectic between ambivalence and style change, which means that human ambivalence and changed styles never complete each other; people find anyway new needs that they want to change or emphasize. So, new styles are created and human ambivalence remains and the cycle starts again. The theory combines micro- and macro-level processes i.e. the processes through which individuals interpret or form their own ideas about a new fashion and how society reacts to the new fashion.

Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002 have developed the social interactionist theory further. They call it the fashion transformation process (Figure 5). The process is divided into four levels; the micro/macro i.e. individual/society division of the social interactionist theory is divided further into two sublevels.

The macro-subjective level interprets the "spirit of the time or Zeitgeist". On this level, fashion change reflects issues and trends in a society. Green values or objecting to fur farming

can be modern trends. Depending on their interest in these trends, consumers can conform to them by choosing an acceptable dress, consumers can oppose trends by selecting an alternative dress, they can hide by choosing an escape dress with which they are chameleons in society or they can modify the trend by adapting a dress that is similar to the trend, but still slightly different. These dress selections happen on the macro-objective level.
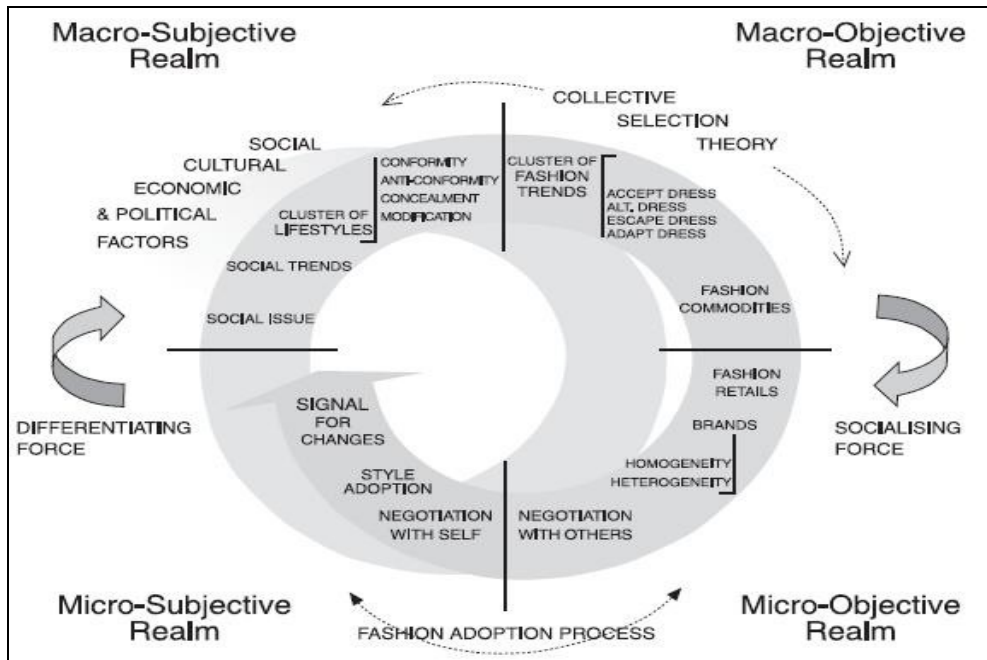
Figure 5. Fashion Transformation process model (Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002)

On the micro-objective level, consumers interact with fashion commodities. Retailers sell the brands in their shops and the brands compete with each other. If the prices of trends are the same (homogeneity), the trends compete by societal interpretation and if the style is the same (heterogeneity) the trends can compete with prices. The adoption of trends follows the fashion adoption process. Fashion innovators and early adopters buy new commodities first and the majority follows, as shown in Figure 3. In the micro-subjective level consumers interpret the new look to determine whether it fulfils their needs. There are two antagonistic forces, which individuals must balance; do they want to conform to their reference group or do they want to be unique. Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002 call these forces the "socializing force" and the "differentiating force". The negotiation and adoption give signals to society, which create new needs and initiate new trends and fashions.

3 Fashion in Japan

For a few decades, Japan has been a stage for the appearance of striking styles in youth fashion as well as the origin of several phenomena that have spread out to the rest of the world. For instance, tamagotchi was a hit product in the 90s, the electronic pet, which needed care and attention from its owner. Some of the products have been more successful and longer lasting, like Japanese cartoons and comics: anime and manga. These are phenomena that can be seen in western countries.

Inside Japan, fashion has its own characteristics. Although Japan is westernising, Japanese female and male fashion consumers may differ to some extent from their western counterparts. This is visible in recent literature on Japanese fashion and also in the interviews that were conducted for this study.

3.1 Characteristics of Fashion in Japan

One of the most famous phenomena in Japan is street fashion (Japanese Street Fashion 2008, Japanese Lifestyle 2008 and Harajukustyle 2008). The kogyaru (school girl) style with platform shoes, miniskirts, bleached hair and expensive design accessories is very visible in Shibuya, especially in the fashion store complex called 109 (in Japanese Marukyu). This style was initiated in 1996 by the Japanese pop-star Namie Amuro (Frederick 2004). Other more striking and unforgettable subcultures are the Lolita style with cute garments and the Ganguro style with strongly tanned or almost blackened faces, which was later replaced by the more extreme, but short-term style Amazoness. The Yamamba (mountain witch) style developed in the late 90s and evolved into Mamba, which is now fading away (Kawamura 2006). Another style that still exists is Cosplay, with clothes imitated from manga, video games or bands. The respective style for young males is called gyaru-o, which also has sub styles like military, rock and American casual.

The target group for street fashion is female and male teenagers, although some Japanese young people keep admiring street fashion even when older. High-end fashion starts attracting the interest of these young females and males. For instance, females between 20 and 30 called oneegyaru, where "onee" refers to elder sister, may combine expensive accessories from Vuitton or Prada with street fashion clothing.

Consumers aged 20 and more are in general similar to Western consumers, except that Japanese may use more expensive design accessories as the editor of the Japanese Lifestyle website stated in his blog (Japanese Lifestyle 2009). However, according to McCaughan (2004), one of the trends in Japan is the youthing of luxury. By this he means that luxury products are nowadays marketed more to younger and younger people. One factor promoting this behaviour is "six pockets", which means that parents and grandparents want to give the best to their children and grandchildren, so that they may spend a lot of money on luxury products (Sato and Kato 2005).

McCaughan (2004) writes that younger people like junior high school kids are also gaining importance in other areas of fashion; they have become trend-setters or arbiters of fads during this decade. In the 90s high school students created the styles and a decade earlier the role was played by office ladies, women older than 20. This rejuvenation can also be seen in one more trend: the childult. Japanese adults are allowed to be interested in and use products that are associated solely with children. Today's grownups are into Harry Potter, Miyazaki's films or Moomin. On the streets of Tokyo it is possible to see businessmen in suits and with Hello Kitty figures on their mobile phone straps. The cute figure of Hello Kitty hanging on phone straps is one example of the specialties of Japanese brand culture that should be taken into account. These are cuteness and coolness. When the Japanese see a product or even a person they like, they say "kawaii". There is no definition of cuteness; it comes from the heart of the Japanese people (Kawamura 2006, p.795)

> *"Brands must tap into these emerging trends to achieve the very Japanese trait of 'kawaii' and 'kakkoii' – cuteness and cool." (WARC 2005)*

3.2 Rhythm of Japanese Fashion

The speed of the fashion cycles in Japan seems to be fast. Fast fashion or pronto moda is meant to react to changes in the market very rapidly and effectively. Cocolulu and Egoist, which are retailers in the famous Tokyo's Marukyu fashion department store, have a weekly fashion buying procedure for high-school girl fashion. The procedure consists of the eight steps presented in Figure 6.

All these steps take only one week and furthermore, market research is done in the streets of Shibuya and all samples are manufactured in South Korea (Azuma 2002). Also, some

interviewees of this study stated that in Japan the fashion and trends change quickly, although they were referring mainly to fashion among young people.

"If something lasts in Japan one year, we think it is long… It is rapid, very rapid"
(Japanese male)

Merchandising and buying procedure of *pronto moda* apparel firms

Friday	Saturday and Sunday	Monday and Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday and Sunday	Monday
Market research (Tokyo)	Design and merchandise planning (Tokyo)	Prototype sample order and sample making (15 hours)	Final sample ready (Seoul) Test sales (Tokyo)	Test sales results Buy order decision (Tokyo)	Market research (Tokyo)	Design and merchandise planning (Tokyo)	Ordered merchandise (Thursday's orders) ready (Seoul)

Source: Fieldwork

Figure 6. Fast fashion or pronto moda (Azuma 2002, p.142)

In other areas of fashion, the rhythm is similar to global life cycles of fashion. For instance, the clothing industry follows the four seasons; they launch autumn, winter, spring and summer collections. The interview in a department store in Sendai revealed that the existence of four seasons gives the basic structure for buying products, but they do it twice a season. They supply the commodities in the department store in eight periods.

"Japan has four seasons and the fashion changes with the seasons very precisely… For instance, in the USA they may wear a pullover all year round and they are different in that sense, but if we watch Japan, there are eight periods and people are very careful that even the jacket is the same there are different versions for spring and winter… so there is a difference in colours and materials… and these change with the seasons… And of course we want to make advantage of this, because we want to sell a lot, so we divide the year into eight periods."
(Japanese department store manager)

The interview in the department store brought out that the nature of fashion has also changed so that the former periods of fashions are no longer so clearly defined.

"Recently we have seen reactions that shoes and other things do not have a distinct position in the cycles… customers have started to use summer items in spring and vice versa… the clear phases have recently started to get mixed…"
(Japanese department store manager)

One of the interviewees thought that the trends are overwhelming and it is impossible to follow them. Another message in the comment and also in the literature was that the

consumers often create the trends; the role of designers or stylists has diminished (Kawamura 2006, Zaun 2003).

> *Fashion in Japan is no longer led by the designers or stylists anymore. Probably we don't really have the, the – trends, only this trend or that trend, but there are lots of trends going on together and someone pick up this, and then it becomes like a famous, or… or spread. So it's more like oriented by the consumers themselves, rather than by designers or stylists.*
>
> <div align="right">(Japanese design specialist)</div>

3.3 Japanese as Fashion Consumers

Traditionally, Japanese society is very masculine. The roles of men and women have been well defined; men take care of the family financially and women stay at home and take care of the children and do the domestic work. However, the society is changing and the transforming distinction between the male and female roles is also reflected in the fashion buying behaviour of female and male consumers.

3.3.1 Japanese Females

One of the interviewees described vividly how the stage of life and social relations may impact consuming behaviour among young females.

> *"From the middle of nineeties to let's say 2001 or 2002 high school girls dominated what's cool and what's not. They started to make their own words that… some of those vocabularies they created, are now in official dictionary of Japanese language. They created a strong force, when it comes to what is wanted and what is cool, what's hip or hot, in terms of music, cloth you were words you use, TV programs you see, Internet sites you use, cell phones you buy. And they still do create kind of a mainstream trend. They are trend-setters. But what they want to do is have followers, who believe what is good or cool. So, the younger ones, they actually don't want to differentiate, but rather they want to have more people joining to what they believe is good and cool. But then after, for instance, high school, when they start university, then they notice that there are so many different high school girls coming to study e.g. in Tokyo area, then they find out that what was cool in Tokyo may not be cool in Hokkaido. Then they gradually try to become unique, try to differentiate from others. That is completely different, opposite movement from what they were doing in high school. So then, at least, how I saw through asking some surveys, when I was doing business that… the peak was the early years of thirties when they really wanted to be free from any third person's opinion, but just choose whatever feels good, like pink when the trend was black. All the high school girls would use black, but older generation, in early thirties, they are free to choose pink and laughing at those high school girls wearing black, everything black, skin black, hair black, clothes black."*
>
> <div align="right">(Japanese male)</div>

This story contains observations that can also be explained by fashion theories, some of which were presented in chapter 0. For instance, the kogyaru or street fashion phase of young girls is an example where the two forces; differentiating and socializing, seek a balance. The members of these groups want to differentiate and be unique inside their ideology and while they are also looking for acceptance or conformance in this style of living. To people who are looking at these groups from the outside, these girls may look very similar, but inside the group, for instance, imitation of friends is not acceptable. Kawamura (2006) has conducted a comprehensive ethnographic study among Shibuya and Harajuku girls who are into street fashion. She uses the symbolic interactionist approach to describe the different sub cultures of kogyaru and states that these groups have common values and attitudes which are expressed through their characteristic clothes, makeup, accessories and jewelry. At the same time they may live a double life; dressing up is a hobby that they practice only on weekends without their parents knowing it. Some parents know that their daughters are wearing weird clothes, but ask them not to show up in those clothes at home and in the neighborhood (Kubo 2005). This contradictory situation may also come from the Confucian culture, where group conformity and face saving play an important part (Chung and Pysarchik 2000).

The attitude of parents and also other older people may be quite negative. Some girls have been insulted by strangers and even encountered harassment, like finding chewing gum stuck to the backs of their dresses (Parker 2004). Also, some interviewees referred to these sub cultures and no one praised them in their comments.

> *"We were really sick of it. It was really disgusting to see all those horrible looking girls."*
>
> (Japanese male)

> *"A teenager creates the quite new fashion, originality, by themselves. So the… to be honest, I don't understand the where they came from. About the… that kind of stupid fashion design!"*
>
> (Japanese manager)

However, if the interviewees younger had been under 20, positive comments might have emerged. It looks like the aesthetic fashion models may not be able to explain kogyaru sub cultures because the concept of beauty depends on the person.

It is important to remember that the kogyaru styles with all sub cultures are just sub cultures. Most Japanese school girls and boys dress in a casual way, for example with Levi jeans and t-shirts, Nike shoes and leather jackets, and at school they have to wear school uniforms (Parker et al. 2004), although they mention that pupils may modify their school uniforms to indicate that they belong to a specific group. The same study also reports that Japanese high school students seem to prefer style to comfort when selecting clothes while with American high school students the result is the opposite.

When the girls, who have been enthusiastic about some of these sub cultures, get older, graduate from high school and continue their studies at the universities, they may get a shock. As the example mentioned by the Japanese male continues, the girls may move to other cities and the old relationships may break. This is why they do not have the familiar group to backup their identities; then they form new relationships, which may change their values and attitudes. For instance, they may start to follow high-end fashion. According to the study of Kawabata and Rabolt (1999), Japanese female university students tend to connect the brand name to fashion more clearly than American students. This finding supports the view that every third woman in Japan, that is 36 million women, own Vuitton brand goods (Fernie and Azuma 2004).

One of the Japanese interviewees, who had experience of Japanese females as customers, stated that after the high-end fashion phase of their life, Japanese females might start to appreciate clothes and commodities that are comfortable and please themselves.

> *"… If they are younger, they are too later part of teenagers, girls in their twenties just wanting to have Louis Vuitton, Prada, those brands that everyone knows. So, that they don't get kicked out from the group. But when they grow a bit older, into their thirties, they are more into what they feel comfortable, not how others see it…"*
>
> (Japanese male)

3.3.2 Japanese Males

Japanese males have not been as fashion-conscious as Japanese women (Parker et al 2004). This is also visible in the extreme styles of street fashion; when walking around Shibuya and Harajuku; it is mainly the girls who display the extraordinary clothes. However, this composition may change. Bakewell et al (2006) made a study among young British men.

Although this study was conducted in Europe, there are aspects that are applicable in Japan as well. The study presented factors that influence male fashion-consciousness (Figure 7).
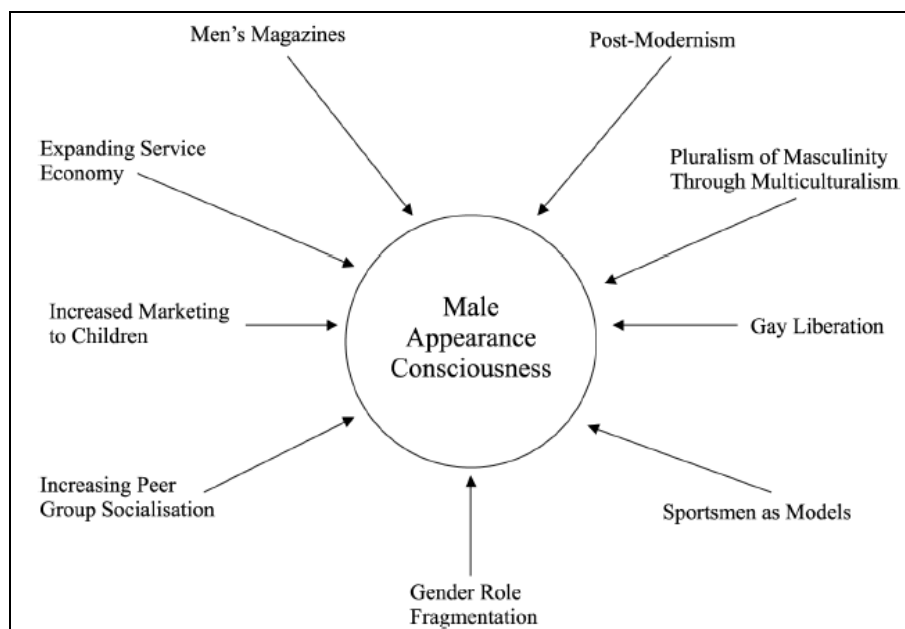
Figure 7. Male appearance consciousness (Bakewell et al 2006, p.172)

The society and roles of individuals have changed; the post-modern economy has also transformed men into consumers and the perception of masculinity has changed due to multiculturalism, gay liberation and changes in gender roles. Modern men are used to seeing famous athletes as models advertising clothes, accessories and skin care products and they are freer to talk about it. Also, the variety of men's magazines is nowadays huge and they are an important channel for fashion-related information.

Most of these factors are relevant or even more significant in Japan than in Europe. A similar transformation of society is happening in Japan; especially young people get impulses from western culture (Koehn 1999). Also, the attitudes and gender roles of young people are becoming more emancipated and same media phenomena have taken place (Tanaka 2003). Brasor and Masako (1995) write that young Japanese men have never been so worried about their feminine features in their personality compared to western men. This has encouraged unisex street fashion, like tight T-shirts, reverse layering, hair bands or hairstyles.

Koehn (1999) categorized Japanese male fashion consumers into three groups. Students aged 15 to 22, who were not yet affected much by the recession of that time, form the first group. Japanese companies started to use part-time workers and these young people have pocket money to spend on fashion. The second group consists of men over 40 who could be regarded as nouveau riche or yuppies. These men often live in double-income relationship with or without children. The third group is the real "fashionists". They live for fashion and buy it because it is part of their life style.

Nowadays, it looks like that during the last ten years, Japanese men are more and more interested in fashion and a kind of vanity is no longer something, which one should be ashamed of (McCracken 2003). Also, men allow themselves to have some luxuries like brand clothes, hair and skin care products, watches and other accessories. McCracken writes in his article that on Tuesdays the television show 'Junk Sports' shows a segment called 'Narita Collection', which features the wardrobe and accessories of famous Japanese sportsmen. At the end of the show, the total cost of the clothes is calculated and the value can exceed 1000000 Yen or 8500 Euros. In business life, Japan has been very conservative; men wear suits and ties. Recently there have been changes; McCracken writes about a company that switched from casual Friday to an everyday casual dress code. Morse and Inada (2006) tell us about Cool Biz, which is a governmental programme to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by decreasing air-conditioning in offices during the hot, humid months of summer. The program suggests that businessmen leave their jackets and ties home and dress lighter. For instance, Japan's former Prime Minister Koizumi appeared in the media in open-necked white shirts. Some fashion commentators criticized him, but many businessmen welcomed the style with open arms.

Men and in particular, Japanese men, seem to value high-tech features in products. When one Japanese male was asked to recommend a good rice cooker, he concentrated only on the technical details like how the machine has a timer and uses a special convection system that is very efficient. One of the interviewees mentioned Tumi bags, which are very popular among businessmen in Japan.

> *"I have always surprised when I see Japanese business people is that they love Tumi business bags, the ones from US. And... my father he very often goes to United States and he says that Tumi's brand in the US is not too expensive... good in function and everything that business person needs, but nothing more... ... They are still paying the*

same price in yen, because they see the value in it, technology oriented. They use high-tech materials and they need ten places to put a pencil or some things, individual pockets for cell phones or something like that. They really love it."

(Japanese male)

One of the interviewees thought that Japanese men are also nowadays more interested in interior design. In Japan, there are shops that sell different kind of small items or decorations like pots, plates, statues, candles or textiles. These shops are called Zakka (雑貨), which means 'many things'. However, once when the undersigned visited this kind of shop, there were no other men there. So, this may also depict the change of attitude and values.

"About zakka… many young men are living alone, so long time so they have started kind of having interest in their surroundings and in a way also other reason is that there have been many lifestyle magazines and this also kind of… so that male people can also have interest in interior… before it was not so interested, men were not so interested in interior"

(Japanese male student)

3.3.3 Sustainable Values

Fashion and trends reflect "the spirit of the time". Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002 describe in the fashion transformation process model (Figure 5) how macro-subjective realm introduces social issues and social trends into fashion. One of the Japanese interviewees said that artists and designers transmit their feelings to fashion:

"… and then… what these artists and designers or feel, experience and live, those things take forms in that product or creation… so, they are very sensitive to all phenomena of the world… "

(Japanese manager)

Also, Japanese consumers have more and more interest in green values and sustainable consumption. The Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization also promotes these values. They have created Good Design Award and Sustainable Design Award (JIDPO 2009). One of the interviewees commented that Japanese people are becoming more aware of sustainable fashion.

"Lifestyle, and nowadays I, I think they are, they are very… Uuh… They are very interested in the how is the house, the interior also. That is big change I think. Because Japanese are interested in food and clothes, but not so much in living, interior;, but nowadays they more, have intention about interiors and design also. I mean the normal

people. So that is one. And… nowadays the sus…sustainable design is also a fashion in Japan"

<div align="right">(Japanese female)</div>

One of the interviewees referred to the "mottainai" concept, according to which people should not throw away old items, and instead repair them and use them again.

"We have the traditional value of this mottainai concept, e.g. if I throw this and this away, I'm sure my mother would be mad. I can wash it and use it again, so the traditional value is that we take care of things nicely and instead of throwing things we… according to our traditional value we should fix it and use it again until it is completely unusable."

<div align="right">(Japanese male)</div>

Another interviewee told about Japanese brand called "Mujirushi" or more briefly "Muji". Their products are made of natural materials and have a reputation for being nature friendly.

"I have a question… do you know Japanese brand Mujirushi… I think that Muji brand is very simple and… basically made from natural material. So, concept is very near to hmmm. Scandinavia design… that in Japan, muji is very, very popular, especially for students who don't have much money so they start think of life, they collect all things in Muji brand…   …Mujirushi means "no brand", mujirushi… So, Japanese don't like outstanding design in housing, muji is very reserved, modest. It is very interesting"

<div align="right">(Japanese female student)</div>

3.3.4 Communication Channels

Television is the most important channel to promote new products in Japan. In the Tokyo and Kansai area the weekly reach of TV is about 88% whereas newspapers reach 41% (WARC 2005). The role of celebrities on TV is essential, in commercials or even better, in drama or documentary programmes, in which case the company promoting their product does not necessarily have to pay anything for the promotion.

And the other side, this is one of other good exposure. Free exposure about the TV drama. This is one good result of the... this drama is called SP, Security Polices. Yes then we can get good exposure about our products about these dramas.

<div align="right">(Japanese manager)</div>

The Japanese mobile phones give one more channel for TV to reach consumers, just as one of the interviewees mention.

"Still TV is the dominant and now we have this "1seg" (ワンセグ, wansegu) service, you can see TV very clearly through your cell phones. It is just *like this DVB-H, it is this*

new Nokia is promoting… like you can see, you can receive TV with the cell phone. So, even though the Internet and cell phone internet sites are becoming very strong in Japan, I feel that TV is by far still the dominant channel with a famous artist or famous singer is wearing a dress made by Marimekko. So it was not magazines not radio it was the TV and it still is TV."

(Japanese male)

In general, the Japanese, especially the young used mobile phones constantly. They read and write emails via their phones. Emails are used also instead of text messages because short message system is not supported widely in Japan. Japanese companies have websites that are easy to access with mobile phones.

Kawamura (2006) says that within street fashion, the most important channel for spreading information about new trends is word-of-mouth. Internet and mobile phones have created a new channel called "electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which consists of e-mails, blogs, news groups or community sites (Okazaki 2008). Okazaki studied whether young people are willing to participate in a brand promotion campaign, in this case men's hair wax, via their mobile phones. According to the study, young people seem to disseminate the information to their peers as long as a hedonistic-utilitarian aspect was involved i.e. the users enjoy using the mobile phones and more important, they feel that they benefit from it. Viral marketing plays an important role, especially among young people, where collectivism is strong.

4 Discussion

This study makes some observations that support theoretical research on fashion, regarding for example the dynamic nature of fashion and the synthesis of different aspects of fashion, which occurs, for instance, in the fashion transformation process model. Some of the observations may be useful for companies that do business in Japan. These implications are discussed in the following sections.

4.1 Research Implications

There are various types of models that explain different aspects of fashion. The diffusion of fashion is one of the topics that interests researchers. Based on the literature and interviews, groups of Japanese people, such as high school girls or boys, university students or working females or males, seem to have two levels of need for uniqueness and conformance. People seek uniqueness regardless of whether they are into street fashion, extreme styles of youth fashion or high-end fashion. Inside the group to which the person belongs, being exactly like someone else is not acceptable. However, especially among young people, being unique and different from other people inside their group is the common denominator for the members of the group. The conformance is very high. At the same time, the group itself wants to be unique and different from other groups.

In Japanese culture, the Confucian and Japanese Shinto heritage put an emphasis on face saving and respect for hierarchies like those of the family or the workplace. This may have had an impact on how the extreme styles are created and used in Japan. Although the styles are unusual and shocking, they do not represent changes of a permanent nature, as tattoos or piercings do. The kogyaru and other extreme styles are merely like a masquerade or role play, which can be regarded as manifestations of alternative dresses expressing anti-conformity as defined in the fashion transformation process (Figure 5).

