The Role of Cultural Differences in the Product and Promotion Adaptation Strategy:
A L’Oréal Paris Case Study
PREFACE

During this work, we experienced how to manage the relationships within our work group in order to be efficient. Trust and collaboration have been the prerequisites for the formation of this team. We considered this bachelor thesis as an ongoing process, where all the parts of the paper have been rewritten many times.

This work enables us to see marketing from a new perspective, more complex, maybe closer to the reality of companies.

We would like to thank the managers from L’Oréal, Edouard Laclavière, Valentin Guillois, the manager located in Honk Kong, Ivan Coste-Manière, Iku, Aico, Mayumi