The fashion transformation process depicts fashion as an evolving and dynamic process. New fashions arise from social issues and trends like pacifism, green values and sustainable consuming, but also old fashions are modified and some of them fade away. The extent to which these people accept different fashions and trends depends on the balance between the "socializing force" and the "differentiating force" (Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002). However,

regarding the fashion behaviour of one person, the criteria for acceptance of different fashions and trends evolve and are dynamic. The attitudes and values change depending on the phase of personal life, which affects the balance between the "socializing force" and the "differentiating force" or the need for conformance and uniqueness.

4.2   Managerial Implications

Products can be categorized in three types based on the speed of the lifecycles and diffusion; fads, fashion and basic products. We analyze the marketing actions that companies should take when they want to penetrate Japanese markets and reach the hearts of Japanese consumers.

Fads, short-term booms in fashion, require a presence in Japan. Also street fashion, which consists of several short trends, necessitates direct contact with consumers; observation and discussion, including the virtual environment like blogs and discussion forums on the Internet. It is important to be authentic and credible in the eyes of consumers; show that the product fulfils their values and expectations. The manufacturer must sense the pulse and react immediately, using e.g. fast fashion techniques to respond to the demand of consumers. This can be impossible to put into practice from outside of Japan. If a foreign company starts in this area, they should have an office in Tokyo, local and creative people determining needs and an effective supply-chain. It could be possible to invent a product or concept that would be a fad, but because the duration of the fads is short, companies must create several fads in succession to generate continuous cash flow. The strategy for fast moving trends, like street fashion, should be similar.

> *"So we have to take some antenna, I mean we have to concentrate about the trend, not only the fashion but also any kinds of news, then we will present to the not only the distributor but also the end users how do you wearing our product."*
>
> (Japanese manager)

Fashion needs a strong brand. The Japanese in particular associate fashion and brand. Finland benefits from the fact that many Japanese know Finland. They know Moomin, Santa Claus, the northern lights, lakes and forests. In the interviews Japanese people thought of nature and cleanness. In this sense, Finland could create brands related to these features. One of the interviewees thought that the potential target group with these values could be women in their early thirties.

"So, I think it probably is most attractive and in a way easiest way to persuade, especially new brands coming from Finland, since they already have had a mental connection to Finland, mainly through Moomin. They are more open to new things. If they are younger, they are too later part of teenagers, girls in their twenties just wanting to have Luis Vuitton, Prada, those brands that everyone knows. So, that they don't get kicked out from the group. But when they grow a bit older, into their thirties, they are more into what they feel comfortable, not how others see it. So, they don't mind using completely new brands that nobody knows as long as they are satisfied with the mental connection with the new brand. That was also one reason why I chose the early thirties instead of younger people."

(Japanese male)

The image of nature could be one reason, why SECCO, a Finnish company that manufactures new products from recycled materials, has been successful in Japan. The concept may appeal especially to older people, who are familiar with the "mottainai" concept, and also to younger people, who value sustainable and green ideas.

SECCO, they still have the lineup that they use recycled LPs and chopped them in half then sell them as books and CDs. And when we had that in the exhibition in May, so many people liked them. Especially, the older people, because they have a lot of those LPs still at home and maybe sometimes the record player does not work anymore, but they are happy to see that there is a way to pay respect to old things. So, it is a typical sign of this strong mottainai concept and young people who visited the booth thought it is one way, but older people took pictures and held it in their hands and they really liked that, especially that. So, I think we do have this strong value of we should take care of all this as equally or as nicely as what is new nowadays. Mottainai could be a key word also for SECCOs success. (Japanese male)

But the benefit of nature and cleanness also has a drawback. Especially men appreciate high-tech, so Finland should strengthen the image and reputation of being a technologically advanced nation.

"So, if a Finnish company can come up with certain function or certain materials that truly is high-tech in today's world, probably it is not so difficult to get the hearts of Japanese business persons... males compared to female or younger. That could be one potential area, but then the current image of Finland... we still don't have that kind of high tech oriented image of Finland, because Nokia is still not so successful in Japanese markets at all." (Japanese male)

Creation of an image and brand requires a lot of resources, planning, money and time. Advertising on TV is expensive unless the company manages to slip their products into a film or documentary, which actually is possible. Moore and Smith (2004) emphasize how important it is, especially, for Japanese people to have an opportunity to learn to know the brand, try it and enjoy it or emotionally connect to it.

The life cycle of basic products is longer and in that sense safer for the company. Finnish design is popular within certain consumers and the trend has continued for a relatively long time.

> *"But this kind of trend is really different from booming. Booming is just one time. Peak. But popularity of Finnish design is continuing for almost 5 years, 6 years. Therefore this is really different from booming."* (Japanese specialist)

It is important to find proper distributors or partners to handle basic products and also fashion commodities. If the distributor is exclusive, the costs may rise very high and in the opposite case, if the department store chain is a low-price market, the image of the product may suffer despite its high quality. In Japan relationship management with all local partners is vital for success.

> *"...we have over I think is a... over 1 million... no... 10 million distributors in Japan right now, so but we have to, we cannot you know control that kind of huge amount of distributors, so first of all, we can find found good... you know... a power distributor and then outdoor shop power distributor, fashion power distributor and then they will sell to the more small shops."* (Japanese manager)

Figure 8 summarizes the success factors, the marketing assets the company should have and marketing actions to manage these three types of products.
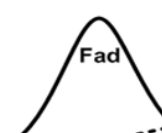
	Fad	Fashion	Basic Product
Success factors	➢ Being on the pulse of the society	➢ Being on the top of the mind of consumers	➢ Being in the distribution channel
Marketing assets	➢ Awareness and understanding of local segments e.g. youth ➢ Authenticity in eyes of fragmented segments	➢ Sizeable advertising budget ➢ Shared assumptions of luxury among customers ➢ Brand equity	➢ Membership in distribution channel reaching the customers
Marketing actions	➢ Fast fashion as operating mode and business model coordinating product development, production, logistic, marketing and sales ➢ Ability to connect and have dialogue with fragmented segments through digital marketing and retail channels	➢ Ability to invest in branding and advertising in order to build top of the mind awareness and preference as luxury product	➢ Ability to sell yourself to right distribution channel ➢ Maintaining and developing partnerships from business, legal, relationship and cultural perspectives

Figure 8. Managerial implications

5   Conclusion

This report introduces several fashion theories, fashion characteristics and fads. Twenty-one Finnish and Japanese people with connections to or working in industrial design or in exporting to Japan were interviewed for this research project. A dozen of these interviews contributed to fashion-related questions. Based on the interviews and literature review, the characteristics of Japanese fashion are presented, including the fashion consumer behaviour of Japanese females and males. Sustainable fashion is taken as an example of a modern ideology that is also spreading to Japan.

This study has some limitations. The number of interviews that provided input on fashion-related question was limited. Also, the fashion-related questions proved to be very difficult for some interviewees to answer because they did not regard themselves as experts of this area. However, this study revealed theoretical and practical observations that can be useful for future studies of this topic.

The study supports the idea that modern fashion models, like the symbolic interactionist theory (Kaiser et al. 1995) or the fashion transformation process (Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002) have suggested, should include several aspects of traditional fashion theories and the dynamic nature of fashion is evident. The dynamic nature of fashion consumer tastes and values is also taken into account when analyzing fashion-buying behaviour.

For business it is important to understand that depending on the type of merchandise, for instance fads or fast changing trends, fashion commodities or basic products, the company must select the correct strategy to penetrate the Japanese market. Fast moving trends or fads need a local presence and local knowledge, marketing fashion needs strong and expensive brands and basic products and close relationships with partners and distribution channels. The understanding of Japanese attitudes is important. In general, the Japanese are becoming more like western consumers, although there still are differences. The Japanese are very fashion-conscious and value famous brands; Japanese males appreciate high-tech features of products. Although the interviews of this study were conducted with people from Finland and Japanese people working with Finnish companies, the results of the study can be useful for other western countries.

References

Azuma, N. (2002), "Pronto moda Tokyo-style – emergence of collection-free street fashion in Tokyo and the Seoul-Tokyo fashion connection", International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2002, pp. 137-144

Bakewell, C., Mitchell, V-W and Rothwell, M. (2006): "UK Generation Y Male Fashion Consciousness", Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2006, pp. 169-180

Blumer, H. (1969): Fashion: From class differentiation to collective selection, Sociological Quarterly, 10, pp. 275–291

Brasor, P. and Masako, T (1995), "Young men take to consumerism", Japan Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 4, 1995, pp. 391-404

Cholachatpinyo, A., Fletcher, B., Padgett, I and Crocker, M (2002), "A conceptual model of the fashion process – part 1: The fashion transformation process model", Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2002, pp. 11-23

Chung, J-E and Pysarchik, D.T (2000), "A model of behavioral intention to buy domestic versus imported products in a Confucian culture", Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 18, No. 5, 2000, pp. 281-291

Dichter, E. (1985), "Why we dress the way we do", in Solomon, M. (Eds), *The Psychology of Fashion*, Lexington Book, Lexington, MA, pp.29-38

Fernie, J. and Azuma, N. (2004), "The changing nature of Japanese fashion - Can quick response improve supply chain efficiency?", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 38, No. 7, 2004, pp. 790-808

Frederick, J. (2004), "Cracking the Code of Tokyo's Teens", Time, Oct 11, 2004. Vol. 164, No. 15, pp. 62-64

Hamilton, J. (1997), "The Macro-Micro Interface in the Construction of Individual Fashion Forms and Meanings", Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1997, pp. 164-171

Harajukustyle (2008), www-pages, http://www.harajukustyle.net/index.htm, accessed 10.11.2008

Herbig, P.A and Milam, R (1994), "When in Japan, Do as the Japanese Do; When in Rome, Do as the Japanese Do: The Achilles' Heel of Japanese Business Philosophy", Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 12, No. 11, 1994, pp. 26-35

Hirano, K. and Miles, S. (2006): "Japan's New Consumer: Less Mania for Brands as Individuality Rules", Women's Wear Daily, Vol. 192, Issue 122, 2006, pp. 1-13

Japanese Lifestyle (2008): http://www.japaneselifestyle.com.au/fashion/fashion.html, accessed 12.12.2008

Japanese Lifestyle (2009): http://www.japaneselifestyle.com.au/japanforum/viewtopic.php?t=1267&sid=06d0c01bb84f58df91ae86761e34d7b5, accessed 2.1.2009

Japanese Street Fashion (2008): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_street_fashion, accessed 10.11.2008

JIDPO (2009): Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization, http://www.jidpo.or.jp/en/, accessed 10.2.2009

Kaiser, S., Nagasawa, R.H. and Hutton, S.S (1995), "Construction of an SI Theory of Fashion: Part 1. Ambivalence and Change", Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, Vol. 13, 1995, pp. 172-183

Kawabata, H. and Rabolt, N.J (1999), "Comparison of clothing purchase behavior between US and Japanese female university students", Journal of Consumer Studies & Home Economics, Vol. 23, Issue 4, 1999, pp. 213-223

Kawamura, Y. (2006): "Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion", Current Sociology, September 2006, Vol. 54, No. 5, pp. 784–801

Knight, D.K. and Kim, E.Y (2007), "Japanese consumers' need for uniqueness: Effects on brand perceptions and purchase intention", Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2007, pp. 270-280

Koehn, V. (1999), "Japanese men make streetwise statements", Japan Quarterly, Vol. 46, No. 2, 1999, pp 30-32

Kubo, E. (2005), "Harajuku Girls Co-opted", J@pan Inc., June 2005, Issue 64, pp. 36-41

Law, K.M, Zhang, Z-M and Leung, C-S (2004), "Fashion change and fashion consumption: the chaotic perspective", Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2004, pp. 362-374

Letscher, M.G. (1990): "Fad or Trend? How to Distinguish Them and Capitalize on Them", Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1990, pp. 21-26

McCaughan, D. (2004), "Japan Top Trends", J@pan Inc., May 2004, Issue 55, p.23

McCracken, M. (2003): "Young Japanese Men Pay Big Bucks for Vanity", J@pan Inc., September 2003, p.6

Moore, K. and Smith, M. (2004): "Taking global brands to Japan", Across the Board, Vol. 41, No. 1, p.39

Morse, A. and Inada, M. (2006): "Japanese Men Dress Down to Cut Summer's Energy Costs", Wall Street Journal (Eastern edition), Jun 9, 2006

Okazaki, S (2008), "Determinant Factors of Mobile-Based Word-of-Mouth Campaign Referral among Japanese Adolescents", Psychology & Marketing, Vol. 25, No. 8, 2008, pp. 714–731

Parker, R.S, Hermans, C.M and Schaefer, A.D (2004), "Fashion consciousness of Chinese, Japanese and American teenagers", Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2004, pp. 176-186

Parker, G. (2004), "The Little-Girl Look Is Big in Japan Now", Wall Street Journal (Eastern edition), Sep 17, 2004, p. A.1

Rath, P.M., Bay, S., Petrizzi, R. and Gill P (2008): "The Why of the Buy: Consumer Behavior and Fashion Marketing", Fairchild Books, 2008

Rogers, E.M (1962): "Diffusion of Innovations", Glencoe, Free Press, Ch. 7

Sato, N. and Kato, Y (2005), "Youth marketing in Japan", Young Consumers, Quarter 3, 2005, pp. 56-60

Simmel, G. (1904): "Fashion", International Quarterly, Vol. 10, pp. 130-155

Snyder, M. and Fromkin, H.L (1977): "Abnormality as a positive characteristic: the development and validation of a scale measuring need for uniqueness", Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Vol. 86, October, pp. 518-27

Sproles, G.B (1974), "Fashion Theory: A Conceptual Framework", Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1974, pp. 463-472

Sproles, G.B (1981), "Analyzing Fashion Life Cycles: Principles and Perspectives", The Journal of Marketing, Vol. 45, No. 4, 1981, pp. 116-124

Sproles, G.B (1985), "Behavioral science theories of fashion", in Solomon, M.R (Eds), *The Psychology of Fashion*, Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, pp.55-69.

Tanaka, K. (2003): "The Language of Japanese Men's Magazines: Young Men Who Don't Want to Get Hurt", in Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines (ed. Benwell B.), Wiley-Blackwell

WARC (2005): "Marketing to Japanese Consumers", Brand Strategy, May 2005, World Advertising Research Center (WARC), pp. 41-43

Zaun, t. (2003), "For Japanese Girls, Uniforms Are Now Too Cool for School - Teenage Trendsetters Skirt Conformity With New Fad - Ms. Sanao's Grunge Touch", Wall Street Journal (Eastern edition), Aug 5, 2003, p. A1

Design and Finnishness in Japanese Consumer Culture

Vesa Leikos

Katariina Villberg

Abstract

Scandinavian design is enjoying steady popularity in Japan and Finnish design companies are also increasingly taking interest in the Japanese market. Finnish and Japanese design are often said to possess similar aesthetic values, despite vast cultural differences between Finland and Japan. This report studies the characteristics of Japanese consumers of design as well as explores their perceptions of Finland and Finnish design based on interviews with Japanese and Finnish experts and group discussions with Japanese consumers. Four key issues are discovered regarding Japanese consumer culture: group-centrism, appreciation of background information, high brand awareness and high quality demands. The country image of Finland, image of Finnish design and similarities between Finnish and Japanese aesthetic ideals are discussed. Managerial recommendations for Finnish companies are given relating to each main issue.

1 Introduction

"A design product is always about culture and about understanding that culture."

Our research contributes to cultural consumer studies (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) regarding the culture specific meaning-making processes of consumers. Specifically, our purpose is to explore the kinds of meanings that Japanese consumers constitute and negotiate discursively when consuming design, and specifically Finnish design products.

We will be covering two distinct themes. The first comprises the characteristics of Japanese consumers of design. How do the Japanese consume design, and what kind of meanings do Japanese consumers attach to design products? Based on the data gathered from the expert interviews, we identified four topics that came up repeatedly in our interviews. These are appreciation for background information, group-centrism, insistence on high quality and high brand awareness.

The second theme concerns how Japanese consumers perceive Finnishness, and what it means to them? More specifically, we study their perception and image of Finnish design. An invariable theme in our interviews is that the Japanese have very positive mental images of Finland, even though these images may often seem a little clichéd and naive to native Finns. It is important for Finnish marketers to understand what kind of meanings the Japanese consumers attach to and expect from Finnish products, as they may differ from what the marketers see as Finnish. Also, we look at the potential socio-economical target groups for Finnish design. Instead of simply grouping consumers by demographics, we identify socio-cultural streams in current Japanese society that can be seen from our data.

Finally, based on these two themes we discuss the kinds of concrete managerial implications our findings have for marketing in Japan by Finnish design firms. Our goal is to help Finnish design companies operating in the Japanese market and trying to enter the market and to better understand Japanese consumers and Japanese consumer culture in order to formulate better marketing strategies.

2 Methodology

The expert interviews as described in the introduction to this research constitute the main research method. Further data were also gathered for this article from two group discussions with ordinary consumers, one in Kawasaki and the other in Yokohama. These discussions dealt mainly with the image of Finland and Finnish design. To stimulate discussion, the participants were presented with images of Finland and Finnish design products during the sessions.

These discussions proved to be very demanding, and drawing conclusions from them is challenging. A big problem was the language barrier. Because of the need for translation, group moderation was very difficult. Also, there were other constraints beyond our control, such as group size and the availability of time. One common feature of these two interviews is that at least one of our informants in each interview had prepared for the interview by searching for information about Finland beforehand. One informant found information from an electronic dictionary; another brought her daughter's primary school geography book to the interview. This of course was not at all what we wanted, as we were looking for spontaneous reactions and discussion (Puchta and Potter, 2004). This kind of spontaneity and informality is not very natural in Japanese culture.

Some of the findings, especially those regarding the country image of Finland, also draw from these group discussions. They provide us with hints about what the average Japanese consumer actually knows about Finland or Finnish design. We also prepared a questionnaire that was filled in by the informants of our group discussions. In total, we received 17 questionnaires with some kind of answers and 15 of them were complete. The questionnaires combined closed-ended & open-ended questions such as scaled questions, word association questions and unstructured questions. The informants were asked to fill in the questionnaires while or after the interviewers showed posters of Finnish products and Finnish travel posters as well as some actual products.

3   Theoretical Background

3.1   Consumer Culture

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the cultural approach to marketing research. The basic assumption here is that we live in a culturally constituted world, and that in contemporary Western society this constitution largely takes place in and through the market. The marketplace is a joint cultural production of marketers and consumers, and consumers and marketers negotiate cultural meaning in relation to each other in the marketplace (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006).

Culture refers to the systems of representation through which people make sense of their everyday life. Culture is not a socially integrating system of norms and values that produces social order; Rather, it is produced, transformed and contested in social interaction. Therefore, culture is not seen as something to be reduced to a fixed locality or entity such as nationality or ethnicity (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

3.2   Consumer Culture in Japan

Perceptions of Japan are often based on the Japan of big corporations, such as Toyota, Sony and Matsushita. However, in the 21st century Japan manufacturing and a large part of the industrial jobs are being shifted to background, or to other Asian countries where cheap labor and mass market are thriving. Also, the perceptions of the mass nature of Japanese consumption are outdated. The contemporary Japanese market is constantly moving and hectic by nature, slipping away from definitions. Because the volume of goods and material supplied already exceeded the actual needs of people in the eighties, the shape of the market has moved towards different immaterial value added services and a culture of symbolic consumption. Japan must be one of world's leading markets in consumption of different brands and symbolic meanings and images (Turkki, 2005).

3.3 Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods

According to McCracken (1986), consumer goods have significance that goes beyond their utilitarian character and commercial value. This significance is largely based on their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning. We think that in the case of design products this is especially relevant.

Furthermore, this meaning is constantly moving. Meaning is usually transferred from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods. Then the meaning is drawn from the object and transferred to an individual consumer. In other words, cultural meaning is located in three places: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, and moves in a trajectory between two points of transfer: world to good and good to individual.

The world of everyday experience from which meanings are drawn to goods is shaped and constituted by the beliefs and assumptions of the culture to which an individual consumer belongs. Culture constitutes the phenomenal world in two ways. First, culture is the "lens" through which the individual views phenomena. Second, culture is the "blueprint" of human activity, determining the co-ordinates of social action and productive activity, and specifying the behaviors and objects that issue from both. As a lens, culture determines how the world is seen. As a blueprint, it determines how the world will be fashioned by human effort. In short, culture constitutes the world by supplying it with meaning.

McCracken also identifies instruments of meaning transfer in his framework: advertising and the "fashion system" (this includes product design, media and opinion leaders) draw meaning from the world to goods, and consumers draw meaning from goods to themselves through different rituals. McCracken identifies four such rituals: exchange rituals, possession rituals, grooming rituals and divestment rituals.

Cleaning, discussing, comparing, reflecting on and personalizing possessions are possession rituals and contribute to taking possession of the meanings of consumer goods. Exchange rituals are the various rituals of gift giving. Examples of grooming rituals are "going out" rituals, showing off the product in public, and maintenance of the product. They serve to "freshen" the properties drawn from goods. Divestment rituals are used to empty goods of

meaning, and take place when consumers are about to dispense with a good, or when an individual purchases a good that has been previously owned.

Culturally Constituted World

Advertising   Fashion System

KEY:

Consumer Goods

Location of Meaning

Possession   Exchange   Grooming   Divestment
Ritual   Ritual   Ritual   Ritual

Instrument of
Meaning Transfer

Individual Consumer
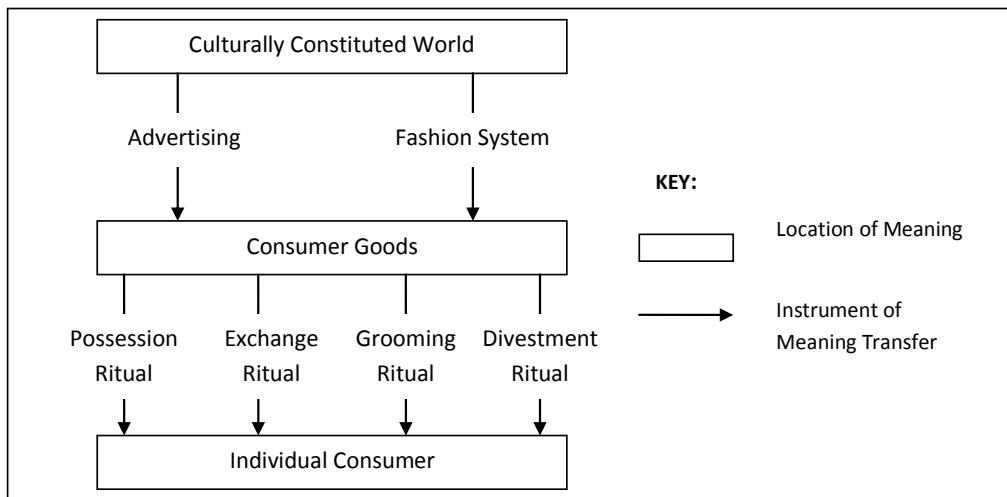
(McCracken, 1986)

Recent thinking on cultural production and meaning transfer views the process as less linear and more interactive, especially in terms of the constitution of meaning. For example, in the realm of advertising, it has been shown that consumers do not merely decode the meaning that cultural producers and intermediaries have signaled to them but actively produce the meaning that is garnered from the advertisement (Venkatesh and Meamber, 2006). The meaning that consumers produce may be a combination of the 'intended' or given meaning and the personal meaning given to the advertising by the consumers based on their background and interests. So while marketers and advertisers may seek to "hand down" certain meaning to products and brands, or produce certain types of subject positions, individuals also construct their own personalized meanings and identities by drawing from their network of cultural resources such as social settings, mass media images and ethnic traditions (Thompson et al, 1994).

Venkatesh and Meamber (2006) discuss the role of marketing in cultural production in more detail. According to the traditional view, marketing is seen as a cultural intermediary that takes the cultural product made by designers or artists and imbues it with additional symbolic meaning that is communicated to the consumer. However marketing can also be seen as an

integral part of all phases of the cultural production process from production and distribution to consumption.

Nevertheless, McCracken's framework helps us to see consumer goods (in this case Finnish design goods) and consumers (in this case Japanese consumers) as way-stations of meaning. Phenomena such as advertising, the fashion world and the rituals of consumers can be seen as instruments of meaning transfer. From a practical managerial standpoint, this draws our attention to questions such as what sorts of meanings are sought by Japanese consumers when they buy Finnish design. What kind of meanings should companies and designers seek to associate their products with? How can they load their products with desired cultural meaning by using instruments such as product design and advertising?

Furthermore, it helps us draw attention to the fact that when marketing Finnish design products to Japan, the cultural context from where Finnish designers and marketers draw cultural meaning to the product differs greatly from the cultural context that the consumer in Japan lives. Japanese consumers interpret the marketing messages through their own cultural lens, and may also have different associations and expectations of the things that the products represent. Thus it is important for Finnish marketers and designers to understand the cultural viewpoint of the Japanese consumers and their meaning-making processes.

3.4   Design

Design as a business can be defined in a multitude of ways. Depending on how widely the value chain is understood, the portion contributed by design to the Finnish GDP varies from less than 0.5 percent up to 25 percent (Export strategy for Finnish design industry, 2007). According to *The Future in Design* (2004) report, the 2358 Finnish design companies employed 2233 people and if the architecture firms are excluded, the total number of companies was 921 with 796 employees in 2002.

For the purpose of this research, however, we did not attempt to define design in any way. Instead we let the participants of the interviews tell us what design meant to them. However, the example materials we presented during the group discussions mainly represented traditional fields of design, such as textiles, furniture, glassware, ceramics etc.

4 Characteristics of Japanese Consumers of Design

In the following paragraphs, we discuss four topics about Japanese consumers that were identified from the interview data. We will call them group-centrism, high emphasis on background information, brand consciousness and quality consciousness. These should not be taken as absolute characteristics of Japanese consumers, but as discourses that can be seen in Japanese consumer culture. For example regarding group centrism, opposite trends towards individualism are also apparent.

4.1 Group-centrism

One aspect of Japanese consumer culture that came up in the interviews, and which we could also observe in real life in the streets of Tokyo, is its overwhelming diversity and richness. From 100 yen shops, to super-expensive and luxurious flagship stores of international brands designed by famous architects, the variety of offerings and different tastes is so huge and even chaotic that it can be difficult to grasp.

However, collectivism is deeply ingrained in Japanese society and has been part of the culture for hundreds of years. Like other Asian cultures, Japanese society is characterized by group-centrism, in contrast to the western ideals of individualism (Herbig, 1995). In the popular classification of cultural dimensions created by Geert Hofstede, Japan is placed higher than the average Asian countries on the individuality scale, but still clearly lower than the other developed western nations (Hofstede, 1967-2009).

Despite this, the Japanese market is far from homogenous. Consumption started to become the core of social interaction in the eighties, when individuality built on consumption choices rose to public attention in the Japanese media. People started expressing themselves through purchases and styles, choosing products that especially attracted them (Turkki, 2005).

> *I think it still is very collective in society. It was one of the main reasons I wanted to get out, because if you are from certain part of country, if you graduate from certain high school or university, or you join certain company, there is very strong invisible force from the family, from friends, from society that you have to live this way. Otherwise you are not paying respect to Japanese way.*

...
So this social pressure applies to how you live, which means basically what you wear, what you use, what you talk.

(Japanese entrepreneur)

The impact of group-centrism can be seen in the consumption habits of smaller groups and sub-cultures. One Finnish marketing and design expert who had spent time in Tokyo described it like this:

How it has many faces and forms, how you just can't grasp it from one corner - describes it well. I can imagine that for every or any product there will always be a buyer, at any time, if you can just find the crowd among which it happens to be hip. It's like on the other hand, I can imagine that they are very purist in a way, that there are like a million of those different groups, and within that group there are very clear guidelines about what that must-have thing is right now.

(Finnish design marketer)

4.2 Emphasis on Stories and Background Information

In my opinion, it is a genuinely special characteristic of a Japanese consumer, how he is so strongly interested in the story behind the product, and it means so much to him.

(Finnish academic)

This theme is emphasized in several interviews that we made in both Finland and Japan. The demand for background information is especially well recognized by the marketers and resellers we interviewed in Japan. One of them comments that if the product is cheap and its design is good, it can be sold to ordinary people without a story, but to sell more expensive products there should be a story. In short, the Japanese expect to hear how the product is made and by who, what is the concept behind it and so on: for example that it is designed by Kari Virtanen, or that it is made with some very sophisticated method.

The importance of this kind of background information to Japanese consumers is a recurring theme in our interviews. One explanation for the importance of stories is that the Japanese view products holistically. According to Herbig (2001), the Japanese see the total product as

consisting of both tangible and intangible components. *Kansei* is the intangible value placed on the product by the purchaser, and it takes into account the image associated with the use of the product. In other words, the term Kansei involves the oneness of the product and the user and it takes into account the intangible things that make a consumer feel confident and at home when using the product (Herbig, 1997).

Country of origin can be one important piece of background information in itself. When Japanese consumers buy western products, they often want to communicate something by it. For example, Scandinavia seems to be often associated with a relaxed life-style and well-being.

> *When a Japanese consumer buys something western, it needs to be something that represents that culture for real*

> (Finnish academic)

The interviewee quoted above tells us an interesting story about the Finnish porcelain industry. When a Japanese importer in the 70s was building markets for imported European porcelain, including the Finnish Arabia brand, they published a series of books on the history of European porcelain. A group comprising dozens of people traveled around Europe working on the project, and details of the history of European porcelain factories were explained more thoroughly than ever published in Europe. The strategy was to make a long-term effort in order to build a basis for the import business. This demonstrates well the desire of the Japanese for detailed background information and the importance that they attach to it.

> *There are those specific stories that Japanese companies and consumers are expecting, that what they already know. They want to feel sure that "I was right. Everything from Finland is cute, positive, functional, highly educated." So, those are the stories that they really want to hear and those are the stories to make real business.*

> (Japanese marketer in Finland)

According to the informant quoted above, consumers want to hear stories that amplify the positive images that they already have and do not contradict them. He had noticed that while

living in Finland he was no longer in touch with the ever-changing demands of Japanese consumers and the stories he wanted to tell were not all what the Japanese consumers were expecting or wanted to hear. Genestre, Herbing and Shao (1995) write that tailoring the products to Japanese tastes is necessary when advertising them in Japan. What is required is an aggressive strategy and creation of an image that meets the expectations of Japanese consumers. We will have more to say on this in the section about the Japanese consumer's perceptions of Finnishness.

The example of the Japanese expectations mentioned above demonstrates the movement of meaning in design goods. The design products carry cultural meaning in themselves and marketers can attempt to attach further meaning to them by adding background information and stories. Still, consumers have an active role in negotiating the meaning that they adapt to themselves, and the meanings pushed by marketers need to match the wants and expectations of consumers, perhaps adding to them but not contradicting them.

4.3   High Brand Consciousness

Closely related to the emphasis of background stories in the minds of Japanese consumers, is the importance given to well-known brands. One interviewed expert even describes Japan as "the promised land of brands."

> *A Japanese trusts a brand in unbelievable way when the brand is built well.*
> *...*
> *He is critical in that way that you have to have a solid story behind the brand. That you cannot build a brand from nothing, there's that characteristic in the Japanese consumer that he wants to investigate the background of a brand very carefully*
> *...*
> *When he's willing to pay for the product that he appreciates maybe five or ten times more than for another product, then he will make a lot of effort to investigate that brand's backgrounds, and there needs to be a solid story to be found there.*

<div align="center">(Finnish academic)</div>

Some people we interviewed present some contradicting views as well. One marketing director of a Finnish company in Japan argues that many Japanese consumers are nowadays looking for more individual and personalized brands, not necessarily the most famous and prestigious.

Some people of course are fond of very strong very famous brands, but there was a new generation, more like, centering around themselves, like – how to say, I select this brand and then we'll grow together.

(Japanese industry expert)

Japanese consumers know the world-famous designers and their products. In our view, the brands and the names of the designers, which can be seen as brands in their own right, form part of the background story that the Japanese value so much. They add symbolic meaning to the products.

One factor in Japan is clearly that the value of the designer is tremendous; they are superstars in a way... That who it is designed by is usually a really important thing.

(Finnish manager)

Several people interviewed in Japan also mention names of Finnish designers, such as Alvar Aalto, Harri Koskela and Stefan Lindfors. Regarding furniture, one Japanese importer remarks that Finnish furniture sells mainly for public spaces, where the main selling point is price-quality. Today only Artek and Alvar Aalto are famous enough brands for the home market. Award-winning furniture designed by Stefan Lindfors was also popular for a while until quality problems destroyed its appeal.

4.4   High Quality Consciousness and Attention to Detail

Quality is another topic that frequently comes up in the interviews. Japanese quality demands are the most stringent in the world. A typical Japanese consumer will refuse to accept a product not in perfect condition. The word 'quality' in Japan is synonymous with the word 'excellence' in the West. Many consumer complaints are about seemingly insignificant scratches or other exterior damage to routine products and household goods. Consumers also demand reliability and good after-sales service, and expect an immediate response from the manufacturer. A major concern for the Japanese in purchasing imported products is the length of time it takes to have them serviced or repaired. (Herbig, 2001) Also, due to the fact that the Japanese people place such emphasis on quality, high-end products have always enjoyed a strong market in Japan (Marber & Wellen, 2007).

All the Finnish furniture exporters we interviewed mention the particularly high quality demands of their customers. Complaints are made if the product delivered is not made exactly according to specifications. Even when the product is advertised as hand-made, which means that it is difficult to make them exactly alike, Japanese customers who have seen a product may say that they want one exactly like this, and are not satisfied if there are any differences. The same is true if there is for example even a small scratch in the product. It is mentioned that IKEA, too, has had to follow higher quality standards for the Japanese market.

Finpro, the former Finnish Export Association, publishes a biannual country report of all the most commercially interesting countries in the world. The latest country report for Japan mentions that Japanese consumers are demanding and that gaining their trust requires considerable effort (Nuutinen, 2008). Yet the Finns are used to thinking that Finnish quality is very good and we were surprised to hear in the interviews that it is often inadequate for the Japanese.

According to our informant, the furniture made in Finland and which is meant for use in public spaces has a good price-quality ratio. Yet of Finnish design furniture for private use has traditionally had problems in quality. This includes Artek products as well as the aforementioned design prize-winning chair designed by Stefan Lindfors. However, the Japanese importers that we interviewed limit their complaints to the quality of manufacturing. The problems lie in manufacturing, not in design. Design in itself is said to be of very high quality. Nevertheless it is said that Finnish manufacturers do not make the perfect quality and finishing demanded by Japanese customers:

> *The Finns are lacking the passion for perfection. They do not strive for perfection, but think that this or that quality will do. ...However what is ok for the Finnish market is not ok for the Japanese market. ...The quality control in the Finnish factories is not adequate as the Japanese demand for perfection of every detail. For example in the case of some Finnish made auditorium chairs, the stitches of a new chair were fraying. ...The quality problems concern specifically Finnish furniture, the interior decoration materials, floor materials and such are of high quality and there is no need to think that the image of the Finnish products would be tarnished as a whole.*

> (Japanese marketer)

5 Finland and Finnish Design in Japan

In Finpro's Japan country report, published in March 2008, the Finpro Trade Center in Tokyo lists the following as positive features of the Japanese market from the perspective of Finnish companies (Finpro, 2008):

- Excellent information and telecommunications infrastructure
- Attractive consumer market
- The good image of Finland as a country of pure nature and high technology.
- The Finnish and the Japanese mentality have some similar features
- At the moment there is a growing interest towards Scandinavia in Japan

Many of our interview results relate to the abovementioned positive features of the Japanese market from the perspective of Finnish companies. In the following we distinguish some specific themes that recur in our interviews. In this part of our paper the themes are first divided under two headings, 'The Image of Finland' and 'the Image of Finnish Design.' This division helps the reader to understand what the Japanese consumers and design professionals think about Finland and about Finnish design products.

5.1 The Image of Finland: *Mori to mizumi no kuni* – The country of forests and lakes

According to our research most Japanese have very limited knowledge about Finland. The mental image that many Japanese consumers have of Finland is also very stereotypical and relates above all to Finnish nature, winter and the Moomins. In the words of one of our informants:

> *...what Japanese consumers know about Finland is very limited. I would say that 99.5 % positive, a lot of nature, sincere people, hardworking people, aurora, xylitol chewing gum, Moomin and then nowadays Marimekko, Iiittala, Arabia, specific brands. What they want to see and hear from Finland is to enhance those images they have of Finland. They don't want to be shocked; they expect very clean, nature oriented, but functional and highly educated. So, those images should not be neglected. Consumers want that the product enhances the images they have about Finland, that the image you have about Finland is correct.*

The informant also emphasizes that for example connecting Finland with alcohol would not be wise:

> *That is not [what] consumers are expecting and that is what they don't want to hear, they want to hear something clean and just pure positive from Finland. So, then I noticed that maybe kind of shocking Japanese consumers with some stories from Finland that are true but that are not wanted by Japanese consumers, would not work.*

> (Japanese marketer)

In the following, we introduce some of the most important themes that can be distinguished from our interview material. These might not represent all the mental images the Japanese consumers have of Finland, but the same or similar themes recurred in our interviews and as such provide us with valuable information about the ways the Japanese see Finland.

5.2 Nature

The Japanese know Finland as *mori to mizumi no kuni*, the country of forests and lakes, and many of our informants mention forests and trees especially pines. At least one group of our business informants thinks that the Finnish image as a country of forests and lakes is what is best known about Finland and that this image should be used even when introducing Finnish high-tech products to the Japanese market.

The Finns themselves also often talk about Finland as the country of forests and lakes, although their image is different from that of the Japanese. In Japan, forests are located on mountains and the Japanese expect this to be true of Finland, too. In the questionnaires the informants also thought that Finland has fjords and tundra. Our informants considered Finland to be a very cold country, where there is a lot of snow and ice. Other things that interest the Japanese are the midnight sun "Byakuya" and the northern lights, which they usually call "aurora".

> *There are many Japanese who come to Finland to see the Northern Lights. However the "aurora" has a very different meaning to us and to them. One phenomenon represents fertility to them and for the Finns it represents something mystical*

> (Finnish academic)

5.3   Ecological thinking

(When looking at Finnish design products)…Many of the people just feel, this is pretty. But secondly, they notice that, ah, Finland doesn't consume design. This is so called evergreen, forever design. Continuing 100 years, 200 years. And therefore uh, this shape is so simple. Not so special but so simple. And color is very basic. And I think this is a hit in Japanese mind.

(Japanese specialist)

Many of our informants emphasize the image of cleanness and environmental friendliness that is related to Finland. The ecological values and timeless product design appeals to the environment-conscious Japanese consumers.

Do the Japanese consumers care about the environment?

The interest is increasing. I think this is why the Nordic design has become more familiar with consumers… I think that people who are interested in both ecological things and design are interested in Finland and Finnish design.

(Japanese marketer)

According to this business informant, ecology and environmental friendly manufacturing processes, which use as little energy and natural resources as possible, are among the top criteria when choosing new products for their collection. However, according to another informant the Japanese are aware about environmental issues, yet they do not always make the ecological choices due to practical reasons of everyday life.

5.4   Famous Finnish Characters

The average Japanese consumer might have problems in naming the President of Finland or even the famous Finnish Formula 1 drivers Mika Häkkinen and Kimi Räikkönen, but all Japanese despite their age know the Finnish animated Moomin figures and many of them also know that Santa Claus resides in Finland. Below we discuss these characters in more detail.

Moomin

The Moomin are imaginary characters in a series of books and comics drawn by the Finnish artist Tove Jansson (1914-2001), which were introduced to Japan in the 1960s. The Moomin are still very popular in Japan today and there is a great variety of Moomin related products

available on the market. Despite the fact that the majority of the products are currently made in China uniquely for the Japanese market, there is a very strong connection between the Moomins and Finland. This is proven by the fact that in many products there is a Finnish or Swedish language text such as the names of the Moomin characters in Finnish.

> *Well, basically Japanese most of the Japanese have very – friendly feeling towards Finnish people, and Finnish things, so uh, I think most of the Japanese like Finnish things. So when you think about market, Japanese market, Finnish people is a very good thing, because there's a basic knowledge and the feeling in Japan, that Japanese have good feeling about Finnish things and..*
>
> *Why do you think that is?*
>
> *What is it about Finland that..?*
>
> *Probably Moomin... But it's true, because I personally like Moomin. It's very popular.*
>
> <div align="right">(Japanese industry expert)</div>

Interestingly some Japanese imagine that Finland is a fairytale wonderland, perhaps similar to Moomin valley, where life is happy and free of stress and worries.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus and the fact that he lives in Finland is well known by the Japanese. In the city of Sendai we interviewed the management group of a large department store, which has had the habit of inviting the original Santa Claus from Finland to visit the department store.

> *Timo Pakkanen comes here every year and stays for four of five days. Some Finnish radio channels and the largest Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat have come here in Japan to interview Timo Pakkanen.*

In our interviews, we learned that the attractiveness of Finland lies very much in the feelings and experiences that are passed to the consumers. One of our informants mentions the Finland Café, an event that takes place annually in Tokyo as an example of this. At the cafe customers experience the atmosphere and the design and through them they can begin to understand what Finland is like. These experiential qualities have also been used in marketing campaigns, the warm and emotional feeling of the Finnish Santa Claus and the Finnish Christmas traditions have been used to promote Finnish products.

According to our informant some 12 years ago the central organization of Japanese department stores decided to start marketing for Christmas, to bring Christmas to Japan and at that time they were looking for it and everybody agreed that it is the American Christmas, but then the marketer decided that it should not be the American Christmas… (Instead)

> *I made a research of the Christmas traditions in different countries, Sweden, Holland, and others and I wanted to organize an event, which would not only be commercial, but an event with Christmas theme that would create interaction between people and let the different cultures meet... Then it would be possible to combine this with Aarikka, Marimekko or other products and the consumers could see the products and feel them by their own hands. If they think that the products feel good they might consider buying them and at the same time they will learn what Finland or Finnishness is all about.*

<div align="center">(Japanese marketer)</div>

Other Themes

Here we will briefly introduce some interesting topics that were mentioned in the interviews or in the questionnaires, but that did not lead to lengthy discussions. One important theme that was mentioned in some of the interviews and also in the questionnaires was Finland's success in the PISA survey and the high level of education including top education in the field of design. In our Kawasaki group an informant asked whether Finland has blueberries. In the last couple of years the blueberries have become very popular in Japan for their healthy qualities. Also, our informants knew the Finnish sauna and the famous composer Jean Sibelius.

6   The Image of Finnish Design

In our group interviews the informants seemed to have no previous knowledge of Finnish design and they were not able to name any Finnish designers or design companies. In contrast, the design professionals were of the opinion that the average Japanese consumer would know Alvar Aalto and a few other very famous designers or design companies. In general, the Japanese like very trendy things and for this reason the world famous designers are popular in Japan.

The Japanese are attracted to Scandinavian design for many reasons. The majority of the professionals praised Finnish design for its high quality, although the simplicity of form and colors, which are very compatible with Japanese homes, attract the eye of the average consumers as an option to short-lived fashion. In the following, our informant gives another interesting explanation of why the Japanese might like Finnish design.

> *But one of the reasons why people so like to, uh, Finnish design, is the bubble economy. During bubble economy people like Italian design. Gorgeous, decorative design – so much. But after bubble economy – naturally we had almost ten years of recession – and during that time people are so depressed, and uuh, their tastes shifted to very simple, modern design.*

> (Japanese academic)

The Finnish Tourist Board (MEK) has actively promoted Finnish design for the last 6-7 years as a means of increasing Japanese tourism to Finland. Design was chosen as a topic to promote tourism as it is possible to overcome the Finnish seasonality with design and design is not limited to any specific group of people or age class. As a part of this promotion campaign, MEK participated in the production of the Japanese film Kamome Shokudo in 2006. The film became quite successful in Japan. Finnish design products were prominently displayed in the film and the restaurant and other sites where it was filmed were on the itineraries of Japanese tourists[1].

---

[1]   Helsinki Export offers 6 hour guided tours of the Kamome shokudo sites for Japanese tourists. Other similar tours are offered with the theme Houkuo zakka (referring to Nordic design goods) http://www.helsinkiexpert.fi/tours/

6.1 Finnish versus Scandinavian Design

Japanese do not make difference between Nordic design and Finnish design, they just buy good design.

(Japanese marketer)

Scandinavian design is currently very well known in Japan. There are a variety of Internet stores, small specialty shops and in Tokyo alone there are two department stores, which specialize in Scandinavian design and IKEA is increasingly popular. For some Japanese Scandinavia is synonymous with good quality design. Yet the consumers we interviewed were not able to distinguish the Finnish and the Scandinavian design. According to the design professionals this is not a problem for Finnish design companies, but instead an advantage when marketing Finnish design products. Using the well known Scandinavian image instead of a separate Finnish image gives more visibility in the Japanese market. Even MEK's first publication to promote Finnish design in Japan covered Helsinki, Stockholm, and Copenhagen together instead of centering on Helsinki.

A Japanese marketer used the term Soboku 素朴 which means simplicity, naiveté to describe Finnish design compared with other Scandinavian design. She mentioned other differences between the design products of the Scandinavian countries:

The Finnish design products have this kind of unsophisticated yet honest feeling in them even more than in the Swedish design. A limited amount of colors are used and the colors are different or then they use pure wood as such… And when you think about the traditional Japanese house and how much they use wood and the tatamis, then the wooden (products) match nicely with the surrounding colors.

(Japanese marketer)

6.2 Knowledge of Finnish Companies

Japanese knowledge of Finnish companies is very limited. Nokia, Marimekko, Iittala, and Arabia are among the best known companies and their products can be seen on the streets of Tokyo and in many department stores. Still, the Japanese may not realize that those

companies are from Finland. Also, the Finnish jewelry manufacturer Lapponia was mentioned in our questionnaires.

Perhaps the most famous and the most distinguishable Finnish design company in the Japanese market, Marimekko currently has 15 shops around Japan according to the company's Japanese homepage[2]. Our consumer informants did not recognize the name of the company, but when shown some of the Marimekko products, many remembered seeing the Unikko or poppy design before the interview.

6.3   Similarity of Aesthetic Ideals

Very often people say that Finnish and the Japanese aesthetic ideals have something in common and that the Finns and the Japanese share a similar mentality that is then reflected in the arts and handicrafts. The two things that the majority of our professional informants mentioned as common features of the Japanese and the Finnish design were simplicity and the use of wood and other natural materials. Resulting from this similarity, many informants felt that the Finnish design products are a positive addition to Japanese homes.

> *That what Finland and Japan have in common is plain and simplified and in a way aesthetically sophisticated.*
>
> *My theory is that the interest (of the Japanese to the Finnish design) cannot be explained by the history of the two countries. We have completely different societies, different religions and different political cultures; however in both cultures people behave in a similar way and have a similar nature. Both the Finns and the Japanese are very modest, reserved and personal relationships and trust are quite important. This is related to the fact that at the level of aesthetics, the ideals are very similar… This makes intercommunication somehow very easy, as the people understand each other intuitively.*

<div align="center">(Finnish academic)</div>

However, another Finnish academic argues that despite the apparent similarities of the Finnish and the Japanese design, the aesthetic values of the two cultures are very different.

---

[2]   www.marimekko.jp/shops/index.html

Finnish and Scandinavian design has been compared to the Japanese design in many occasions and it has been easy to see similarities such as respecting silence and respecting quality of handicrafts and simplicity… However, many of these similarities are only ostensible and their backgrounds are very different. For example, in our culture simplicity is often the same as necessity where as in the Japanese culture the roots of simplicity are in privation and the Zen–Buddhist ideals.

(Finnish academic)

In our interviews some of the informants brought up the idea that the Japanese history of using western style furniture such as chairs or tall tables is still very short and for this reason their tastes are not mature. Tomoko Tamari writes in *Rise of Department Store and Consumer Culture in Japan* (2006) that beginning from the Meiji era or the second half of the 19th century, the Japanese have adopted new lifestyles and gained familiarity with new objects that have reconstituted living space. The department stores have played an important part in the learning process and for this reason it is questionable whether the Finnish and the Japanese truly share the same aesthetic values or whether they have just learnt to appreciate the similar offerings of the department stores.

7 Target Consumer Groups for Finnish Design

Our interviews indicate the presence of different groups of consumers in Japan that are interesting from the perspective of design. Economically, there are at least four distinct groups, which are divided by the products that they can buy and where they buy. The first group comprises the super rich, who buy what they like at any price. Second is the group that idealizes the super rich and tries to buy the same expensive brand products as they do. The third group is the average consumers, who buy their products from the supermarkets. The fourth group includes the people who are outside the economy - the homeless and the poor.

When asking what consumer groups might be interested in buying Finnish design products many of the informants suggested that the most likely group to buy Finnish design would be trend-conscious women in their twenties and forties. Traditionally, women have made decisions regarding the family budget and nowadays single Japanese 'office ladies' have taken the habit of rewarding themselves by buying luxury products or perhaps design items for their homes.

> *Young Japanese women are crazy about change and they need to constantly have new things… they follow the magazines… and like everything new and what they must have.*
>
> (Japanese designer)

We also found out that there is a specific group of Japanese consumers and particularly Japanese females, who are especially sensitive to Finland and Finnish products. The following quotation from our interview describes the recent change in the visitors of the Finland café and the broadening of the scope of people who are interested in Finland and Finnish design products.

> *But we had, we saw really big changing at, three years ago. At that point, until that point, we had many guest but many of them were so-called Finland fan. Finland fan has a special character. They are not so talkative. Especially ladies, Japanese ladies they are not so talkative, they are shy, and they are not interested in fashion so much.*

And uh – somehow they are little bit uncomfortable in Japanese society. They want to escape from Japan to dreaming country Finland. This is original Finland fan. But from three years ago, we had really wide range of ladies. Office ladies, designers, and uh creators, and we had a really big difference. Fashion was completely different. And also uh – because of the blogs, people wrote down about Finland cafe. And if you search by Finland cafe, at the end of Finland cafe you can find like ten thousand pages.

(Japanese marketer)

According to an informant, Scandinavian design has experienced three booms and is now truly established in the Japanese market. Buying Finnish furniture or other design products is no more limited to a small group of enthusiasts, but an option for all fashion-conscious Japanese.

8 Managerial Implications for Finnish Companies

The image of Finland as a country of forests and lakes is what the Japanese know best about Finland. This clean and environmentally friendly image is valuable and provides a good source of background stories and symbolic meanings for Finnish design products. Finnish companies should not shy away from using this image in their marketing, as well as other images of Finnish culture.

"Made in Finland" is a very positive label in Japan. While we do not recommend that every Finnish design company should start using Moomins and Santa Claus in their marketing using Finnish cultural artifacts such as these can be considered from the perspective of Japanese consumers. On the other hand, most Japanese consumers cannot tell the difference between Finland and the rest of Scandinavia, which is also seen as a positive and trendy area. Hence for this reason there is actually no need to clearly differentiate from other Scandinavian design.

The image of Finland as a country of high technology is not very well established in Japan; therefore it is possible that even when marketing high-tech products it might be better for Finnish companies to resort to more traditional nature imagery. Another possible positive image to use in marketing could be emphasizing Finland as a land of wellbeing, social welfare and high education, which are all relatively well known facts about Finland.

The firms should take into account the traditional group-centrism of Japanese society and think carefully about the groups they want to target. The marketing channels, advertising and perhaps even product design and packaging should be planned according to the different tastes of separate target groups.

More attention should be paid not just to the product and its design, but also to the whole concept of the product. This includes intangible things such as background information about the product and the Finnish or Scandinavian image as a part of the product concept and also tangible things like packaging.

Brand is also obviously part of the background information and concept of the story. While few if any Finnish brands can reach the status of Louis Vuitton, this may not really be necessary in the Japanese market. Many Japanese consumers actually prefer and seek lesser known, more individual brands. However, there always needs to be a solid concept and background story behind the brand, and Finnish firms should pay extra attention to building their brands.

Quality is something that Finnish design exporters need to pay special attention to in the Japanese market. Finnish companies should realize that what is considered good quality in Finland is not necessarily sufficiently good quality in Japan. Even IKEA, while still catering to a budget-conscious market, had to up their quality standards in order to succeed in Japan. The Japanese market requires passion and striving for perfect quality, and foreign manufacturers should make sure early on, in the design phase, that the manufacturing processes are up to realizing the designs without the slightest flaws. A lack of attention to details or finishing touches is potential deal-breakers for demanding Japanese customers.

Our research findings indicate that Finnish design itself was in most cases highly regarded and aesthetically pleasing to the Japanese, although sometimes Finnish designers may be a bit too fascinated by their own designs, and should think more about what the customers want. In order to succeed in the Japanese market, the designers should be more willing to listen to customer demands and make modifications to their designs if necessary.

Although the MEK projects to promote Finnish design in Japan have been successful, Japanese marketing people hoped that the Finnish embassy and the Finnish Institute in Japan would take a more active role in promoting Finnish design and bringing together the Finnish companies, designers and the Japanese marketers. In their opinion, Finland should follow the example of the Swedes in this respect.

We have summarized our recommendations for marketing actions in the table below.

Findings	Main Issues	Marketing Actions
Group-centrism	Japanese society is group-centric compared to the West, but fragmented into countless different groups.	Identify desired target groups and try to reach them by specialized media.
Emphasis on stories and background information	Japanese consumers value background information and "stories" attached to product highly. Holistic view of the product.	Pay more attention to not just design, but the whole concept of the product: packaging, point of sale, etc. Make sure there is a solid story behind the product, provide plenty of background information.
High brand awareness	Japanese consumers are very brand-conscious and investigate the backgrounds of brands carefully. Lesser known, more individual brands are on the rise among certain consumer groups.	Seek to build stronger brands. Make sure there is a story behind the brand and that the story is solid and not made up.
Quality consciousness and attention to detail	Japanese consumers have extremely high quality demands. Details and finishing touches very important.	Marketers need to be passionate about quality and realize that good quality means something entirely different in Japan and in Finland. Only perfect is good enough.
Clean nature image of Finland	Finland is mainly associated with nature, which is seen as very positive as consumers are becoming more ecologically conscious. Related positive associations about relaxedness and well-being as opposed to hectic pace of Japanese society.	Marketers can build stories and draw meanings from the nature imagery of Finland. Eco-friendly values can be emphasized.
Similarity of aesthetic ideals	Simplicity, clean lines and use of wood are common factors of Japanese and Finnish design tradition. However, these similarities may be somewhat superficial, as the cultural reasons behind them are completely different. Japanese reality is smaller.	Aesthetically, Finnish design philosophy should suit the Japanese market well. Finnish designers should be willing to make modifications however, most commonly regarding the size: Some Finnish products are simply too big for the Japanese.
Image of Finnish design vs. Scandinavian design	Most Japanese cannot tell the difference between Finland and Scandinavia. Scandinavian design is popular and well known; Scandinavia in itself is associated with good design. Finnish design is known by experts and enthusiasts.	Position products more as part of Scandinavian design. Think about whether it is necessary to differentiate from Scandinavian/Finnish at all.
Famous Finnish things in Japan	Moomins, Santa Claus, blueberries, aurora, F1 drivers… These are often the first things that come to mind for the Japanese about Finland, and they are all seen as positive things.	Finnish marketers could draw meanings into their products from well-known Finnish cultural artifacts with more courage, even if they seemed a little silly for them. Think instead about what is "cool" and positive to the Japanese buyer.
Finnish design highly regarded	Experts agreed that Finnish design itself is top-notch. The problems are in manufacturing quality. Finns sometimes said to be too fascinated by their own design, inflexible and unwilling to make modifications according to customer demands.	Make sure manufacturing processes are up to realizing designs without flaws. Be willing to modify designs based on Japanese demands.

References:

Arnould, E. J. and Thompson, C. J. (2005), Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31, Issue 4, March 2005, pp. 868-882.

Herbig, P. (1995), Marketing Japanese Style. Quarum Books, London

Herbig P. (1997), Handbook of Cross-cultural Marketing. http://books.google.fi. Quoted 27.1.2009

Herbig, P. (2002), Marketing Implications of Japan's social-cultural underpinnings. *Brand Management,* Vol. 9. No. 3. January 2002

Hofstede, Geert (1967-2009), Cultural Dimensions, Japan. www.geert-hofstede.com/ Quoted 07.2.2009

Genestre, A. and Herbing, P. and Shao, A. T. (1995), What does marketing really mean to the Japanese? *Marketing Intelligence Planning*, Vol. 13. No. 9. pp.16-27.

Marber A. and Wellen P. M. (2007) Developing Products With Soul: The Marketing Strategy of Chanel in Japan. *Marketing Management Journal*, Spring 2007.

McCracken, G. (1986), Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (June), pp. 71-85.

Moisander, J. and Valtonen, A. (2006), *Qualitative Marketing Research. A Cultural Approach*. Sage Publications Ltd. London.

Muotoilualan Vientistrategia 2007–2012 (2007) Design Forum Finland.

Nuutinen, Eeva (2008): Maaraportti Japani. www.finpro.fi. Quoted 18.11.2008

Puchta, C. and Potter, J. (2004), Focus Group Practice. Sage Publications, London

Tamari, Tomoko (2006): The Rise of the Department Store and the Aestheticization of Everyday Life in Early 20th Century Japan. International Journal of Japanese Sociology, Number 15. 2006.

The Future in Design: The competitiveness and industrial dynamics of the Nordic design industry. Final Report (2004). Nordic Innovation Centre. www.nordicdesign.org. Quoted 02.02.2009.

Thompson C.J., Pollio, H.R. and Locander, W.B. (1994), The Spoken and the Unspoken: A Hermeneutic Approach to Understanding the Cultural Viewpoints That Underlie Consumers' Expressed Meanings. *The Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 21, No. 3 (December), 432-452.

Turkki, T. (2005), Kahdeksan pilven takaa – Japanin murros ja uusi nousu. Edita Prima, Helsinki.

Venkatesh, A. and Meamber, L. (2006) Arts and aesthetics: Marketing and cultural production. *Marketing Theory*, Mar2006, Vol. 6 Issue 1, p11-39.

Marketing Communication of Finnish Design Companies in Japan

Tuua Rinne and Nina Yppärilä

Abstract

The objective of this research is to describe how Finnish companies in the field of design have realized their marketing communication in Japan and to contribute to the discussion of standardization/adaptation research in marketing communications. Our goal is to describe the everyday practices of planning and implementing marketing programmes with local partners.

The study was conducted by interviewing Finnish design companies that operate in the Japanese market, their distributors and subsidiaries in Japan and experts in the field. Most of the design companies sell small design objects and furniture to business-to-business customers. We discovered that Finnish design companies are rather small and due to their shallow knowledge of local market conditions they delegate considerable authority in marketing decisions to their Japanese distributors. To maintain some control over the brand image and important marketing decisions, it is crucial to choose the distributors carefully. The Japanese market is attractive to Finnish design companies since Finnish design has a positive image and because individualism is on the rise, increasing demand for small, foreign design brands.

1 Introduction

Our research studies how Finnish companies operating in the field of design have realized their marketing communication in Japan. In this research we look at both the marketing communication strategy of the Finnish design companies and the marketing strategy implementation. Regarding the marketing communication strategy, we are interested in finding out what kind of objectives and marketing strategy the Finnish design companies have in Japan. This means determining whether the marketing communication is localized to the Japanese market to address the specific needs of the market place or whether it is standardized in all the markets.

We found out how Finnish companies have conducted their marketing efforts in practice: what kinds of strategic resource mix and marketing communication methods have been used. In addition, we looked at the marketing communication message - what has been communicated to the target audience, and studied how the marketing communication process has been organized and what are the roles of exporters, distributors and other relevant parties. This meant determining whether the companies have done the marketing communication themselves or whether they have a partner, for example an advertising agency that plans and implements their marketing in Japan.

Our aim was to provide Finnish design companies with information about marketing communication practices in Japan and explain how the Finnish design companies currently operating in Japan have conducted their marketing communication there. We also identified the biggest marketing challenges for a Finnish company in Japan. In the following, we explain the most important terms and definitions that are needed to understand this research.

Business-to-business marketing includes all activities that are related to marketing products to organizations (commercial companies, government and distributors) in order for them to resell the products or to use them in the production of consumer or industrial products, or to facilitate the activities of the company. (de Pelsmacker et al. 2004) This is an important definition in our research since most of the Finnish design companies we interviewed operate in the business-to-business field.

There are many definitions for the term *design*. Olson et al. (1998) define the term design as being simultaneously a process, an object and a function. This means that the word design can be used for many purposes. Cooper and Press (1995) divide design into three areas: the development of corporate identity, the design of saleable products and the design of operative environments. In this research, we limit the definition to include only the design of saleable products.

Our focus is on the marketing communication of the companies chosen for the study. *Marketing* is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (American Marketing Association). *Marketing communication* in turn includes all the instruments by means of which the company communicates with its target group and stakeholders to promote its products or the company as a whole. (de Pelsmacker et al. 2004)

One of our focus areas is the standardization/adaptation of marketing strategy and marketing mix. In the *standardization* approach marketing activity or marketing strategy are conducted in the same way in all (or a set of) foreign markets (Albaum et. al, 2003). In international advertising the standardization approach suggests that a single advertising message with only minor modifications or proper translations can be used in all countries as consumers around the world are believed to share the same or very similar wants and needs (Papavassiliou & Stathakopoulos, 1997). In contrast, the adaptation approach takes cultural differences and preferences into account and advertising messages are adapted to reach buyers in different markets in different countries (de Pelsmacker et al. 2004).

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of our research, we have structured our article as follows. First, we begin by introducing the marketing field in Japan. We discuss how Japanese culture has affected Japanese marketing approaches and practices and how foreign companies have succeeded in the market. Second, we discuss marketing communication strategies from the organizational point of view. In other words, we research how Finnish design companies have divided the marketing activities between the different players such as exporter and distributor.

Third, we discuss the marketing strategies that companies have chosen to adopt when entering foreign markets. We focus on standardization/adaptation research in marketing communication. Fourth, we explain how the standardization/localization issue has been implemented in the marketing communication of Finnish design companies. We research this in four different categories: advertising content, PR, trade shows and sales material. Finally, we conclude the article by discussing the results and making recommendations for further research.

2 Research

With this article we contribute to the discussion of standardization/adaptation research in marketing communications (Taylor and Okazaki, 2005; Dallmann, 1999; Papavassiliuo and Stathakopoulos, 1997; Javalgi et al., 1995; Mueller, 1988; Levitt, 1983; Buzell, 1968). Despite research on this topic at the global level and on certain countries, there has not been a focus on Finnish design companies. We have studied the standardization/adaptation issue regarding strategic resource mix and strategy content. Our aim was to find out how Finnish design companies have implemented their advertising, PR, trade shows and sales material in terms of standardization/localization.

Before concentrating on the marketing communication strategy and content we want to look at the organization of the marketing activities of Finnish design companies. This is done in terms of the relationship between the exporter and the customer or the distributor. We also look at the processes and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the marketing strategy. In order to get an overall view of the marketing situation in Japan, we also have a closer look at the marketing field in Japan.

2.1 Marketing Field in Japan

It has been exceptionally difficult for foreign companies to gain a foothold in the Japanese market and to implement marketing successfully. An in-depth understanding of the culture, language and historical perspective of business developments is needed in order to fully understand how the marketing is conducted in Japan (Lazer et al. 1985). The challenge is that all else being equal, Japanese companies have both cultural and networking advantages over foreign ones in their home market (Chao et. al 2003).

The history of marketing is rather short in Japanese companies. The concept of marketing was still unknown in Japan after the Second World War. However, in the last 50 years Japanese companies have mastered the field and gained recognition as world-class marketers (Nakanishi, 1981). Over the years, Japanese companies have taken the Western marketing concepts and modified and adjusted them to fit Japanese culture. However, marketing is not

the main concern for many Japanese companies, and most of the focus is still on production. For Japanese companies technological self-sufficiency, market share and industrial rank (status) are the key issues in business, while Western companies focus more on costs and risks. (Herbig & Howard, 2001)

According to a study by Japan's biggest advertising agency Dentsu (1978), there are four concepts behind Japanese marketing approaches and practices: pseudo-harmonism, eclecticism, exceptionism and economic non-functionality. Pseudo-harmonism refers to the importance of maintaining harmony on economic concerns despite apparent disagreement. Eclecticism emphasizes the human harmony aspects of decisions, while not emphasizing the trade-off of economic costs. Exceptionism stresses exceptions to different policies, thus making Japanese companies flexible and alert for change. Economic non-functionality means that the Japanese place more importance on individual human factors than on economic efficiency and business profits. The Japanese consider marketing primarily a human activity, while in Western countries it is more economically oriented (cited in Lazer et al, 1985). According to our research, Finnish design companies should recognize these characteristics when conducting their marketing activities in Japan. For example, human factors are stressed in communication and there is a need for visiting and contacting distributors and media representatives frequently to develop a close relationship and trust between the parties.

In order to be successful in the Japanese market there is a need to understand Japanese culture and its implications for marketing. According to an interview with a Japanese industrial designer, Japanese companies design their products according to onsumer needs, while this is not always the case in Europe. He stated:

> *"Japanese designers are maybe such that they know the consumers or find out what they want. In Europe, it is more so that this is what our design is; you better see the value of it. It is not so consumer-driven. It is good strategy to maintain your own character that sells; then the price is not such an issue anymore."*
>
> Japanese Industrial Designer

As this statement shows, European brands can also gain by not strictly following consumer needs and wants, since they can maintain their character better and keep the brand from changing too much over the years. This also affects the pricing of the product – they can charge higher prices. However, in the Japanese markets consumers also expect to get what

they are looking for from design products. Thus, Finnish design companies could be a bit more consumer-centric and study what Japanese consumers want and need. This would make it easier to choose products that appeal to Japanese consumers.

According to our analysis, the marketing philosophy in Japan is based on three things: carefully studying customer wants and needs, designing a product that incorporates the desired features and creating an effective marketing campaign for this product. The idea is that if a product is good and based on consumer needs, people will buy it. Japanese people also view service as an important factor, which shows customers how much they are valued (Herbig & Howard, 2001). "No matter how unique you product or service, no matter how large your market share, when a customer has a problem you solve it." You do whatever is needed to make the customer happy – even giving something away for free. (Genestre et al. 1995) According to our research, this can be seen e.g. in after sales situations in which Japanese distributors and consumers expect spotless service and unlimited warranty if there are any problems related to the product or service.

In the past the marketing of foreign products has been rather difficult in Japan. One reason for this may be Confucianism, which emphasizes belonging to an in-group and that everyone else are outsiders. Traditionally, this has created mistrust towards everything coming from outside the in-group and especially from outside Japan. This is why foreign products and their promotion have had a negative reputation in the past. However, travel abroad and international influences received through the media have changed this. Nowadays, there is indeed a great demand for foreign brands. (Martin and Herbig, 2002)

Even though foreign brands are accepted, it might take some time to build trust in a new brand and company, since Japanese buyers and consumers want to know if the foreign exporter is trustworthy and if the products and brand it represents are of high quality. Consumers are keen to find information and discuss brand names with each other. This is why it is important to have marketing material that explains the story of the company and brand as well as gives assurance of quality. Even though it might take a while for foreign brands to win acceptance in Japan, once they have it, success can be fast and enormous.

According to Japanese distributor representatives, the Japanese people are becoming more consumer-oriented and concerned about individual fulfilment. As a Finnish design company representative stated, consumers do not necessarily want to buy only famous brands with an image for good and high quality like Louis Vuitton. They are more interested in individual, personal fashion - as long as their own in-group still somehow accepts these brands. So according to our research, individualization together with traditional concerns for high quality and reasonable cost is still the main issues for consumer marketing in today's Japan.

2.2 Organization of Marketing Activities

In this research we also describe how Finnish design companies have divided their marketing between different players. In this part we discuss the division of marketing between exporter, distributor and possibly other players like advertising or PR agencies.

The main focus of previous research has been on the locus of decision-making regarding marketing strategies. Several authors have argued that decision-making authority shifts to local subsidiaries as the task becomes more tactical and operational (Wills and Ryans 1977). They state that marketing strategies and budgets are controlled by the exporter, while advertising content and media selection are decided by the local representative. According to Solberg (2002), there are two variables that are relevant when considering the organization of marketing functions: knowledge of local market conditions and headquarters' influence on local market decisions. He found out that knowledge of local market conditions is a more important factor and usually leads to a more standardized marketing approach. This means that when the exporter knows the foreign market conditions, it is possible to have a constructive dialogue with the local partners such as the distributor and advertising agency.

In our analysis of Finnish design companies and their organization of marketing activities, we used Solberg's (2002) typology of governing strategies in international marketing. He divided companies into four categories depending on their market knowledge and the centralization of decision-making. These categories are local baronies, civil war, confederation and federation. In the local baronies category the marketing decisions are mainly left to the local representatives, since the exporter does not have much information about the foreign markets. In civil war, the exporter has limited knowledge of the market, but still makes decisions in a

centralized manner. In confederation, the exporter has considerable knowledge of the local conditions, but still gives the local representatives independence and decision-making power. Federation means that the exporter has in-depth market knowledge and concentrates on finding similarities in different markets – in this approach the decision-making power is centralized and the marketing variables are rather standardized.

HQ Knowledge of Local Market Conditions		Mainly Local Representative	Mainly HQ
	Deep	Confederation	Federation
	Shallow	Local Baronies	Civil War

Influence on Marketing Decisions
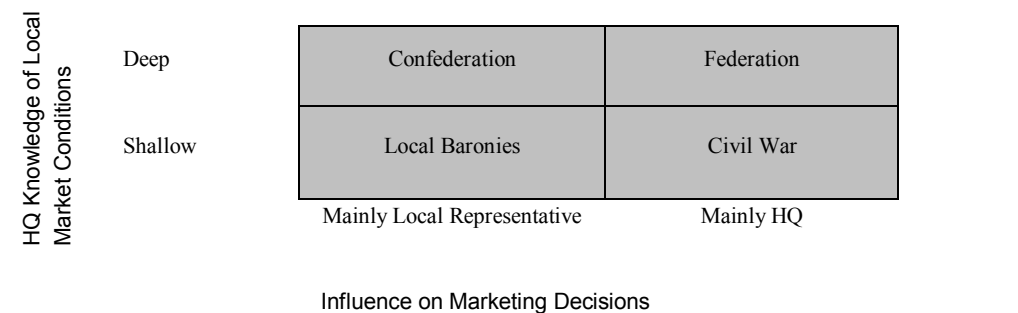
Most of the companies interviewed delegated quite a lot of decision-making power to their Japanese distributors and according to Solberg's typology they are in the local baronies category. The design companies researched are rather small in size and they do not have a lot of knowledge regarding the marketing characteristics of the Japanese market, and thus they are willing to delegate power to make decisions about the marketing message and media channels to their distributors. This means that the control of the brand image and marketing has been largely turned over to the Japanese distributor. Moreover, the exporter does not learn much more about the market, since it has turned the decision-making power over to the local actors. Even though the distributor often makes the operational decisions, the exporter still controls the marketing strategy and budget questions. As one exporter stated in the interview:

> *"[Marketing communication] goes quite a lot through our distributor, but of course we make them certain materials, but there is often this language issue… So we do things together with the distributor and decide with them the costs and implementation case by case".*
>
> Representative of Finnish Design Manufacturer in B2B field

Only one of the companies we interviewed operated in the business-to-consumer business; the rest were in the business-to-business field. Business-to-business buying behaviour has some special characteristics that also have an effect on the marketing communication process. In the business-to-business field, there are fewer customers, the relationship between the seller and the buyer is closer, and the orders are larger and thus more significant. There are usually

many buyers involved in the buying process and they are usually more technically qualified and rational in their decisions. However, the buyers are at the same time more loyal than in the consumer business, since the switching costs are higher. (de Pelsmacker et al. 2004) These characteristics affect marketing communication and the methods that work in consumer business may not be relevant at all in a business-to-business context. Finnish design companies that operate in the business-to-business sector do not see marketing campaigns as important as they would be in business-to-business. One interviewee stated the following:

> *"We do not have any active marketing campaigns or anything like that, since we work in business-to-business and the cost versus benefits is not the same as when you look at the consumer business".*
> *Representative of Finnish Design Manufacturer in B2B field*

The only company that we interviewed from the consumer business has its own subsidiary in Japan and they sell consumer products to local distributors. This subsidiary coordinates marketing in the Japanese market. According to the Solberg's typology, this company can be categorized as a federation. The role of headquarters is quite strong and it can be said that most of the marketing is standardized globally. Still, the local subsidiary is given a lot of power and the global strategies are conducted in cooperation with the local subsidiary. The headquarters makes the marketing schedule and visual guidelines, for example, for launching new products, and after that the Japanese subsidiary decides whether they suit Japanese consumers. If there is a specialized need in the local market, the subsidiary is authorized to make sales material for the Japanese market alone. However, the subsidiaries need approval from the headquarters for all localized materials. Even though the Japanese subsidiary works with a local advertising agency, the agency mainly translates the texts into Japanese. The advertising is mostly standardized and the brand image is controlled, so that it is the same in all foreign markets. In order to control the brand image and imagery used in the local markets, some companies have also organized an image databank for their distributors.

Deep	Small Design Exporter with Local Knowledge	Design Exporter with Local Sales Office
Shallow	Small Design Exporters without Local Knowledge	Design Exporter without Local Knowledge
	Mainly Local Representative	Mainly HQ

HQ Knowledge of Local Market Conditions

Influence on Marketing Decisions

In Japan, distributors have quite a lot of power. Moreover, they are often delegated a lot of power in marketing decisions due to assumptions about market peculiarities. However, according to one Japanese specialist, the Japanese market is not so different from the European market. He explained that many distributors do not want to promote the exporter's product too much, preferring to promote it just a little bit, but not drastically. Japanese distributors like steady, slow growth of 2-3 per cent. This is why they do not want to market the product too much. The reason for this is that the distributors do not want to lose their business. Their fear is that if the company succeeds, the exporter will want to establish their own subsidiary in Japan. This is why distributors say that the Japanese market is special and you cannot succeed there without a local partner. Another problem is that the distributors are not so interested in the brand image itself; they merely want the products to be sold. This is especially the case when the exporter has several distributors. One interviewee stated the following:

> *"If you have many distributors the problem is that the distributors work based on a certain project, but   not for the design brand itself, because they feel that otherwise if they do the [brand building] work, anyone can benefit from that [also the competitors]".*
> Representative of Finnish Design Manufacturer in B2B field

According to our research, Finnish design companies have delegated quite a lot of power to local distributors regarding marketing. When the marketing is turned over to people who know the culture and local conditions in Japan, they are also given quite a lot of authority regarding how the marketing is conducted and also over the brand. A close relationship with the distributors is thus essential in order to maintain control over the brand and its image in Japan. The brand image is important for increasing sales of a product especially in Japan, since people want stories and personal value. Companies can provide this added value by creating a consistent brand image. Brand image can differentiate a product and create a competitive advantage over other similar products. It also allows the exporter to charge a higher price, since this product can give more value than a similar product without a positive brand image.

3   Marketing Strategy

Before taking a deeper look at the different methods of marketing communication, we would like to discuss the marketing strategies of companies entering foreign markets. International marketing models are widely based on globalisation and broader theories of standardization and localization of marketing mix elements (Merrilees & Tiessen, 1999). Buzell (1968) was the first to recognize the conflicting requirements of local adaptation and standardization. Since then, some authors have argued that cultural differences between countries prevent the use of standardised strategies. Some other authors have stated that standardized marketing works at least across some regions. Levitt (1983) has seen standardization as an answer to globalisation forces. According to him, markets are becoming more homogenous and thus standardized marketing and strategies are necessary for success in the global market place (cited in Solberg, 2000).

We studied the case of four small- or medium-sized Finnish design companies that operate in the Japanese market. Only one of the companies operates in consumer business; the rest sell their products to business-to-business customers. These business-to-business companies mainly sell small design objects and furniture. The customers are mostly architects, interior designers and construction companies as well as buyers of department stores and specialty stores. This also affects the marketing strategy and communication of products. There are fewer buyers and thus companies know their customers better and can approach them in a more personalized way. Business-to-business markets are also more homogenous in a global scale. Market segmentation is often based on the type of industry instead of on demographic or psychographic characteristics (de Pelsmacker et al. 2004). One of the interviewees stated that marketing communication practices are rather different in different countries, but inside the industry the changes might not be so important.

> *When you look at the Japanese media [in general], it is quite different than the Finnish one. But when we talk about the field of design, it is very specific part of culture and people have created a relationship with it, and they know and understand it. So, in that sense marketing is more similar than in other fields of services or culture. So, design is a specific culture in Finland, Japan and everywhere in the world. But marketing communication in general has big differences.*
>
> Expert in Finnish Design (University of Art and Design Helsinki)

So according to our research, even though there are cultural differences between marketing communication in Japan and Finland, these differences might not be as significant in design as in marketing in general.

According to Szymanski et al (1993), companies that are planning to enter foreign markets should analyse how similar the local and foreign markets are in terms of marketing strategy variables and performance targets. This means that companies should develop an understanding of the competitive marketing strategy variables (e.g. advertising, trade shows) and performance they are looking for (e.g. market share, profitably). There are several decisions the companies should make based on these relationships between markets.

1) *Strategic orientation*: either standardization or localization
2) *Degree of standardization of the strategic resource mix* (proportion of resources allocated to advertising, trade shows, personal selling and other marketing mix variables)
3) *Degree of standardization of the strategy content* (standardization/localization of e.g. product positioning, brand name, media selection and content of advertisement) (Szymanski et al, 1993)

Regarding the general strategic orientation, we found that most of the Finnish design companies we interviewed export their products to several foreign markets and the exports to these markets are rather small in volume. Hence, there is pressure to have standardized marketing since there is not enough business to support localization in all these various markets. The companies simply do not have the monetary resources for adjusting their marketing to these separate markets. It seems that most of the marketing resources are spent on making product catalogues and price lists for potential customers. These marketing materials are then distributed by the companies to architects, interior designers and construction firms. The standardization of the strategy resource mix and content is analysed in more detail in the section on Marketing Communications.

The traditional standardization/localization models have concentrated on researching certain elements of marketing strategy, e.g. the 4P's of marketing strategy, not marketing strategy as such. For small- and medium-sized companies these models are rather broad and do not

necessarily work the same way as for multinational corporations whose marketing strategies are more developed. To better suit the reality of small- and medium-sized companies, Merrilees and Tiessen (1999) have developed two international marketing models that synthesize the way SME companies have conducted their international marketing. These models are sales-driven international marketing and relationship-driven international marketing.

The sales-driven marketing strategy has a rather short-term focus and the company does not have niche market power; it is just one small player in the market. The relationship between the exporter and the customer or the distributor is transaction-orientated rather than relationship-orientated. This means that it concentrates mainly on routine processes of receiving orders, checking requirements and shipping products. Limited effort is spent on building the relationship with the customer or the distributor. The exporter company has a reactive strategy, so most of the contact comes from the distributor's side. There are some changes made in the marketing mix to suit the foreign market and meet the customer's needs, but these efforts are only low or moderate. (Merrilees and Tiessen,1999)

On the other hand, companies that fall into relationship-driven international marketing model have real power in a well-defined niche. The company tightly controls the selection process of the agent or the distributor chosen in the foreign market. There is also high priority placed on the relationship and the agent or distributor and the company are ready to spend time and money to visit the distributor or the customer regularly. The exporter company also makes considerable effort to understand and meet the customer's needs in the foreign market. However, the decisions are mainly based on the company's own needs and marketing strategy, not merely on the needs of the foreign customer or agent. (Merrilees and Tiessen, 1999)

Most of the Finnish design companies we interviewed have a sales-driven marketing strategy and do not have niche market power in Japan. The exporters are quite reactive to requests from the distributors. Some time and money is spent on building the relationship with the distributor, but these efforts are only moderate. A few larger design companies we interviewed seem to be moving towards a more relationship-driven marketing strategy. They were making more efforts on building the relationship and considering the needs of the

distributor and end consumers, while still keeping their own marketing strategy focus strong. However, it still seems that most of the Finnish design companies have a sales-driven marketing model. This is partly due to limited human and monetary resources, since most of the companies we interviewed have only one or a few employees working in international marketing, Japan is only one of the countries in which they market their products. So even though many companies would like to have a closer relationship with their distributors in Japan, they are still in the transaction-oriented business. They have neither power in the market nor a close relationship with the distributors.

3.1   Marketing Communication

When planning their marketing communication strategies abroad, companies need to decide whether to standardize or adapt their advertising and other marketing communication. In addition, there is a need to decide which aspects can be standardized and when they can be standardized. The global marketing mix strategy has been extensively debated and there are supporters for both approaches.

In standardized advertising, concepts, themes, messages and settings are similar in different countries with the possible exception of translations (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004). According to Taylor and Okazaki (2006), who researched multinational companies and their advertising practices, there are several motives for standardization. First, standardised advertising brings cost savings. There is an assumption that standardization is less costly than localization; it results in considerable savings in media costs, advertising production costs and advertising illustrative materials (Taylor and Okazaki, 2006; Papavassiliuo and Stathakopoulos, 1997) and also the quality can be similarly enhanced in all markets (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004). Second, companies standardize their advertising, because they want to create brand awareness and a uniform brand image (Taylor and Okazaki 2006). This kind of global approach allows the multinational company to maintain a consistent image and identity throughout the world, for example it minimizes the confusion among buyers who travel frequently (Papavassiliuo and Stathakopoulos, 1997). Third, by standardizing advertising, companies can appeal to cross-market segments – segments that exist in many countries. Finally, when using standardizes marketing, company headquarters can coordinate and control marketing strategy more effectively (Taylor and Okazaki 2006).

Supporters of adaptation concentrate on the cultural differences that should not be neglected when planning advertising in different countries (Mueller, 1988). It is hard to deny that culture is a major factor in marketing communication. Herbig and Howard (2001) argue that marketing is the most culturally sensitive of all disciplines, because it is a process of satisfying needs and wants. People around the globe differ for example in their beliefs, experiences and values and these differences may lead to different needs and consumer behaviour (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004). It is has also been said that "culture is communication". Communicating effectively in a foreign country requires the ability to decode messages properly (Rosenbloom & Larsen, 2003).

In addition to differences in cultural dimensions, there can be differences in geography, national wealth and level of development, education, and religion etc. that may require consideration when planning international advertising (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004).

As mentioned previously, the adaptation/standardisation decision could be partly explained with knowledge of the local market conditions and the headquarters' influence on local marketing decisions. Better knowledge of local market condition seems to lead to a more standardised approach (Solberg, 2001). On the other hand, the decision is not necessarily dichotomous. Some parts of an advertising campaign can be kept standard while other parts can be adapted to local market conditions. The adaptation/standardisation decision could be seen as a continuum with the two opposite ends and all possible degrees between them (Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997).

In the next part we analyse - in terms of adaptation versus standardization - the opportunities for marketing communication content available to Finnish companies in their marketing communication strategy in Japan. Mostly used methods include advertising, PR, trade shows and sales material.

3.1.1 Advertising Content

Japan is a quite unique market with regard to the culture and people, at least when compared to Western markets. Maybe because of these characteristics advertising in Japan has been widely examined and compared with advertisements in the West in search of cultural

differences and their effect on advertising content and also to determine whether standardisation or adaptation is used (for example Taylor and Okazaki, 2005; Dallmann, 2001; Javalgi et al., 1995; Mueller, 1988, 1987).

When establishing advertising objects or creating content, advertising appeals can be used. Appeals can be roughly divided into the emotional and the rational. Emotional appeals elicit affective responses and convey images whereas rational appeals use features and practical details (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004). Mueller (1987) distinguished two groups of advertising appeals in Japanese advertisements: traditional appeals which reflect traditional Japanese values and other national characteristics, and modern, more westernised appeals which would be used in developing global consumer culture. Traditional appeals contain many emotional appeals; they enhance moods and atmospheres (soft-sell appeals) or the goodness and beauty of nature (oneness with nature appeals). Modern appeals, on the other hand, are more practical and emphasis is on the product and its characteristics (product merit appeals) and the technological achievement (manipulation of nature appeals) or sales orientation, which stress brand name and product recommendations (hard-sell appeals).

Traditional Appeals	Modern and Westernized Appeals
Group Consensus	Individual and Indepedence
Soft-Sell	Hard-Sell
Veneration Elderly	Youth and Modernity
Status	Product Merit
Oneness with Nature	Manipulation of Nature

Traditionally, Japanese culture has been seen as a collective culture. However, this tradition has been long gone in Japanese advertising where individuality is stressed even more than in American advertisements (Mueller, 1987). Similar pattern was visible in the interviews as well. It must also be noted that those who seek Finnish or Scandinavian design products were more individualistic and tried to create a unique image, slightly different from that of the masses. The interviews revealed an interesting point; while individualism is highly desirable and fashionable, being part of a group is still important. This means that one should not be too different even when being different.

When comparing soft-sell and hard-sell appeals, Japan has remained traditional as advertisements appeal much more to the emotional level and tend to be less direct than their Western counterparts (Mueller, 1987). This was apparent when the interviewees emphasised the importance of using stories behind the product and bringing the story up in advertisements to build an atmosphere and emotional bond with the product, brand or company.

> *A product is nothing without a story. Especially expensive products need to have a story: how it is done, what is the concept…*
>
> Japanese company representative

Especially many expensive and luxurious products are advertised using status appeals; using the product will improve your rank or some quality in face of others. Foreign, imported impressions of a product are interpreted as adding further prestige (Mueller, 1987). The interviews mentioned that preserving the Finnish feeling or look of the product in advertising was a strength. One interviewee even stressed that you should not translate all the sales material to preserve the original Finnish image.

The relationship with nature has always been emphasised in Japanese advertising and current environmental awareness has made the nature appeal a global appeal used equally in East and West. In this light, many Finnish design products are in a good position, as they are interpreted and advertised as something "inspired by nature" or "created from nature". Also, the message of Finland was considered quite positive even though the Japanese might not know much of Finland or Finnish products.

> *What Japanese know about Finland is very limited. I would say that 99.5% is positive, a lot of nature, sincere people, hardworking people, aurora, xylitol chewing gum, Moomin and then nowadays Marimekko, Iittala, Arabia, specific brands.*
>
> Japanese design expert

> *The advertisements have given a soft and lifestyle-related image of Finland. The images promote a Finnish and Scandinavian lifestyle – it is relaxed, democratic, safe and good feeling.*
>
> Finnish company representative

This positive image of Finland could be used in advertising and promoting Finnish design products. Finnishness was seen as a good advertising argument and a "power word" to raise the interests of the Japanese media. One question that arose, though, was whether Finnish design products were recognised as Finnish or just more generally Scandinavian.

In business communications, the role of advertising is relatively unimportant (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004) and this came up in many of the interviews. Business-to-business companies had either few advertising campaigns and materials or none at all, as the cost versus benefit is not the same as in consumer business. Instead, these companies relied more on building relationships with important stakeholders and attending different kinds of trade shows. These marketing communication methods will be discussed in below.

3.1.2 Public Relations

Public relations (PR) are the company's communications efforts targeted at various publics or stakeholders. PR is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain good relationships, mutual understanding, sympathy and goodwill with secondary target groups, also called publics, audiences and shareholders (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004).

Advertising was found to be expensive and relatively ineffective, thus PR was seen as a more effective means:

> *Advertising is astronomically expensive in Japan. We have PR based approach and with personal relationship we have tried to get publicity and exposure in articles. We try to keep in contact with the press and increase the amount of contacts there.*
>
> Japanese representative of a Finnish company

Especially for small shops advertising was not seen as a good option, but articles with information and stories about the shop were considered more realistic and a lot more effective. Many interviewees reported that they were aiming for appearance and articles in relevant newspapers and periodicals because Japanese consumers and businesses considered that kind of publicity more trustworthy and convincing. Good and regular contacts with the press were considered important although design companies aim their PR to many directions. These parties include distributors and their contacts, different kinds of media, opinion leaders, embassies, design and other related associations like Finpro, events and exhibitions and related internet communities such as fans, blogs, forums etc. One consumer product was featured in a Japanese movie; it was an immediate success, which took the company by surprise. This kind of "free" public exposure is the result of hard relationship building:

I met some famous people or opinion's leader, for example, a famous actor or famous you know the news reader… get to them and please wear [our product]…

<div align="right">Finnish company representative</div>

Of all the marketing communication methods used, PR is most likely to be formatted to fit the local conditions, which is, of course, due to the very nature of the PR. Being successful in PR in Japanese market seems to require very deep knowledge on Japanese ways and culture as well as the media and market peculiarities. A Japanese PR person from a Finnish company explained that his work never ended as he went out every evening with different influential people to enhance valuable contacts and continuously create new ones.

3.1.3 Trade shows

Trade shows or fairs are a typical part of marketing and selling strategies for industrial companies that bring together suppliers, designers, manufacturers, distributors and related services and media to a single location (Herbig et al., 1997). Trade fairs are one of the oldest forms of marketing and are considered as more personal communications tools (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004).

There are many positive aspects in trade show marketing: promotional messages can be targeted to a large number of qualified interested people, introductions of new products are possible, potential customers may be discovered, free company publicity can be attained and they are a very effective tool in influencing buying decisions. (Herbig et al., 1997) Through trade fairs it is also possible to create product and company awareness in new international markets and to learn about the new products of competitors as well as motivate employees and find new ones (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004).

Among Finnish companies design fairs were seen as important marketing effort in addition to PR, and Finnish companies have been quite active in attending and arranging events. Setting up fairs or attending them could be done in cooperation with the Japanese distributor. And for those companies that did not yet have a distributor or contacts in Japan, trade shows are handy because there is no need for a spokesperson and new contacts can be created, especially to distributors or wholesalers.

On the other hand, there is a downside; In addition of being very expensive, trade fairs are often considered ineffective and regarded more as social events. Specific goals are hard to set and often neglected before entering a fair, the booth personnel's training is inadequate and the results of fairs are seldom reported and analysed. (Herbig et al., 1997) In huge events, the number of different products and companies can easily overwhelm visitors during a short period of time, and it is likely that the contacts formed are more or less superficial (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004).

One interviewee thought that many of the Finnish design companies are afraid of participating in big design events in Japan:

> *It's funny, they have [been] really brave for Italian market, and for European market, but suddenly they come to Asia, they are so careful.*
>
> Finnish expert in trade relations

As many of the Finnish companies interviewed worked with a Japanese distributor or wholesaler they would also need to discuss participation in trade shows with them. A couple of interviewees pointed out that distributors might not be too keen on participating because of the limited resources and because wholesalers seem to want to keep a low profile. Wholesalers want to have slow and steady growth instead of a one-time boom. They are afraid that if the product is too successful, Finnish companies will establish a subsidiary in Japan and that would be end of their wholesale business.

Other potential trade show partners could be the Finnish embassy in Tokyo and various associations. One interviewee stated that the embassy could be more open and arrange more opportunities for young Finnish designers such as introduction events.

3.1.4 Sales Material

Sales materials include brochures, catalogues, promotional magazines, flyers and other commercial sources of information (de Pelsmacker et al., 2004). For many of the Finnish design companies interviewed sales materials were mostly provided by the Japanese distributor. Distributors' catalogues are good not only for showing the products but also for telling the story behind the company, especially when the company does not have the resources or knowledge for their own sales material. The Japanese also want to see the prices of the products in the catalogue, so these are added to catalogues made for the Japanese

market. These catalogues and/or pricelists are also translated into Japanese because Japanese consumers often lack proficiency in English. The language issue also was one of the reasons for working together with the distributor in creating sales material that came up in the interviews. One interviewee, on the other hand, thought that Japanese consumers would value English texts more and the feeling of the country of origin in the catalogues:

> *You should not change them [catalogues] to fit Japanese market. They should have the original Finnish smell and image, not to lose their originality.*
> Finnish design company representative

In addition to translations, sales materials can be adapted with relative ease. In cooperation with the distributors, many Finnish design companies create their own materials for Japanese customers and stakeholders. The product pictures usually come directly from the headquarters but leaflets or brochures can include more adapted material, for example, interviews with famous Japanese people. Stories and articles about the companies included in the materials stress the *Finnishness, history* and *tradition* of the company in question.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

In this paper we describe the special characteristics of the Japanese marketing environment. We have identified how the marketing functions of Finnish design have been organised between different participants and what kind of marketing communication efforts have been used.

For a long time, it has been significantly challenging for foreign companies to enter the Japanese market and successfully implement marketing due to the special characteristics, fierce competition and other problems typical for Japan. Understanding the culture and its implication for marketing is essential for success in the Japanese market. According to our analysis, the marketing philosophy in Japan is based on three things:

1. Carefully studying customer wants and needs,
2. Designing a product that incorporates the desired features, and
3. Creating an effective marketing campaign for the product.

Japanese distribution representatives claim that the Japanese in general are also becoming more consumer-oriented and concerned about individual fulfilment.

Regarding the general strategic orientation, we find that most of the Finnish design companies we interviewed export their products to several foreign markets and exports to these markets are rather small in volume. Hence, there is pressure to have standardized marketing since there is not enough business to support localization in all these various markets.

Most of the Finnish design companies we interviewed have a sales-driven marketing strategy and do not have niche market power in Japan. The exporters are quite reactive to requests from distributors. Some time and money is spent on building the relationship with the distributor, but these efforts are only moderate. Some of the larger design companies we interviewed seem to be moving towards a more relationship-driven marketing strategy.

		Targeted groups	Roles	Standardisation and/or adaptation
Communication methods	**Advertising**	Consumers	Advertising prepared mostly in headquarters. Local representative may have some decision power on adapted ads.	Mostly translations into Japanese. Printed advertising more likely to be adapted, for example using Japanese models.
	PR	(Consumers) Businesses Stakeholders	Decision power on local level as presence in Japan important.	Strongly adapted. Requires contacts and deep knowledge of the local cultural and market conditions.
	Tradeshows	Businesses Stakeholders	Headquarter driven marketing effort.	Some materials such as posters and flyers can be translated into Japanese. Tradeshow personnel don't usually speak Japanese.
	Sales material	Consumers Businesses (Stakeholders)	Prepared in cooperation with distributors. Pictures and other materials coming from headquarters	Translated into Japanese. Prices added to the product catalogues. May include stories or interviews directed to the Japanese customers

In the table above we summarize different aspects of marketing communication. First of all, different methods have different audiences. While advertising is mostly used by business-to-consumer companies, tradeshows are commonly attended by industrial, business-to-business companies. Public relations and different kinds of sales material are targeted to all groups, however the content and message of these marketing communication efforts varies from one target group to another.

The second column summarises how the roles are divided between the company headquarters, local subsidiaries or distributors related to different communication methods. The distributors have quite a lot of authority in decisions related to different marketing activities due to assumptions on market peculiarities. This is also the case with the Finnish design companies in our study and control of the brand image and marketing is largely delegated to the Japanese distributor. They are willing to authorise distributors to make decisions about the marketing

message and media channels. This is probably because the design companies researched are rather small in size and they do not have a lot of knowledge about the marketing characteristics of the Japanese market. However, there are some differences in the distribution of power depending of the methods in question.

The question about standardisation and adaptation is addressed in the last column. In advertising, differences in appeals still exist between Eastern and Western advertisements, although appeals are also levelling out or even changing positions. In the case of Finnish design companies, advertising is only a small part of their marketing communication mix due to its high cost and relative ineffectiveness in reaching segmented customer groups. In general, advertising as well as sales and trade show materials are merely translated into Japanese. These efforts might be sufficient because of the universal characteristics of design: There are obvious cultural differences between the marketing communication in Japan and Finland, but the differences might not be as significant in design as in marketing in general.

To conclude, Finnish design companies, at least the ones we studied, are small in size. That could be one reason why companies give a lot of authority to their distributors. Distributors have their say in brand building, advertising and shop fitting plans because Finnish companies do not have enough knowledge on Japanese market peculiarities. It is important to spent time and effort in choosing the right distributor in order to build brand and market share in the most effective manner. Companies with more than one partner in Japan may be reluctant to enhance marketing, as this would also help competitors. This stresses the importance of the fit of the chosen partner with your own views.

Managers of Finnish design companies should be daring and active when entering Japanese markets. Japanese culture is not as close and collective as it used to; in fact Japanese advertisements emphasize individualism even more than in Western markets (Mueller, 1987) and growing individualism drives consumers looking for specialities in Japan such as Finnish design products. Finnishness is seen as a positive and interesting characteristic and it is a valuable argument in marketing communication. To build networks in Japan, even small companies can find useful contacts in embassies and different associations. However, the Finnish embassy could be even more active in supporting the position of smaller companies.

We found studying these companies extremely interesting and beneficial. The weakness of this research is the small number of companies that we were able to study. However, the number of Finnish design companies operating in Japan is not very large. Most of the companies we studied operated in the business-to-business field where marketing communication is slightly different than in consumer business. For future research it would be beneficial to study more business-to-consumer companies and their challenges and achievements in marketing communication. More in-depth research on marketing communication strategy is also needed, in order to understand better what kind of strategies improves the odds of becoming a successful design company in Japanese markets.

References

Albaum, Gerald, Tse, David K., Hozier, Jr. George C. and Baker Kenneth K. (2003). "Extending Marketing Activities and Strategies from Domestic to Foreign Markets." *Journal of Global Marketing*, Vol. 16(3), pp. 105-129.

American Marketing Association.
http://www.marketingpower.com/_layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=M. 28.9.2008.

Buzell, Robert D. (1968). "Can you Standardize Multinational Marketing?" *Harvard Business Review,* 46, (November/December), pp. 102-113.

Chao, Paul, Samiee, Saeed and Yip, Leslie Sai-Chung (2003). "International Marketing and the Asia-Pacific Region. Developments, Opportunities and Research Issues." *International Marketing Review,* Vol. 20, No. 5, pp. 480-492.

Cooper, R. and Press, M. (1995). *The Design Agenda – A Guide to Successful Design Management*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Dallmann, Katharina M. (2001). "Targeting woman in German and Japanese magazine advertising: A difference-in-differences approach". *European Journal of Marketing.* Vol. 35, No. 11/12, pp. 1320-1339.

De Pelsmacker, Patrick, Geuens, Maggie and Joeri Van den Bergh (2004). *Marketing Communications – A European Perspective*. 2nd Edition, Pearson Education Limited.

Genestre, Alain, Herbig, Paul and Shao Alan T. (1995). "What does marketing really mean to the Japanese?" *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 13 (9), pp.16-27.

Genestre, Alain, Herbig, Paul and Shao Alan T. (1995). "Japanese International Marketing Strategy". *Marketing Intelligence & Planning.* Vol. 13, No. 11, pp.36-46.

Herbig, Paul and Howard, Carol (2001). "The Future of Japanese Marketing." *Business Forum*, Vol. 24, pp. 26-31.

Lazer, William, Murata, Shoji and Hiroshi Kosaka (1985). "Japanese Marketing: Towards a Better Understanding". *Journal of Marketing,* Vol. 49 (Spring), pp. 69-81.

Levitt, Ted (1983). "The Globalization of Markets." *Harvard Business Review,* 61 (May/June), pp. 92-102.

Lohtia, Ritu, Ikeo, Kyoichi and Subramaniam, Ramesh (1999). "Changing Patterns of Channel Governance: An Example from Japan." *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 75 (2), pp. 263-275.

Marber, Allen and Wellen, Paul M. (2007). "Developing Products with Soul: The Marketing Strategy of Chanel in Japan." *The Marketing Management Journal*, vol. 17, issue 1, pp. 198-207.

Martin, Drew amd Herbig Paul (2002). "Marketing Implications of Japan's Socio-Cultural Underpinnings". *Brand Management*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 171-179.

Merrilees, Bill and Tiessen, James H. (1999). "Building Generalizable SME International Marketing Models using Case studies." *International Marketing Review,* Vol. 16, No. 4/5, pp. 326-344.

Mueller, Barbara (1991). "Multinational Advertising: Factors Influencing the Standardised vs. Specialised Approach". *International Marketing Review.* Vol.8, No. 1, pp. 7-18.

____ (1987). "Reflections of Culture: An Analysis of Japanese and American Advertising Appeals". *Journal of Advertising Research.* June/July.

Nakanishi, Masao (1981). "Marketing Developments in Japan." *Journal of Marketing*, 45 (Summer), pp. 206-208.

Olson, E. M., Cooper, R. and Slater, S. F. (1998). "Design Strategy and Competitive Advantage". Business Horizons, 41(2), pp. 55-61.

Papavassiliou, Nikolaos and Stathakopoulos, Vlasis (1997). "Standardization versus adaptation of international advertising strategies: Towards a framework". *European Journal of Marketing.* Vol. 31, No. 7, pp. 504-527.

Javalgi, Rajshekhar G.; Cutler, Bob D.; Malhotra, Naresh K. (1995). "Print Advertising at the component Level: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of the United States and Japan". *Journal of Business Research.* Vol. 34, pp. 117-124.

Rosenbloom, Bert and Larsen, Trina (2003). "Communication in International Business-to-Business Marketing Channels. Does Culture matter?" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 32, pp. 309-315.

Solberg, Carl Arthur (2000). "Standardization or Adaptation of the International Marketing Mix: The Role of the Local Subsidiary/Representative." *Journal of International Marketing,* 8 (March), pp. 78-98.

Solberg, Carl Arthur (2002). "The Perennial Issue of Adaptation or Standardization of International Marketing Communication: Organizational Contingencies and Performance." *Journal of International Marketing,* Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 1-21.

Szymanski, David M, Bharadwaj, Sundar G. and Varadarajan Rajan P. (1993). "Standardization versus Adaptation of International Marketing Strategy: An Empirical Investigation." *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57, pp. 1-17.

Taylor, Charles R. and Okazaki, Shintaro (2006). "Who Standardizes Advertising More Frequently, and Why Do They Do So? A Comparison of U.S. and Japanese Subsidiaries' Advertising Practices in the European Union". *Journal of International Marketing.* Vol.14, No.1, pp. 98-120.

Wills, J.R. and John K. Ryans (1977). "An Analysis of Headquarters Executive Involvement in International Advertising." *European Journal of Marketing,* 11(8), pp. 577-584.

Finnish design companies in Japan - Distribution Strategies and Market Entrance

Susanna Hurme

Abstract

Internationalisation is always a big step for a company, especially when it involves entering a distant and substantially different market. Finnish design companies have tried to penetrate the Japanese market, but excluding a few moderate success stories, the market is still waiting to be conquered. Finding and choosing the right distribution channel is the cornerstone of successful market penetration. This is a challenge in Japan, as the distribution system – where *keiretsu* companies play a major role - is notably different from any other distribution channel. In this study both Japanese importers and Finnish design companies are interviewed to find out how to create and maintain relationships in distribution channels between Japanese and Finnish actors. The major stumbling blocks discovered lie in communication and in the lack of cultural knowledge and help from outside organizations, such as the Finnish Trade Centers (Finpro) located in the target markets.

1 Introduction

Globalisation is a dominant trend in business. Also, Finnish design has found its way into the international market. Although Europe was readily conquered, the Japanese market has remained relatively impenetrable for the design industry. Even though a Finland-trend has already been established in Japan, Finnish design companies have still not succeeded in market penetration as would have been expected.

The major problems arise from the unique Japanese distribution channel system, which is dominated by the *keiretsu*. In addition, the importance of personal contacts and Japanese protectionism create a barrier for importing. Although the Japanese distribution system has been studied extensively and its special characteristics are well known and documented, only a few studies on the Finns or Finnish design companies in the Japanese market have been published.

In this study both Finnish and Japanese companies are interviewed with respect to distribution channels and market entrance. The case companies are surveyed about their experiences and the challenges faced in Finnish-Japanese collaboration in order to evaluate how Finnish design companies have found their Japanese distributors and created a business relationship, how this relationship has been maintained and what kind of conflicts have arisen. The biggest stumbling blocks were found to be in communication – success cannot be achieved no matter how good the product unless it is introduced effectively and sold to the distributors.

2 Distribution Channels

Distribution channels are critical for the export business as they determine how products are presented to the customer. There are cultural differences in distribution channel structure. The Japanese system in particular has been said to be an important barrier to Western exporters (Williamson and Yamawaki, 1991).

The value or supply chain comprises the interrelated, value-adding functions performed by suppliers, marketers, wholesalers, retailers and other participants with the ultimate aim of delivering the product to customers and meeting their needs. The value added downstream takes place within a marketing channel or distribution channel (Wood, 2004; Kotler and Keller, 2008).

Marketing or distribution channels are the means by which products are distributed from the manufacturer to the end user. Distribution can be implemented completely by the company itself, or by outsourcing to other companies. The actual decision about the distribution channels used is fundamental for the company's success as it affects all aspects of the international marketing strategy. An integrated, well-managed supply chain, especially within foreign markets, is a key factor in determining a company's competitive advantage (Wood, 2004; Doole and Lowe, 2008).

Today's business environment is shaped to a large extent by globalisation, as a majority of industries operate on international markets (Edmondson et al., 2000; Czinkota et al., 2001). Thus a company's ability to maintain a good and effective relationship with international channel members has become an essential factor for a successful export business (Aulakh, Kotabe and Sahay, 1996; Zhang, Cavusgil and Roath, 2003).

The choice of distribution strategy is crucial for success. The main questions to be answered in developing a distribution strategy are the following (Doole and Lowe, 2008):
- *How do you obtain contacts and to build relationships with intermediaries?* How do you assure a long-term presence and how do you confront cultural differences in relationship building?

- *Who should you work with?* Selection of country intermediaries. Should indirect or direct channels be used? What types of intermediaries best fulfil a company's needs at the market place? For example, can Internet and other electronic forms of distribution be utilized, and if so, how?
- *How do you avoid and deal with conflicts with distribution channel members?* How do you deal with varying types of retailing infrastructure?

The intermediaries in foreign markets are most often either export distributors or agents. Export distributors usually offer several functions such as stock inventories, promotion, extending customer credit, shipping, and product maintenance. Wholesalers are business-to-business distributors, whereas retailers are business-to-cunsumer companies that buy the product from wholesalers or producers and then sell it to customers. Export agents and representatives offer buyer/seller introductions and host market information. They also may take care of trade fair exhibitions and general promotion activities. They seldom take ownership of the product. Besides agents and distributors, cooperative organizations engage in exporting on behalf of producers. Cooperative organizations are mainly used for exporting primary goods - e.g. coffee and sugar. (Wood, 2004; Doole and Lowe, 2008)

Distribution can be exclusive, selective or intensive. In an exclusive distribution agreement one intermediary will have an exclusive right to sell and market the product in a particular area. In selective distribution the number of intermediaries selling the product is low. In contrast to exclusive agreements, intensive distribution consists of the widest distributor network possible. (Wood, 2004; Kotler and Keller, 2008)

2.1 Relationships in Business-to-Business Marketing

The buying processes in business-to-business can be divided roughly into three types based on the significance of relationships. In a *straight re-buy* the buy signal is triggered when inventories reach a certain predetermined level. The *modified re-buy* process also includes a certain level of information search and re-evaluation of the products and/or the suppliers before the re-buying decision. The third type of buying process, *new task*, involves substantial uncertainty for the negotiating parties. The buyer needs to specify and assess its needs, performance standards and supplier capabilities. The new task type of buying might take a

long time to complete (Doole and Lowe, 2008). Exporters of Finnish design mainly face modified re-buy and new task types of buying.

Relationship building is especially important in business-to-business marketing because companies can gain additional competitive advantage from the relationship. There must be a kind of "feel-good factor" since all business is personal in the end. Feelings of fairness and honesty are important. The relationship is built by personal interactions, but also by business operations. The overall manner and reliability of business operations, e.g. order handling, has to build trust between parties (Schmitz and Wagner, 2007; Doole and Lowe, 2008).

In internationalisation, companies start to develop relationships with other companies in the foreign market. These relationships act as a bridge to the distant market. A firm can have relationships with several type of actors; e.g. customers, suppliers, distributors, public administration and competitors (Johanson and Mattson, 1988; Johanson and Vahlne, 1990). These network relationships can be formal, informal or intermediary (Ojala, 2008). Formal relationships are related to business activities and informal relationships are based on personal relationships with family members and friends. In addition, intermediary relationships often play an important role in the penetration of distant markets. Intermediary relationships do not include direct contact between the two business actors (the seller and the domestic distributor); there is a third party acting between the two companies. These "brokers" or "agents" provide important links between companies in different markets and initiate international business activities between them (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005; Ojala, 2008). Especially in the Japanese market, informal relationships are essential if no proper business contacts exist. Also, the use of intermediary relationships becomes important when distances are long and the market is relatively unknown.

In addition, cultural aspects may increase the importance of relationships (Doole and Lowe, 2008). The contact between different national cultures is a unique characteristic of multinational business operations. Although globalisation is decreasing cultural differences, local channel members still express a desire that their own national culture is respected (Schmitz and Wagner, 2007). In China and Japan this is particularly emphasized, since personal relationships play an important role in business. Thus it is important for foreign companies to understand the dynamics of these relationships. Cultural factors have the

greatest impact in negotiations and relationship building, although they also play an important role in the maintaining of relationship (Doole and Lowe, 2008).

One key aspect in relationships is information and its availability to parties in the distribution channel. Satisfaction with communication requires quick response times, a high frequency of information exchange, as well as the timeliness and completeness of the information provided between the international channel members (Schmitz and Wagner, 2007).

Management of international business relationships is a difficult and complex task. Different languages, cultures, long distances and lack of trust may create strong barriers to effective relationships. Thus it is crucial for firms and single employees to understand the international markets and their challenges.

2.2   Distribution Channels in Japan

Cultural traditions play a major role in the development of distribution channels. For example in Finland, for most product categories there are four to five centralized wholesalers covering the whole market. In contrast, in Japan there are over 300,000 wholesalers and over 1.6 million retailers. The distribution system is based on a wide wholesaler network often with several layers. One reason for the layered structure of the Japanese distribution network is the high price of land, which prevents keeping stocks in the traditional sense; instead, orders are made on a daily basis. This results in many wholesaler layers between the foreign company and the final consumer.
(Doole and Lowe, 2008; Kotler and Keller, 2008).

To succeed in the Japanese market, Western companies have to exploit the Japanese distribution system and adapt their strategies in order to:
- Provide customers the assurance of product availability, even as market conditions change
- Provide assurance of pricing, even as exchange rates or production costs change
- Provide assurance of service, after-sales care and product development

Thus the process of market entrance requires extensive re-evaluation of the strategic choices (Williamson and Yamawaki, 1991).

The Japanese system is built on the linkage between distributors and *dainyo* manufacturers. A political hierarchy, the '*ryatsu-keiretsu'*, emerges from this linkage. *Keiretsu* is a distribution channel in Japan with vertical restraints. In *keiretsu*, the manufacturer or the primary wholesaler controls the activities of downstream distributors through preconditions or contractual stipulations. The distributor accepts an acquiescent status in return for economic security. In *keiretsu,* the units are organized in hierarchical layers and the power is held in the highest layers of the *keiretsu* network. *Keiretsu* is a uniquely Japanese form of corporate organization. It is a grouping of affiliated companies forming a tight alliance aiming to assure each other's mutual success. *Keiretsu* links basically all sectors together – banks, manufacturers, suppliers and distributors are linked to the Japanese government (Flath, 2005; Doole and Lowe, 2008).

The members at the lowest level of *keiretsu* are tied to this network by loyalty, mutual obligation, trust and the power extending through the distribution structure. The obverse of security is the lost economic freedom. Operating with outside members may result in an end to ties with the *keiretsu*-group. On the other hand, the *keiretsu* members avoid many costs associated with being independent. These costs include e.g. the risks of keeping inventories as well as many financial costs (Doole and Lowe, 2008).

For a larger company, the general trading houses or *sogo shosha*, are one alternative for importing to Japan. The six giants among the *sogo shosha* are C. Itoh, Marubeni, Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Nissho-Iwai, and Sumitomo. They have several hundred subsidiaries and affiliates. *Sogo sosha* offers access to a rich and powerful relationship network with substantial experience in the distribution business and logistics. The disadvantage is the very unequal partnership, since the *sogo sosha* will dominate the relationship and will have significant bargaining power over the foreign company. In the relationship with *sogo shosha,* the foreign company is not likely to learn a lot about the Japanese market. In addition, it is likely to lose all its alternative options for long-term business development in Japan (Williamson and Yamawaki, 1991).

With *keiretsu* channels, the Japanese market is widely considered to be more difficult to penetrate for foreign companies than for domestic ones (Flath, 2005). There is also empirical

evidence for this contention. Although still one of the key elements in the Japanese market, the power of *keiretsu* has diminished during the past decade. Companies outside the *keiretsu* system, such as Sony, Toys R Us and McDonalds, have circumvented the system and managed to enter the market successfully and even outperformed the *keiretsu* members. Another factor is the increased status of Internet retailing (Doole and Lowe, 2008).

3 Market Entrance and the Choice of Distribution Channel by Finnish Design Companies

Since both Finnish and Japanese representatives were interviewed, it was possible to study how Finnish design and its distribution was seen from both sides. Chapter 4.1 presents the findings from interviews with representatives of Finnish design companies and designers, whereas the Japanese perspective is covered in chapter 4.2.

3.1 The Finnish Perspective

3.1.1 Making Contacts and Penetrating Market Channels

The distance between Japan and Finland limits travel to Japan before concrete contacts have been made there. Also, Japanese design fairs are not familiar to Finnish companies. Hence it is not surprising to hear that the Finnish interviewees had made their contacts with Japanese collaborators through the big international exhibitions, of which Milan was mentioned as the most important one. The Japanese market is found to be very competitive and hence almost impossible to enter. Especially smaller firms cannot afford to visit Japan, even though creating trust and real relationships through email and by phone is said to be very difficult. Websites were mentioned as useful in introducing the products and keeping the Japanese contacts updated, when travelling to Japan is not possible.

In contrast to Europe or Scandinavia, where unofficial discussions are not regarded as crucial, the initial negotiations in Japan should be well planned and the partners carefully chosen. Even for the initial negotiations the parties have to be chosen carefully, since the Japanese are said to have their own sources for always knowing who you are meeting and working with. Thus negotiations with several different parties should be avoided. Since it is very difficult for

a foreign to know whom to contact in the first place, local assistance is essential before deciding whom to approach.

In addition, both the Japanese public and the market are very protectionist, thus further emphasizing the need for Japanese connections. Without any Japanese connection even finding the necessary market information is said to be very difficult. Finpro's commitment is regarded as relatively passive or even nonexistent, although it could help in creating connections and offer the contact information of Japanese distributors and agents. Help is needed especially with the language barrier, time difference, arranging any contacts and distributors, and dealing with the Japanese system in general. The Finnish Ministry of Culture enables arrangement of exhibitions and this helps businesses to attain visibility in Japan, although further engagement on the part of Finpro is still needed. In general, creation of contacts and active business relationship takes 2 to 3 years. Considering all the uncertainty, the investment needed for market entrance might end up too high for a small design company if no outside help is available.

3.1.2 Choosing the Distribution Channel

Unlike the European market, which is based on institutions, the Japanese market and business are based on trust and personal relationships. Hence the Japanese are reluctant to do business with foreign companies, and a local distributor level is needed. Another difference in the Japanese market is the strong power of wholesalers; in contrast, retailers have the strongest bargaining power in Europe. Although the *keiretsu* structure is gradually declining, it is still found difficult or impossible to bypass the different levels of the traditional Japanese marketing channel. Thus, unless the company can afford the high investments needed for its own distribution systems, *keiretsu* and other existing channels are the only choice for marketing. An optional choice for a smaller company is Internet shops, which have a much better reputation in Japan than in Europe.

In addition to the choice of the type distribution channel, the exact distributor or agent needs to be selected carefully. Some Finnish interviewees reported that although they had entered the market, their agent or distributor does not put enough effort into marketing especially for Finnish products, as they also represent other Nordic or European designers. Changing the

agent or distributor is very difficult because if the business relationship ends all the lower-layer parties in the distributor network are also affected and the Japanese partner loses face in relation to them. All operators in Japan will know this, and getting a new distributor may be impossible, as the foreign company is considered unreliable. And in cases where the agent ends the business relationship, finding a new agent or distributor is also found to be very difficult. This further emphasizes the difficulty and importance of choosing the right partners from the beginning.

3.1.3 How to Stay in and Solve Conflicts in the Channel

Travelling between Japan and Finland is expensive. In particular, small companies or designers often cannot afford to visit their Japanese distributors. As many Japanese partners are also small Internet companies or select shops, they too lack the resources to fly to Finland. As a result, communication and creation of a deeper relationship is built through emails and phone calls. In practice, all the interviewees meet their Japanese partners annually and in bigger companies even more often. The main problems arising from this are reflected in the importance of personal relationships and trust in Japanese culture. As face-to-face contacts are rare, building real trust between the parties is complicated and easily prolonged. The Japanese are said to be active in using email, asking only how things are going if nothing else. This is felt to be different from the Finnish way of communicating, which requires a real business reason for getting in touch. On the other hand, the importance of this kind of continuous communication is well understood, and emails and phone calls are always answered. Some companies reported that they also call frequently to Japan just to ask how their partners were doing. But this is an area where Finns should go further in adopting the Japanese way of keeping in touch because frequent communication is the key to building and maintaining trust.

Also, the hierarchy in the Japanese company should be known. For everyday matters the lower level managers or the secretaries are contacted, where as more important topics are dealt with by middle managers. For greetings, contracts and major business action it is often best to contact the directors. Continuous mistakes in these relationships may result in uncomfortable situations. In smaller Japanese firms, such as the select shops, the organizational structure is less layered and the vertical relationships are more flexible.

The Japanese were said to be very concerned about even minute details in design, operations and contracts. They also make complaints easily if they notice any divergence from their expectations. Responding to complaints and solving problems whenever possible is crucial, since the Japanese do not tolerate mistakes. Thus taking all their feedback seriously is the key to avoid bigger conflicts.

Step	Problems	Remedy
Making contact	Long distances, language barrier, limited knowledge of Japanese culture, lack of help from Finnish institutions	International, well established exhibitions. Use an interpreter when possible. Use all possible Japanese contacts/exponents. Get introductions from Finpro and the Finnish embassy or use their status when making contacts.
Creating a relationship	High importance of personal relationships, lack of ready connections in Japan, relationship building takes a long time	Prepare for the time needed before any real business contracts are made. Invest in personal relationship. Use all possible Japanese contacts/exponents. Utilize Finpro and the Finnish embassy wisely, e.g. holding meetings on their grounds will convey reliability.
Choosing the partner	Difficulty of changing partners, lack of knowledge on the possibilities ("choosing whoever is ready to co-operate"), different infrastructure, strength of the *keiretsu*	Decide what is wanted and what your company is capable of fulfilling: market segment, size, type of final retailer. Avoid negotiation with the wrong type of partners. The Internet is more appreciated than in Finland.
Conflicts and maintaining the relationship	Japanese perfectionism, importance of not losing face, dependence on the chosen partner	Be prepared to fulfil requirements not accepted in Finland. Always think of the Japanese point-of-view to understand their reasoning. If the partnership does not work out, know when to quit.

Table 1: *Problems experienced and remedies used by Finnish companies in the Japanese market. Adapted from Czinkota and Ronkainen (2007).*

3.2 The Japanese Perspective

The companies interviewed in Japan represented the importers of design products and focused on business-to-business marketing.

3.2.1 Getting Contacts and Meeting the Japanese Requirements

The most common way to make contact with Finnish design companies or designers is international exhibitions. Especially Milan's design fairs were mentioned in several

interviews. Exhibitions in Japan are not found so useful, partly due to the low presence of Finnish design during the past few years. It is emphasized that international exhibitions are the place where Japanese importers are looking for new products and designers; thus Finnish design companies should focus on well-known, established, international design exhibitions.

In a few smaller, owner-led companies the manager searches for potential import products by visiting Finland, often Helsinki, and going through craft shops and major department stores, e.g. Stockmann. They also utilize any personal contacts in Finland. Nevertheless, one's own efforts play a big role in penetrating the Japanese markets; foreign designers have to take an active role and contact the Japanese wholesalers themselves. The competition in Japan is tough and retailers and wholesalers have choices.

Different events on Finnish design mentioned in various interviews were Finlando Café and Design Forum Finland. Japanese buyers look for new products through these events, although it is stated that there is a need for more events and especially for more distributor-oriented events. Such events are seen as a fairly good chance for unknown designers to attract attention in Japan. Particularly Finpro and the Finnish embassy are found to be relatively passive in promoting Finnish design. In contrast, the Swedish embassy is praised for its active promotions through e.g. frequent cocktail events.

Regardless of the introduction route to the market, Finnish companies and designers have to show that they are serious about the Japanese market and that they are ready to invest in all aspects of the business relationship. Nevertheless, the creation of a real business relationship in Japan is said to take from several months to years. Hence it is not worthwhile for the distributor or the Finnish seller to progress in the negotiation process if one party is not serious.

The main features in design that were found to complicate entry to the Japanese market are quality and price. Quality is extremely important for Japanese consumers and Finnish products were sometimes seen to fall short of their standards. The problem si said to be in production rather than in design; Japanese consumers have high expectations regarding even minute details and they do not accept variations between individual products. This was sometimes seen as a problem with hand-made products, although the Japanese are said to

understand that here small variations cannot be avoided. The price of Finnish products is often regarded as too high to be competitive in Japan.

3.2.2 The Choice of Distribution Channel and the Changing Environment

The Japanese *keiretsu* companies are gradually losing their standing, as smaller independent shops enter the market. Especially in the design niche, so-called select shops have emerged during the past 10 years. Select shops are often small, privately owned and concentrated on a selected product range. They operate on both the business-to-business and business-to-consumer markets. Young people, the 'Ikea generation,' cannot be properly reached through traditional marketing channels. This young generation often prefers select shops and the Internet.

Also, the delivery requirements and lot sizes of large *keiretsu* distributors may be too binding and even impossible to meet by a smaller designer. Thus a Finnish design company should seriously consider choices other than *keiretsu* channels for market entrance. As select shops are often owner-managed, the creation of a business relationship may involve more personal factors than it would with a big, faceless distributor. Moreover there are only some 10 select shops for design in Japan. Due to the great importance of personal relationships and the owner-managed structure, each select shop has to be contacted personally. Select shops are smaller, and hence not suitable for a big company seeking high market shares, but for a small or medium-sized design company they are relevant choices. In addition to select shops, the Internet is becoming an important distribution channel, especially for products targeted to the younger generation.

The choice of distribution channel has to be made carefully as changing it later on may be difficult or even impossible. The Japanese see such changes as evidence that a foreign company has made a bad decision; they are also regarded as a sign of unreliability. Although the high market potential achieved through a big *keiretsu* may sound tempting, a big conglomerate may include Finnish design products in its selection only to show that it also has Nordic design. In practice this means that there is a risk of not being promoted or marketed as the Finnish producer expects.

3.2.3 Maintaining the Relationship with the Finnish Partners

Finns were often found to be relatively inactive or lazy in communication. The Japanese interviewees reported that it often took an inappropriately long time for Finns to answer email. For the Japanese these are small things that signal how much the partner is ready to invest in business relations. Finnish companies should therefore improve their communication.

In addition, Japanese interviewees reported that they seldom visit Finland, and visits to Japan are not expected of Finnish companies either. But in the beginning of the relationship it was found important that the Finnish producers are ready to travel to Japan, even several times, to show that they were serious about the business.

The Japanese accept criticism and expect to be informed of mistakes if they make them. Finns were found to give feedback relatively well. This question arose especially in smaller Japanese companies. The importance of harmony and respect for the standing of colleagues still dominate in bigger Japanese corporations. Hence large companies are not always receptive to straightforward negative feedback.

Step	Problems	Remedy
Making contact	Long distances, language barrier, limited knowledge of Japanese culture, lack of help from Finnish institutions	International well established exhibitions. Own activity: search web pages, read magazines. Use interpreter when possible. Use all possible Finnish contacts/exponents. Ask Finpro and the Finnish embassy to help.
Creating a relationship	Finnish passiveness and hurrying. Long distance. Low importance of personal relationships in Finland.	Patience, understanding "the Finnish way", open communication on the importance of personal trust etc.
Choosing the partner	Knowing how committed the Finns are, understanding motives and objectives	Understanding the cultural differences, open communication on the requirements of success in Japan, choosing a partner that can meet the market demand (volume)
Conflicts and maintaining the relationship	Finnish generosity, lack of cultural understanding by Finns, long distances	Open and direct communication on the expectations and standards, justified demands. Use of tools other than face-to-face contact: e.g. phone, email, Internet.

Table 2: *Problems experienced and remedies used by Japanese companies in relationships with Finnish design companies. Adapted from Czinkota and Ronkainen (2007).*

4 Conclusions

The critical steps in market entrance and staying in the distribution channel are the following:

- finding the right Japanese contacts and getting into the distribution channel
- maintaining the relationship and trust with international partners
- solving upcoming conflicts

Although Finnish companies are respected and have a good reputation, the study revealed several issues that may result in inefficient market entrance, misunderstandings between the parties and less than optimal distribution channel choices. Lack of information on the Japanese market and insufficient local support from Finnish institutions, e.g. Finpro, are regarded as the major reason for this.

4.1 Finding the Japanese Contacts and Getting into the Market

The best way to make contact with Japanese distributors is to have a personal, Japanese contact either directly to the optimal distributor or as a direct intermediary. As this is lacking for most of the Finnish design companies, they should concentrate on ensuring active visibility in international design exhibitions, for example in Milan. Finnish firms should actively contact the Japanese distributors, especially the smaller select shops. Also, the type and size of the distribution channel has to be chosen carefully, as attempts to change it later may result in closed doors to the Japanese market in the future.

A major problem is passive communication by the Finnish partner in the phase of relationship building. The Japanese find it very important that potential partners show their enthusiasm and that they are serious about entering the market. Thus Finns should focus on showing that they are serious about the Japanese market.

Also, Finnish institutions in Japan are said to be passive in promoting Finnish design, especially compared with other European countries and Nordic countries. They hope that Finpro and the Finnish embassy would be more active in arranging exhibitions and events to increase the visibility and recognition of Finnish design among both distributors and final customers. Also, local support by Finpro in finding and contacting the Japanese parties is desirable.

4.2 Maintaining the Relationship with Japanese Partners

The Japanese expect smooth communication and want to be well informed on everything. Long silences and only mechanical order fulfilment, even if there is nothing relevant to communicate, is in practice always regarded as a lack of interest and commitment. The importance of email and phone calls increases as the distance limits face-to-face contacts. In addition, this will often prolong the time needed for the creation of trust and a real business relationship.

The Japanese readily understand that the distance is a limiting factor, and do not expect that the Finnish partners would visit them often. Although Finns in general are seen to be sufficiently active in keeping in touch, some disturbing laziness in answering emails and phone calls is noticed. Finns also often fail to communicate their commitment. Thus more focus should be put on active communication. Also, to avoid misunderstandings in the level of commitment, it would be good to avoid starting negotiations for example before the summer holidays, as the Japanese may see an absence of two to four weeks as a sign of missing interest.

4.3 Avoiding and Solving Conflicts

First of all, Japanese are very fastidious about details. They will make all the complaints that they are able to justify, and will require and expect information even on minute details in the product. Even though this is sometimes hard for foreigners to understand, it has to be taken seriously. The best approach is to try to foresee and incorporate this in advance into the operations as far as possible. In the case of complaints, the wishes of Japanese partners should be understood, and mistakes corrected if this is reasonable. The Japanese understand that they are requiring more than the general practise, but they still anticipate that their expectations will be met.

The worst thing is to lose the trust of the Japanese partner. Thus all promises, explicit and implicit should be kept and the Japanese need to be informed of any necessary deviations. General cultural misunderstandings are apparently not a significant reason for conflict. Both parties understand and tolerate cultural differences up to some point, and attempts to understand the other party were appreciated.

References

Aulakh, P.S., Kotabe, M. and Sahay, A.: Trust and performance in cross-boarder marketing partnerships: A behavioural approach. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 27(5) 1996

Czinkota, M.R. and Ronkainen, I.A.: International marketing. 8th ed., Thomson South Western, 2007. ISBN 0 324 31702 6

Doole, I., Lowe, R.: International marketing strategy – Analysis, development and implementation. 5th ed., South-Western Cengage Learning, 2008. ISBN 978 1 84480 7635 (Doole and Lowe, 2008)

Flath, D.: Distribution *keiretsu,* foreign direct investment, and import penetration in Japan. *The Japanese Economy,* 33(2) 2005

Johanson, J. and Mattson, L.-G.: Internationalisation in industrial systems – A network approach. In N. Hood and J.-E. Vahlne (Eds.): *Strategies in global competition* (pp. 287 – 314). London: Groom Helm, 1988

Johanson, J. and Vahlne, J.-E.: The mechanism of internationalisation. *International Marketing Review,* 7(4) 1990

Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L.: Marketing management. 13th ed., Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008. ISBN 978 0 13 135797 6 (Kotler and Keller, 2008)

Ojala, A.: Internationalization of knowledge-intensive SMEs: The role of network relationships in the entry to a physically distant market. *International Business Review,* article in press doi:10.1016/j.ibusrev.208.10.002, 2008

Oviatt, B.M. and McDougall, P.P.: Defining international entrepreneurship and modelling the speed of internationalisation. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice,* 29(5) 2005

Schmitz, C. and Wagner, T.: Satisfaction in international marketing channels: A local channel member perspective. *Journal of Marketing Channels,* 14(4) 2007 (Schmitz and Wagner, 2007)

Williamson, P.J. and Yamawaki, H.: Distribution: Japan's hidden advantage. *Business Strategy Reviews*, 2(1) 1991

Wood, M. B.: Marketing planning. Prentice Hall, 2004. ISBN 0 273 68679 8 (Wood, 2004)

Zhang, C., Cavusgil, S.T. and Roath, A.S.: Manufacturer governance of foreign distributor relationships: Do relational norms enhance competitiveness in export market? *Journal of International Business Studies,* 34(6) 2003

Appendices

Appendix 1: Statistics of interviews recorded in Finland and Japan

Appendix 2: Introduction letter made by Mr. Takahashi to request interviews in Japan

Appendix 3: Questions for Specialists

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for Japanese consumers

Statistics: Interviews recorded in Finland and Japan for the project: Marketing Finnish Design in Japan (2008)

Interview	Country	Duration	Transcripted Words
F1	Finland	??	5188
F2	Finland	01:02	5752
F3	Finland	01:04	9991
F4	Finland	00:53	4125
F5	Finland	01:36	8932
F6	Finland	01:17	7391
F7	Finland	01:16	8184
F8	Finland	01:39	6855
F9	Finland	??	3911
F10	Finland	01:40	9707
J1	Japan	01:36	4628
J2	Japan	00:32	3439
J3	Japan	01:35	5801
J4	Japan	01:50	5449
J5	Japan	01:33	8120
J6	Japan	01:45	2010
J7	Japan	01:03	1640
J8	Japan	02:12	2995
J9	Japan	00:42	1250
J10	Japan	01:32	5501
J11	Japan	01:29	6146
J12	Japan	01:13	3055
J13	Japan	00:29	3058
J14	Japan	01:32	7976
J15	Japan	01:23	4830
TOTAL		30:53	135934

The amount interviews in Finland was 10 and in Japan 15. Total duration of interviews 30 hours 53 minutes lacks the information of two tapes. So, the total duration is more than written here. The average duration of the interviews was 1 hour 20 minutes. Durations varied between 30 minutes and 2 hours. Most of the transcriptions were word-for-word letterings. However, some of the interviews were conducted in Japanese and interpreted in English of Finnish on the tapes. The word count of transcriptions was 135934 words; the average was 5440 words with minimum of 1250 and maximum of 9991 words.

HSE HELSINGIN KAUPPAKORKEAKOULU
HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

２００８年３月１７日

御中

ヘルシンキ商科大学のフィンランドデザイン調査プロジェクトに関し
同大学からの訪日調査団のインタビューにご協力をお願いしたいこと
＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝
拝啓
首記に関して、ヘルシンキ商科大学は３月２３日―４月５日の間の２週間、
同大学からの調査団が来日して、フィンランドのデザインに関する調査
を実施しますが、同大学から貴社にインタビューをお願いしたいとの希望
が出て来ました。
調査は下記の４部門の専門に分かれて、夫々の専門学習者がインタビューの
担当になりますが、貴社が下記の何れか１部門でもインタビューに応じて頂ければ
幸いに存じます。
　　　　１．文化と消費
　　　　２．ファッション
　　　　３．マーケッティング・チャンネル．
　　　　４．マーケテイング・コミュニケーション

各項で具体的なインタビュー内容は別添の「専門家及び企業宛のインタビュー内容を
ご参考にして下さい。又、貴社にて「回答不可能」、「答え難い」、「回答したくない」
「知らない」などの項目があった場合にはどうかご遠慮なく「その旨」お答え頂くことに
て一向に差し支えございません。
そうした項目があったこと自体が「調査結果」になりますので、インタビューご協力願い
得ればまことに幸甚に存じます。
宜しくお願い致します。

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　敬具
　　　　ヘルシンキ商科大学フィンランドデザイン調査プロジェクト
　　　　　　　　　　　　日本側協力者

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　拝

　　　職業：　　日本語教師（かって同大学で日本語を教えたことがあります）
　　　295-0004　千葉県南房総市千倉町瀬戸 2,344-36
　　　Telefax　　　　（０４７０）４４－３６５５
　　　E-Mail：　　takahaashi2714@lemon.plala.or.jp

HSE HELSINGIN KAUPPAKORKEAKOULU
HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Questions for Specialists　　**専門家及び企業宛てインタビュー内容**

（質問は先方により相応しい問を選択しながらインタビューする予定）
These give only an outline of the topics of the interview.
Suitable questions will be selected according to the situation and the interests of the informant.

1. Culture & Consumption　文化と消費

Katariina Villberg & Vesa Leikos 担当

- How to address the Japanese consumers, what kind of message speaks to them?
  日本の消費者やコンシューマーはどのように位置づけられているでしょうか。
  Miten japanilaisia kuluttajia puhutellaan?

- What is the attitude of the Japanese consumers towards design? What is the role of design in Japanese everyday life?
  デザインに対して日本人はどのような姿勢をお持ちでしょうか。デザインは日本人の日常的な生活の中で、どのような意味合いがありますか。
  Miten japanilaiset suhtautuvat designiin? Millaista roolia design näyttelee japanilaisessa arjessa?

- What specific characteristics do you see in the Japanese market for design products? Especially what are the preferences and attitudes do the Japanese have toward design?
  デザイン製品の日本でのマーケティングにおいて日本市場はどのような特徴があると思いますか。日本人はデザインに関してどのような態度があり、どのようなものを
  好み、どのような特徴を高く評価しますか。
  Mitä erityispiirteitä näette design-tuotteiden Japanin markkinoissa, erityisesti japanilaisten muotoiluun liittyvissä mieltymyksissä ja arvoissa?

- What do you think are the distinct characteristics and strength of Finnish design? What are the distinctions and similarities between it and design from other countries? Can it be grouped together with similar design from some other Nordic　countries?
  フィンランド・デザインの特徴や長所は何でしょうか。他の国と比べ、それはどの点で似ているか、どの点で違っているかと思っていますか。北欧の他の国々のデザインと同一グループ化できますか。
  Miten näette suomalaisen designin erityispiirteet ja vahvuudet? Onko erottavia tekijöitä verrattuna yleisemmin skandinaaviseen muotoiluun?

- How popular is Finnish ness in Japan in your opinion? How about the Finnish design? Do you think that there is something that appeals to the Japanese tastes? Which features about Finnish ness or Finnish design especially attract the Japanese consumers?
  「フィンランド生まれの文化」および「フィンランドらしさ」は今日本でどの程度人気があると思いますか。フィンランド・デザインはどうでしょうか。なにか日本人の好みに合うものがあると思いますか。「フィンランド生まれの文化」や「フィンランドのデザイン」のどのような点が日本人に好奇心や興味をおこさせるでしょうか。
  Miten suosittua suomalaisuus on mielestänne Japanissa? Entä suomalainen design? Onko niissä jotakin erityisesti japanilaiseen makuun vetoavaa?

HSE HELSINGIN KAUPPAKORKEAKOULU
HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

2. Fashion ファッションセッポマッレニウス

Seppo Mallenius 担当

- Have you recognized any differences between western (Finnish) and Japanese fashion?　Do any strong Japanese fashion phenomena come to mind?
フィンランド（西洋の）と日本のファッションでは、どこか違うと認識していますか。ファッションではどこのようなことが非常に日本的だと思いますか。

- 　a) Are there differences in the lifecycles of fashion, like in the duration or intensity of phenomenon? What makes Japanese people get excited in fashion?
ファッションのライフサイクル、その長さやインテンシティなどに違いがあるでしょうか。日本人はとくにあるファッション流行にのりやすい理由はどんな点にあるでしょうか。

- 　b) What kinds of differences are there in the amount and duration of fads?
ブームや流行の数や期間に違いがあるでしょうか。

- 　c) What are your efforts and plans to make your products the next fashion in Japan?
貴社では、貴社の製品が日本における次の流行になるべくなにか戦略があるでしょうか、目標に対しどのように努力するでしょうか。

- 　d) How does the Japanese culture manifest in consumption?
消費形態において、日本文化はどのように現れているのでしょうか。

- 　e) Can you tell which consumer group at this moment is interesting, significant or somehow important for your design? What the consumption characteristics are for this group? Do you know where this behavior comes from?
現在、貴社のデザインにおいて、どのような消費者グループが興味深いですか、また大事であると思いますか。そのグループの特徴はなんでしょうか？それらはどこから来るものでしょうか？

- What are Japanese like as consumers? How do they become interested in a brand or design? What is important for them when talking of fashion?
日本人はお客様やカスタマーとしていかがでしょうか。日本人はどうやってあるブラ　ンドやデザインに興味をもつようになるでしょうか。日本人にはファッションについて話をする際、どのような事柄を高く評価するのでしょうか。

- Which are the channels through which fashion spread among Japanese consumers? Media, the example of celebrities or idols, friends etc.
日本の消費者の間では、ファッションはどのようなルートやチャンネルを通して広がっていくのでしょうか。例えばメディアなのか、それともアイドルやセレブリティーや友人関係を通じてなのでしょうか。

-

HSE HELSINGIN KAUPPAKORKEAKOULU
HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

3. マーケティング・チャネル　Susanna Hurme　担当

- How Finnish companies have managed their business in Japan?
  フィンランド企業は日本でビジネスをどのように経営管理していましたか。
- How the distribution is carried out usually in Japan? Which factors you consider to be the biggest challenges for Finnish companies/designer regarding the entry to marketing channels?
  フィンランド企業の製品の分配は一般的にどのように行うのでしょうか。フィンランドのデザイナーや企業にとっては、日本市場への進出に関してどんなことが一番大きなチャレンジになるでしょうか。
- How it is possible to get into a Japanese marketing channel? How the marketing should be done to be efficient?
  日本のマーケティング・チャネルにどのように入り込むことができるでしょうか。マーケティングはどのような手段で行われるのが宜しいのでしょうか。
- How the networks or personal relationships affect the business and market entry?
  ネットワークやインターパーソナル関係はどのようにビジネス活動及び市場進出に影響しているでしょうか。
- How a significant factor you consider the use of a Japanese agent or a referee to be?
  日本のエージェントや紹介者使用はどの程度大事であるとお考えでしょうか。
- How the relationships are maintained in the distribution channel? How well Finns have succeeded in this?
  分配チャネルの中では、ビジネス関係をどのようにうまく保つことができるでしょうか。
  フィンランドビジネス関係者や企業はどの程度成功したかと思いますか。
- How well Finnish companies have succeeded in their choice of marketing channel? Are there any clear success stories or failures?
- 日本市場で活躍するフィンランドのビジネス代表者はマーケティング・チャネルの選択にどの程度成功したかと思いますか。

4.　マーケティング・コミュニケーション　Nina Yppärilä　担当

- How do foreign design companies implement their marketing activities in Japan?
  外資系のデザイン企業は日本市場でマーケティングはどのように行っているでしょうか。
- Do Finnish design companies have some special features in their marketing communication compared to the Japanese companies? How about other foreign design companies compared to the Japanese companies?
  フィンランドのデザイン会社はマーケティングコミュニケーション手段や方法においてなにか特徴を持っていると思っていますか。他の外資系の企業はいかがでしょうか。
- Could you tell who are involved in the marketing activities of foreign design companies?
  外資系のデザイン会社のマーケティング活動には、どのような人々が参加していますか。
- Through which media (magazines, TV, fairs…) do design companies implement their marketing in Japan?
  デザイン企業は、どのような手段で（テレビ、雑誌等）マーケティングが行っているでしょうか。
- What kinds of messages are used in marketing in Japan? Do Finnish companies differ in this aspect from Japanese companies?
  日本でのマーケティングではどのようなメッセージが使用されているでしょうか。
- What are the features and qualities of the Finnish design companies should use in their marketing in Japan?
  日本でのマーケティングでは、フィンランドのデザイン企業は、フィンランド・デザインのどのようなフィーチャーや特徴や内容を利用すればよろしいと思いますか。

Design
Questionnaire for Japanese consumers

Personal details 回答者について

---

1. Gender   male ○ 男性   female   ○   女性
2. Age 年齢   < 20 ○   20-29 ○   30-39 ○   40-49 ○   50-59 ○   60- ○

3. Have you ever been to Finland?   フィンランドへ旅行したことがありますか。Yes はい   No いいえ

4. Which Finnish design brands do you now?   どのようなフィンランド・ブランドをご存知ですか。

5. Have you bought any Finnish design products?
    フィンランドのデザイン製品を購入したことがありますか。   a. Yes   はい   b. No   いいえ

6. What are the first three things that come to mind about Finland?
    「フィンランド」といえば、思い浮かぶ事柄を三つ教えてください。

7. To which degree do the following words describe Finland and Finnishness?
    以下のような言い方は、あなたにとって「フィンランド」「フィンランドらしさ」という印象度とし
    て、どの程度、適正だと思われますか。

1 = not at all, 適さない。	2 = to some degree, 少し。	3 = fair amount, 普通。	4 = a lot, 良い。	5 = very much 非常に適する。

Friendly & likeable 親切で好ましい。	1	2	3	4	5
Artistic & creative 芸術性と創造性	1	2	3	4	5
Well educated 高い教養	1	2	3	4	5
Hard-working 勤勉、努力家	1	2	3	4	5
Achieving high standards 高いレベルを追求する	1	2	3	4	5
High standard of living 生活水準が高い	1	2	3	4	5
High technical skills 技術的スキルが高い	1	2	3	4	5
Similar political views 政治観が似ている	1	2	3	4	5
Economically similar 経済構造が似ている	1	2	3	4	5
Culturally similar 文化的に似ている	1	2	3	4	5
International 国際的	1	2	3	4	5
Relaxed リラックスをしている、安心感がある	1	2	3	4	5
Fashionable ファッショナブル、流行的	1	2	3	4	5
Modern モダン	1	2	3	4	5
Exotic エキゾチック	1	2	3	4	5

8. What is your perception of the Finnish design?
   フィンランドのデザインについて　どのように思いますか。

9. How well did you think did the products or advertisements presented in each poster suit your style and home?
   ポスターでご覧になった製品は　自宅やあなたのライフ・スタイルにどの程度合いますか。

   1 = not at all, 2 = to some degree, 3 = fair amount, 4 = a lot, 5 = very much
   適さない　　　少し　　　　　　普通　　良い　　　　　非常に良い

Poster 1	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 2	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 3	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 4	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 5	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 6	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 7	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 8	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 9	1	2	3	4	5
Poster 10	1	2	3	4	5

10. Which poster did you like the best? Poster number: _____
    一番、お好きなポスターは　どれでしょうか。番号をご記入ください。_____

    Why?それはどうしてでしょか。理由を簡単に述べてください。

11. Which poster did you like the least? Poster number: _____
    一番　好ましくない　ポスターはどれでしょうか。番号をご記入ください。_____

    Why?　それは　どうしてでしょうか。理由を簡単に述べてください。

12. In poster with the coffee cups . Which one of the different cups did you like best?
    コーヒーカップを描いたポスターでは、一番お好きなセットはどれでしたか。

    Cup Number : ____　　カップ番号をお記入ください。
    Why ? それは　どうしてでしょか。理由を簡単に述べてください。

13. Which one of the cups did you like the least?
    コーヒーカップを描いたポスターでは、一番　好ましくないセットはどれでしたか。

    Cup Number : ____　カップ番号をお記入ください。
    Why?　それは　どうしてでしょか。理由を簡単に述べてください。

14. To which degree do the following words describe Finnish design products?
    以下は、どの程度フィンランド・デザイン製品を表していると思われますか。

    1 = not at all, 2 = to some degree, 3 = fair amount, 4 = a lot, 5 = very much
    １良くない（適さない）　２少し　　３普通　４まあ良い　　５非常に良い（良く適する）

    次ページご覧下さい。

1.	Unreasonably expensive 非常に高い、高いすぎる	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Luxury products 贅沢品である	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Meticulous workmanship 精密な細工である	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Imitations イミテーション	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Sold in many countries 多くの国で売れている	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Not attractive 興味を引かない	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Intensely advertised 広告が非常に多い	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Wide range of options オプションが非常に多い	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Long lasting 長持ちする	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Good value 価値が高い	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Easily available 簡単に手に入る	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Prestigious brands 高い評価のブランド品である	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Nostalgic ノスタルジーがある	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Relaxed リラックス感がある	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Fashionable ファッショナブルである	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Simple シンプルである	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Natural 自然、ナチュラルである	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Unique ユニークである	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Cute キュートである	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Stylish スタイルがある	1	2	3	4	5

15. Why do you buy design products? どうして、デザイン製品を 購入しますか。

16. What kind of design products do you buy? どんなデザイン製品を よく購入しますか。

17. Which of the following qualities are most important when buying design?
デザイン製品を購入する際、製品のどのよう点が大事だと思いますか。以下に付き、
三つのレベルから、選んで下さい。 1 （選ぶ際の）最も大きな理由　2二番目　3三番目に大事

(Mark 3 items with a number from 1 to 3 in order of importance
1=the most important, 2=the second important, 3=the third important)　次のページご覧下さい。

Quality 質	
Prestigious brand 名門ブランド	
Well-known designer 知られているデザイナー	
Good value for the money 金額的な価値	
Fashionability ファッショナブルであること	
Country of origin 生産国	
Durability 長持ちするかどうか	
Environmental friendliness 環境に優しいこと	
Craftsmanship 細工	

18. What do you think appeals to the Japanese consumers in the Finnish design products?
フィンランド製品のどのような点が　日本人消費者にアピールすると思いますか。

19. Which of these qualities best relate to Finnish design?
　次の言葉では、どれがフィンランドデザインに一番よくマッチすると思いますか。
１－３のレベルで　選んでください。１一番良くマッチする　２次にマッチする　３三番目

(Mark 3 items with a number from 1 to 3 in order of importance 1=the most important,
2=the second important, 3=the third important)

Quality　質	
Prestigious Brand 名門ブランド	
Well-Known Designers 知られているデザイナー	
Good value for the money 金額的な価値	
Fashionable ファッショナブルであること	
Durable 環境に優しいであること	
Fine craftsmanship 質の高い細工	

20. Where do you prefer to buy design products?
大抵どこで　デザイン製品を手に入れますか。ひとつを　お選びください。(Circle one)
Department Stores　　　　　デパート
Specialty Shops　　　　　専門店
Internet　　　　　インターネット
While Traveling Abroad　　　外国旅行中　　　Other: _____　他

21. Where do you seek information about design products?
デザイン製品に関して　どこから情報を得るのが　普通ですか。(Circle all that apply)
いくつかある場合、全てに　印をつけてください。
Magazines　　　　　雑誌
Trade fairs　　　　　トレード・フェアー
Internet　　　　　インターネット
Shops　　　　　店など　　　Other: _____他

22. Circle how well do you agree with the following sentences:
あなたは下記の１から１２のコメントにどのぐらい賛同するかということを１‐５の数字で表現してください。１は全然賛成していなく、５は完璧に賛成しているということ意味しています。

	disagree		neutral		agree
1.　　　I stop using or buying fashions (clothes, accessories) when they become popular with the general public ファッション製品（洋服、アクセサリーなど）が一般の人の手に入るようになってから購入することをやめました。	1	2	3	4	5
2.　　　I dislike brands, which everyone uses or buys 大勢の人が使ったり、買ったりするブランドが嫌いです。	1	2	3	4	5
3.　　　When a brand becomes too popular, I use it less あるブランドの人気が高くなりすぎたとき、私はその品物の使用を控えます。	1	2	3	4	5
4.　　　I look for one-of-a-kind products to create my own style 私は自分のライフ・スタイルを創造するような種類の製品を探している。	1	2	3	4	5
5.　　　I buy unusual brands to create a more distinctive personal image 私は他の人と違うパーソナル・イメージを作るために、まだ一般的に未知のブランド品を購入します。	1	2	3	4	5
An important goal is to find a brand that communicates my uniqueness 私の大事な目標は、自分がユニークであることをうまく見せるブランドを見つけることです。	1	2	3	4	5
6.　　　Fashion that I use makes me feel good 使っているファッションは私を　心地好くさせます。	1	2	3	4	5
7.　　　Some brand products, which I have bought, have a special meaning for me, a story to tell 購入したある種のブランド製品は、私にとり特別な意味がある、物語を語っている　ともいえます。	1	2	3	4	5
8.　　　Fashion that I use gives me pleasure 使用しているファッションは　私に満足感を与えます。	1	2	3	4	5
9.　　　Fashion that I use pleases also my friends 私が使用しているファッションは、私の友達も気に入っています。	1	2	3	4	5
10.　　　I like to use brands which impress other people 他人に好印象を与えるファッションを使いたいです。	1	2	3	4	5
11.　　　I usually buy only the things I need 必要な品物だけ　購入します。	1	2	3	4	5

23. What kinds of products have become fashionable in Japan?
どのような製品が　日本で　ファッショナブルになっているでしょうか。

24. What makes you excited about fashion? Why is a fashion interesting or exciting?
ファッションの　どんなことが　あなたを興奮させますか。
ファッションはどうして　面白いと思いますか。

25. What do you think about differences of Western or Finnish fashion and Japanese fashion?
西洋と日本とフィンランドのファッションは　どのように違うと思いますか。

26. What are the pleasant, nice things in Western or Finnish fashion and what are pleasant, nice things in Japanese fashion? Is there something that you do not like so much within these fashions?
西洋とフィンランドのデザインでは　どのようなことが楽しい点ですか。また日本のデザインではどのような点がよいですか。またこれらのファッションで、どのよう点が嫌いですか。

Thank you for your time. All the information you have given will be kept confidential
どうもありがとうございました。あなたに頂いた情報の機密を守ります。

A:287.   TIMO JÄRVENSIVU: Values-driven management in strategic networks: A case study of the influence of organizational values on cooperation. 2007.
ISBN-10: 952-488-081-4, ISBN-13: 978-952-488-081-7.

A:288.   PETRI HILLI: Riskinhallinta yksityisen sektorin työeläkkeiden rahoituksessa. 2007.
ISBN-10: 952-488-085-7, ISBN-13: 978-952-488-085-5.
E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-110-4.

A:289.   ULLA KRUHSE-LEHTONEN: Empirical Studies on the Returns to Education in Finland.
2007. ISBN 978-952-488-089-3, E-version ISBN 978-952-488-091-6.

A:290.   IRJA HYVÄRI: Project Management Effectiveness in Different Organizational Conditions.
2007. ISBN 978-952-488-092-3, E-version: 978-952-488-093-0.

A:291.   MIKKO MÄKINEN: Essays on Stock Option Schemes and CEO Compensation. 2007.
ISBN 978-952-488-095-4.

A:292.   JAAKKO ASPARA: Emergence and Translations of Management Interests in Corporate Branding in the Finnish Pulp and Paper Corporations. A Study with an Actor-Network Theory Approach. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-096-1, E-version: 978-952-488-107-4.

A:293.   SAMI J. SARPOLA: Information Systems in Buyer-supplier Collaboration. 2007.
ISBN 978-952-488-098-5.

A:294.   SANNA K. LAUKKANEN: On the Integrative Role of Information Systems in Organizations: Observations and a Proposal for Assessment in the Broader Context of Integrative Devices. 2006. ISBN 978-952-488-099-2.

A:295.   CHUNYANG HUANG: Essays on Corporate Governance Issues in China. 2007.
ISBN 978-952-488-106-7, E-version: 978-952-488-125-8.

A:296.   ALEKSI HORSTI: Essays on Electronic Business Models and Their Evaluation. 2007.
ISBN 978-952-488-117-3, E-version: 978-952-488-118-0.

A:297.   SARI STENFORS: Strategy tools and strategy toys: Management tools in strategy work.
2007. ISBN 978-952-488-120-3, E-version: 978-952-488-130-2.

A:298.   PÄIVI KARHUNEN: Field-Level Change in Institutional Transformation: Strategic Responses to Post-Socialism in St. Petersburg Hotel Enterprises. 2007.
ISBN 978-952-488-122-7, E-version: 978-952-488-123-4.

A:299.   EEVA-KATRI AHOLA: Producing Experience in Marketplace Encounters: A Study of Consumption Experiences in Art Exhibitions and Trade Fairs. 2007.
ISBN 978-952-488-126-5.

A:300.   HANNU HÄNNINEN: Negotiated Risks: The Estonia Accident and the Stream of Bow Visor Failures in the Baltic Ferry Traffic. 2007. ISBN 978-952-499-127-2.

A-301.   MARIANNE KIVELÄ: Dynamic Capabilities in Small Software Firms. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-128-9.

A:302.   OSMO T.A. SORONEN: A Transaction Cost Based Comparison of Consumers' Choice
         between Conventional and Electronic Markets. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-131-9.

A:303.   MATTI NOJONEN: Guanxi – The Chinese Third Arm. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-132-6.

A:304.   HANNU OJALA: Essays on the Value Relevance of Goodwill Accounting. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-133-3, E-version: 978-952-488-135-7.

A:305.   ANTTI KAUHANEN: Essays on Empirical Personnel Economics. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-139-5.

A:306.   HANS MÄNTYLÄ: On "Good" Academic Work – Practicing Respect at Close Range.
         2007. ISBN 978,952-488-1421-8, E-version: 978-952-488-142-5.

A:307.   MILLA HUURROS: The Emergence and Scope of Complex System/Service Innovation.
         The Case of the Mobile Payment Services Market in Finland. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-143-2

A:308.   PEKKA MALO: Higher Order Moments in Distribution Modelling with Applications to
         Risk Management. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-155-5, E-version: 978-952-488-156-2.

A:309.   TANJA TANAYAMA: Allocation and Effects of R&D Subsidies: Selection, Screening, and
         Strategic Behavior. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-157-9, E-version: 978-952-488-158-6.

A:310.   JARI PAULAMÄKI: Kauppasyrittäjän toimintavapaus ketjuyrityksessä. Haastattelututkimus
         K-kauppiaan kokemasta toimintavapaudesta agenttiteorian näkökulmasta.
         2008. Korjattu painos. ISBN 978-952-488-246-0, E-version: 978-952-488-247-7.

A:311.   JANNE VIHINEN: Supply and Demand Perspectives on Mobile Products and Content
         Services. ISBN 978-952-488-168-5.

A:312.   SAMULI KNÜPFER: Essays on Household Finance. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-178-4.

A:313.   MARI NYRHINEN: The Success of Firm-wide IT Infrastructure Outsourcing: an Integrated
         Approach. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-179-1.

A:314.   ESKO PENTTINEN: Transition from Products to Services within the Manufacturing
         Business. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-181-4, E-version: 978-952-488-182-1.

A:315.   JARKKO VESA: A Comparison of the Finnish and the Japanese Mobile Services Markets:
         Observations and Possible Implications. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-184-5.

A:316.   ANTTI RUOTOISTENMÄKI: Condition Data in Road Maintenance Management. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-185-2, E-version: 978-952-488-186-9.

A:317.   NINA GRANQVIST: Nanotechnology and Nanolabeling. Essays on the Emergence of
         New Technological Fields. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-187-6, E-version: 978-952-488-188-3.

A:318.   GERARD L. DANFORD: INTERNATIONALIZATION: An Information-Processing
         Perspective. A Study of the Level of ICT Use During Internationalization. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-190-6.

A:319.   TIINA RITVALA: Actors and Institutions in the Emergence of a New Field: A Study of the Cholesterol-Lowering Functional Foods Market. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-195-1.

A:320.   JUHA LAAKSONEN: Managing Radical Business Innovations. A Study of Internal Corporate Venturing at Sonera Corporation. 2007.
ISBN 978-952-488-201-9, E-version: 978-952-488-202-6.

A:321.   BRETT FIFIELD: A Project Network: An Approach to Creating Emergent Business. 2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-206-4, E-version: 978-952-488-207-1.

A:322.   ANTTI NURMI: Essays on Management of Complex Information Systems Development Projects. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-226-2.

A:323.   SAMI RELANDER: Towards Approximate Reasoning on New Software Product Company Success Potential Estimation. A Design Science Based Fuzzy Logic Expert System. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-227-9.

A:324.   SEPPO KINKKI: Essays on Minority Protection and Dividend Policy. 2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-229-3.

A:325.   TEEMU MOILANEN: Network Brand Management: Study of Competencies of Place Branding Ski Destinations. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-236-1.

A:326.   JYRKI ALI-YRKKÖ: Essays on the Impacts of Technology Development and R&D Subsidies. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-237-8.

A:327.   MARKUS M. MÄKELÄ: Essays on software product development. A Strategic management viewpoint. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-238-5.

A:328.   SAMI NAPARI: Essays on the gender wage gap in Finland. 2008.
ISBN 978-952-488-243-9.

A:329.   PAULA KIVIMAA: The innovation effects of environmental policies. Linking policies, companies and innovations in the Nordic pulp and paper industry.
2008. ISBN 978-952-488-244-6.

A:330.   HELI VIRTA: Essays on Institutions and the Other Deep Determinants of Economic Development. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-267-5.

A:331.   JUKKA RUOTINEN: Essays in trade in services difficulties and possibilities.
2008. ISBN 978-952-488-271-2, E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-272-9.

A:332.   IIKKA KORHONEN: Essays on commitment and government debt structure.
2008. ISBN 978-952-488-273-6, E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-274-3.

A:333.   MARKO MERISAVO: The interaction between digital marketing communication and customer loyalty. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-277-4, E-version 978-952-488-278-1.

A:334.   PETRI ESKELINEN: Reference point based decision support tools for interactive multiobjective optimization. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-282-8.

A:335.   SARI YLI-KAUHALUOMA: Working on technology: a study on collaborative R&D work in industrial chemistry. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-284-2

A:336. JANI KILPI: Sourcing of availability services - case aircraft component support. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-284-2, 978-952-488-286-6 (e-version).

A:337. HEIDI SILVENNOINEN: Essays on household time allocation decisions in a collective household model. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-290-3, ISBN 978-952-488-291-0 (e-version).

A:338. JUKKA PARTANEN: Pk-yrityksen verkostokyvykkyydet ja nopea kasvu - case: Tiede- ja teknologiavetoiset yritykset. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-295-8.

A:339. PETRUS KAUTTO: Who holds the reins in Integrated Product Policy? An individual company as a target of regulation and as a policy maker. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-300-9, 978-952-488-301-6 (e-version).

A:340. KATJA AHONIEMI: Modeling and Forecasting Implied Volatility. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-303-0, E-version: 978-952-488-304-7.

A:341. MATTI SARVIMÄKI: Essays on Migration. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-305-4, 978-952-488-306-1 (e-version).

A:342. LEENA KERKELÄ: Essays on Globalization – Policies in Trade, Development, Resources and Climate Change. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-307-8, E-version: 978-952-488-308-5.

A:343. ANNELI NORDBERG: Pienyrityksen dynaaminen kyvykkyys - Empiirinen tutkimus graafisen alan pienpainoyrityksistä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-318-4.

B-SARJA: TUTKIMUKSIA - RESEARCH REPORTS. ISSN 0356-889X.

B:77. MATTI KAUTTO – ARTO LINDBLOM – LASSE MITRONEN: Kaupan liiketoiminta-osaaminen. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-109-8.

B:78. NIILO HOME: Kauppiasyrittäjyys. Empiirinen tutkimus K-ruokakauppiaiden yrittäjyysasenteista. Entrepreneurial Orientation of Grocery Retailers – A Summary. ISBN 978-952-488-113-5, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-114-2.

B:79. PÄIVI KARHUNEN – OLENA LESYK – KRISTO OVASKA: Ukraina suomalaisyritysten toimintaympäristönä. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-150-0, E-versio: 978-952-488-151-7.

B:80. MARIA NOKKONEN: Näkemyksiä pörssiyhtiöiden hallitusten sukupuolikiintiöistä. Retorinen diskurssianalyysi Helsingin Sanomien verkkokeskusteluista. Nasta-projekti. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-166-1, E-versio: 978-952-488-167-8.

B:81. PIIA HELISTE – RIITTA KOSONEN – MARJA MATTILA: Suomalaisyritykset Baltiassa tänään ja huomenna: Liiketoimintanormien ja -käytäntöjen kehityksestä. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-177-7, E-versio: 978-952-488-183-8.

B:82. OLGA MASHKINA – PIIA HELISTE – RIITTA KOSONEN: The Emerging Mortgage Market in Russia: An Overview with Local and Foreign Perspectives. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-193-7, E-version: 978-952-488-194-4.

B:83. PIIA HELISTE – MARJA MATTILA – KRZYSZTOF STACHOWIAK: Puola suomalais-yritysten toimintaympäristönä. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-198-2, E-versio: 978-952-488-199-9.

B:84.   PÄIVI KARHUNEN – RIITTA KOSONEN – JOHANNA LOGRÉN – KRISTO OVASKA:
        Suomalaisyritysten strategiat Venäjän muuttuvassa liiketoimintaympäristössä.
        2008. ISBN 978-953-488-212-5, E-versio: 978-952-488-241-5.

B:85.   MARJA MATTILA – EEVA KEROLA – RIITTA KOSONEN: Unkari suomalaisyritysten
        toimintaympäristönä. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-213-2, E-versio: 978-952-488-222-4.

B:86.   KRISTIINA KORHONEN – ANU PENTTILÄ – MAYUMI SHIMIZU – EEVA KEROLA –
        RIITTA KOSONEN: Intia suomalaisyritysten toimintaympäristönä.2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-214-9, E-versio: 978-952-488-283-5

B:87.   SINIKKA VANHALA – SINIKKA PESONEN: Työstä nauttien. SEFE:en kuuluvien nais- ja
        miesjohtajien näkemyksiä työstään ja urastaan. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-224-8, E-versio: 978-952-488-225-5.

B:88.   POLINA HEININEN – OLGA MASHKINA – PÄIVI KARHUNEN – RIITTA KOSONEN:
        Leningradin lääni yritysten toimintaympäristönä: pk-sektorin näkökulma. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-231-6, E-versio: 978-952-488-235-4.

B:89.   Ольга Машкина – Полина Хейнинен: Влияние государственного сектора на
        развитие малого и среднего предпринимательства в Ленинградской области:
        взгляд предприятий.2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-233-0, E-version: 978-952-488-240-8.

B:90.   MAI ANTTILA – ARTO RAJALA (Editors): Fishing with business nets – keeping thoughts
        on the horizon Professor Kristian Möller. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-249-1, E-version: 978-952-488-250-7.

B:91.   RENÉ DE KOSTER – WERNER DELFMANN (Editors): Recent developments in supply
        chain management. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-251-4, E-version: 978-952-488-252-1.

B:92.   KATARIINA RASILAINEN: Valta orkesterissa. Narratiivinen tutkimus soittajien
        kokemuksista ja näkemyksistä. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-254-5, E-versio: 978-952-488-256-9.

B:93.   SUSANNA KANTELINEN: Opiskelen, siis koen. Kohti kokevan subjektin tunnistavaa
        korkeakoulututkimusta. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-257-6, E-versio: 978-952-488-258.

B:94.   KATRI KARJALAINEN – TUOMO KIVIOJA – SANNA PELLAVA: Yhteishankintojen
        kustannusvaikutus. Valtion hankintatoimen kustannussäästöjen selvittäminen. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-263-7, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-264-4.

B:95.   ESKO PENTTINEN: Electronic Invoicing Initiatives in Finland and in the European Union
        – Taking the Steps towards the Real-Time Economy. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-268-2, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-270-5.

B:96.   LIISA UUSITALO (Editor): Museum and visual art markets. 2008.
        ISBN 978-952-488-287-3, E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-288-0.

B:97.   EEVA-LIISA LEHTONEN: Pohjoismaiden ensimmäinen kauppatieteiden tohtori Vilho
        Paavo Nurmilahti 1899-1943. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-292-7,
        E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-293-4.

B:98.   ERJA KETTUNEN – JYRI LINTUNEN – WEI LU – RIITTA KOSONEN: Suomalaisyritysten
        strategiat Kiinan muuttuvassa toimintaympäristössä. 2008 ISBN 978-952-488-234-7,
        E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-297-2.

B:99.   SUSANNA VIRKKULA – EEVA-KATRI AHOLA – JOHANNA MOISANDER – JAAKKO
         ASPARA – HENRIKKI TIKKANEN: Messut kuluttajia osallistavan markkinakulttuurin
         fasilitaattorina: messukokemuksen rakentuminen Venemessuilla. 2008.
         ISBN 978-952-488-298-9, E-versio: ISBN 978-952-488-299-6.

B:100.   PEER HULL KRISTENSEN – KARI LILJA (Eds): New Modes of Globalization:
         Experimentalist Forms of Economics Organization and Enabling Welfare Institutions
         – Lessons from The Nordic Countries and Slovenia. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-309-2,
         E-version: 978-952-488-310-8.

B:101.   VIRPI SERITA – ERIK PÖNTISKOSKI (eds.)
         SEPPO MALLENIUS – VESA LEIKOS – KATARIINA VILLBERG – TUUA RINNE –
         NINA YPPÄRILÄ – SUSANNA HURME: Marketing Finnish Design in Japan. 2009.
         ISBN 978-952-488-320-7. E-version: ISBN 978-952-488-321-4.

N-SARJA: HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS. MIKKELI BUSINESS CAMPUS PUBLICATIONS.
ISSN 1458-5383

N:63.   SOILE MUSTONEN – ANNE GUSTAFSSON-PESONEN: Oppilaitosten yrittäjyys-
         koulutuksen kehittämishanke 2004–2006 Etelä-Savon alueella. Tavoitteiden, toimen-
         piteiden ja vaikuttavuuden arviointi. 2007. ISBN: 978-952-488-086-2.

N:64.   JOHANNA LOGRÉN – VESA KOKKONEN: Pietarissa toteutettujen yrittäjäkoulutus-
         ohjelmien vaikuttavuus. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-111-1.

N:65.   VESA KOKKONEN: Kehity esimiehenä – koulutusohjelman vaikuttavuus. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-116-6.

N:66.   VESA KOKKONEN – JOHANNA LOGRÉN: Kaupallisten avustajien – koulutusohjelman
         vaikuttavuus. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-116-6.

N:67.   MARKKU VIRTANEN: Summary and Declaration. Of the Conference on Public Support
         Systems of SME's in Russia and Other North European Countries. May 18 – 19, 2006,
         Mikkeli, Finland. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-140-1.

N:68.   ALEKSANDER PANFILO – PÄIVI KARHUNEN: Pietarin ja Leningradin läänin potentiaali
         kaakkoissuomalaisille metallialan yrityksille. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-163-0.

N:69.   ALEKSANDER PANFILO – PÄIVI KARHUNEN – VISA MIETTINEN: Pietarin innovaatio-
         järjestelmä jayhteistyöpotentiaali suomalaisille innovaatiotoimijoille. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-164-7.

N:70.   VESA KOKKONEN: Perusta Oma Yritys – koulutusohjelman vaikuttavuus. 2007.
         ISBN 978-952-488-165-4.

N:71.   JARI HANDELBERG – MIKKO SAARIKIVI: Tutkimus Miktech Yrityshautomon yritysten
         näkemyksistä ja kokemuksista hautomon toiminnasta ja sen edelleen kehittämisestä.
         2007. ISBN 978-952-488-175-3.

N:72.   SINIKKA MYNTTINEN – MIKKO SAARIKIVI – ERKKI HÄMÄLÄINEN: Mikkelin Seudun
         yrityspalvelujen henkilökunnan sekä alueen yrittäjien näkemykset ja suhtautuminen
         mentorointiin. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-176-0.

N:73.   SINIKKA MYNTTINEN: Katsaus K-päivittäistavarakauppaan ja sen merkitykseen Itä-Suomessa. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-196-8.

N:74.   MIKKO SAARIKIVI: Pk-yritysten kansainvälistymisen sopimukset. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-210-1.

N:75.   LAURA TUUTTI: Uutta naisjohtajuutta Delfoi Akatemiasta – hankkeen vaikuttavuus. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-211-8.

N:76.   LAURA KEHUSMAA – JUSSI KÄMÄ – ANNE GUSTAFSSON-PESONEN (ohjaaja): StuNet -Business Possibilities and Education - hankkeen arviointi. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-215-6.

N:77.   PÄIVI KARHUNEN – ERJA KETTUNEN – VISA MIETTINEN – TIINAMARI SIVONEN: Determinants of knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship in Southeast Finland and Northwest Russia. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-223-1.

N:78.   ALEKSANDER PANFILO – PÄIVI KARHUNEN – VISA MIETTINEN: Suomalais-venäläisen innovaatioyhteistyön haasteet toimijanäkökulmasta. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-232-3.

N:79.   VESA KOKKONEN: Kasva Yrittäjäksi – koulutusohjelman vaikuttavuus. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-248-4.

N:80.   VESA KOKKONEN: Johtamisen taidot - hankkeessa järjestettyjen koulutusohjelmien vaikuttavuus. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-259-0.

N:81.   MIKKO SAARIKIVI: Raportti suomalaisten ja brittiläisten pk-yritysten yhteistyön kehittämisestä uusiutuvan energian sektorilla. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-260-6.

N:82.   MIKKO SAARIKIVI – JARI HANDELBERG – TIMO HOLMBERG – ARI MATILAINEN: Selvitys lujitemuovikomposiittituotteiden mahdollisuuksista rakennusteollisuudessa. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-262-0.

N:83.   PÄIVI KARHUNEN – SVETLANA LEDYAEVA – ANNE GUSTAFSSON-PESONEN – ELENA MOCHNIKOVA – DMITRY VASILENKO: Russian students' perceptions of entrepreneurship. Results of a survey in three St. Petersburg universities. Entrepreneurship development –project 2. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-280-4.

W-SARJA: TYÖPAPEREITA - WORKING PAPERS . ISSN 1235-5674.
ELECTRONIC WORKING PAPERS, ISSN 1795-1828.

W:412. LOTHAR THIELE – KAISA MIETTINEN – PEKKA J. KORHONEN – JULIAN MOLINA: A Preference-Based Interactive Evolutionary Algorithm for Multiobjective Optimization. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-094-7.

W:413. JAN-ERIK ANTIPIN – JANI LUOTO: Are There Asymmetric Price Responses in the Euro Area? 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-097-8.

W:414. SAMI SARPOLA: Evaluation Framework for VML Systems. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-097-8.

W:415. SAMI SARPOLA: Focus of Information Systems in Collaborative Supply Chain Relationships. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-101-2.

W:416.   SANNA LAUKKANEN: Information Systems as Integrative Infrastructures. Information Integration and the Broader Context of Integrative and Coordinative Devices. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-102-9.

W:417.   SAMULI SKURNIK – DANIEL PASTERNACK: Uusi näkökulma 1900-luvun alun murroskauteen ja talouden murrosvaiheiden dynamiikkaan. Liikemies Moses Skurnik osakesijoittajana ja -välittäjänä. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-104-3.

W:418.   JOHANNA LOGRÉN – PIIA HELISTE: Kymenlaakson pienten ja keskisuurten yritysten Venäjä-yhteistyöpotentiaali. 2001. ISBN 978-952-488-112-8.

W:419.   SARI STENFORS – LEENA TANNER: Evaluating Strategy Tools through Activity Lens. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-120-3.

W:420.   RAIMO LOVIO: Suomalaisten monikansallisten yritysten kotimaisen sidoksen heikkeneminen 2000-luvulla. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-121-0.

W:421.   PEKKA J. KORHONEN – PYRY-ANTTI SIITARI: A Dimensional Decomposition Approach to Identifying Efficient Units in Large-Scale DEA Models. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-124-1.

W:422.   IRYNA YEVSEYEVA – KAISA MIETTINEN – PEKKA SALMINEN – RISTO LAHDELMA: SMAA-Classification - A New Method for Nominal Classification. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-129-6.

W:423.   ELINA HILTUNEN: The Futures Window – A Medium for Presenting Visual Weak Signals to Trigger Employees' Futures Thinking in Organizations. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-134-0.

W:424.   TOMI SEPPÄLÄ – ANTTI RUOTOISTENMÄKI – FRIDTJOF THOMAS: Optimal Selection and Routing of Road Surface Measurements. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-137-1.

W:425.   ANTTI RUOTOISTENMÄKI: Road Maintenance Management System. A Simplified Approach. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-1389-8.

W:426.   ANTTI PIRJETÄ – VESA PUTTONEN: Style Migration in the European Markets 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-145-6.

W:427.   MARKKU KALLIO – ANTTI PIRJETÄ: Incentive Option Valuation under Imperfect Market and Risky Private Endowment. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-146-3.

W:428.   ANTTI PIRJETÄ – SEPPO IKÄHEIMO – VESA PUTTONEN: Semiparametric Risk Preferences Implied by Executive Stock Options. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-147-0.

W:429.   OLLI-PEKKA KAUPPILA: Towards a Network Model of Ambidexterity. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-148-7.

W:430.   TIINA RITVALA – BIRGIT KLEYMANN: Scientists as Midwives to Cluster Emergence. An Interpretative Case Study of Functional Foods. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-149-4.

W:431.   JUKKA ALA-MUTKA: Johtamiskyvykkyyden mittaaminen kasvuyrityksissä. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-153-1.

W:432.   MARIANO LUQUE – FRANCISCO RUIZ – KAISA MIETTINEN: GLIDE – General Formulation for Interactive Multiobjective Optimization. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-154-8.

W:433.   SEPPO KINKKI: Minority Protection and Information Content of Dividends in Finland. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-170-8.

W:434. TAPIO LAAKSO: Characteristics of the Process Supersede Characteristics of the Debtor Explaining Failure to Recover by Legal Reorganization Proceedings. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-171-5.

W:435. MINNA HALME: Something Good for Everyone? Investigation of Three Corporate Responsibility Approaches. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-189.

W:436. ARTO LAHTI: Globalization, International Trade, Entrepreneurship and Dynamic Theory of Economics.The Nordic Resource Based View. Part One. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-191-3.

W:437. ARTO LAHTI: Globalization, International Trade, Entrepreneurship and Dynamic Theory of Economics.The Nordic Resource Based View. Part Two. 2007 ISBN 978-952-488-192-0.

W:438. JANI KILPI: Valuation of Rotable Spare Parts. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-197-5.

W:439. PETRI ESKELINEN – KAISA MIETTINEN – KATHRIN KLAMROTH – JUSSI HAKANEN: Interactive Learning-oriented Decision Support Tool for Nonlinear Multiobjective Optimization: Pareto Navigator. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-200-2.

W:440. KALYANMOY DEB – KAISA MIETTINEN – SHAMIK CHAUDHURI: Estimating Nadir Objective Vector: Hybrid of Evolutionary and Local Search. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-209-5.

W:441. ARTO LAHTI: Globalisaatio haastaa pohjoismaisen palkkatalousmallin. Onko löydettävissä uusia aktiivisia toimintamalleja, joissa Suomi olisi edelleen globalisaation voittaja? 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-216-3.

W:442. ARTO LAHTI: Semanttinen Web – tulevaisuuden internet. Yrittäjien uudet liiketoimintamahdollisuudet. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-217-0.

W:443. ARTO LAHTI: Ohjelmistoteollisuuden globaali kasvustrategia ja immateriaalioikeudet. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-218-7.

W:444. ARTO LAHTI: Yrittäjän oikeusvarmuus globalisaation ja byrokratisoitumisen pyörteissä. Onko löydettävissä uusia ja aktiivisia toimintamalleja yrittäjien syrjäytymisen estämiseksi? 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-219-4.

W:445. PETRI ESKELINEN: Objective trade-off rate information in interactive multiobjective optimization methods – A survey of theory and applications. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-220-0.

W:446. DEREK C. JONES – PANU KALMI: Trust, inequality and the size of co-operative sector – Cross-country evidence. 2008. ISBN 978-951-488-221-7.

W:447. KRISTIINA KORHONEN – RIITTA KOSONEN – TIINAMARI SIVONEN – PASI SAUKKONEN: Pohjoiskarjalaisten pienten ja keskisuurten yritysten Venäjä-yhteistyöpotentiaali ja tukitarpeet. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-228-6.

W:448. TIMO JÄRVENSIVU – KRISTIAN MÖLLER: Metatheory of Network Management: A Contingency Perspective. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-231-6.

W:449. PEKKA KORHONEN: Setting "condition of order preservation" requirements for the priority vector estimate in AHP is not justified. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-242-2.

W:450. LASSE NIEMI – HANNU OJALA – TOMI SEPPÄLÄ: Misvaluation of takeover targets and auditor quality. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-255-2.

W:451. JAN-ERIK ANTIPIN – JANI LUOTO: Forecasting performance of the small-scale hybrid New Keynesian model. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-261-3.

W:452. MARKO MERISAVO: The Interaction between Digital Marketing Communication and Customer Loyalty. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-266-8.

W:453. PETRI ESKELINEN – KAISA MIETTINEN: Trade-off Analysis Tool with Applicability Study for Interactive Nonlinear Multiobjective Optimization. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-269-9.

W:454. SEPPO IKÄHEIMO – VESA PUTTONEN – TUOMAS RATILAINEN: Antitakeover provisions and performance – Evidence from the Nordic countries. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-275-0.

W:455. JAN-ERIK ANTIPIN: Dynamics of inflation responses to monetary policy in the EMU area. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-276-7.

W:456. KIRSI KOMMONEN: Narratives on Chinese colour culture in business contexts. The Yin Yang Wu Xing of Chinese values. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-279-8.

W:457. MARKKU ANTTONEN – MIKA KUISMA – MINNA HALME – PETRUS KAUTTO: Materiaalitehokkuuden palveluista ympäristömyötäistä liiketoimintaa (MASCO2). 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-279-8.

W:458. PANU KALMI – DEREK C. JONES – ANTTI KAUHANEN: Econometric case studies: overview and evidence from recent finnish studies. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-289-7.

W:459. PETRI JYLHÄ – MATTI SUOMINEN – JUSSI-PEKKA LYYTINEN: Arbitrage Capital and Currency Carry Trade Returns. 2008. ISBN 978-952-488-294-1.

W:460. OLLI-MATTI MIKKOLA – KATIA BLOIGU – PÄIVI KARHUNEN: Venäjä-osaamisen luonne ja merkitys kansainvälisissä suomalaisyrityksissä. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-302-3.

W:461. ANTTI KAUHANEN – SATU ROPONEN: Productivity Dispersion: A Case in the Finnish Retail Trade. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-311-5.

W:462. JARI HUIKKU: Design of a Post-Completion Auditing System for Organizational Learning. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-312-2.

W:463. PYRY-ANTTI SIITARI: Identifying Efficient Units in Large-Scale Dea Models Using Efficient Frontier Approximation. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-313-9.

W:464. MARKKU KALLIO – MERJA HALME: Conditions for Loss Averse and Gain Seeking Consumer Price Behavior. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-314-6.

W:465. MERJA HALME – OUTI SOMERVUORI: Study of Internet Material Use in Education in Finland. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-315-3.

W:466. RAIMO LOVIO: Näkökulmia innovaatiotoiminnan ja –politiikan muutoksiin 2000-luvulla. 2009. ISBN 978-952-488-316-0.

Z:16.   PETER GABRIELSSON – MIKA GABRIELSSON: Marketing Strategies for Global
         Expansion in the ICT Field. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-105-0.

Z:17.   MIKA GABRIELSSON – JARMO ERONEN – JORMA PIETALA: Internationalization and
         Globalization as a Spatial Process. 2007. ISBN 978-952-488-136-4.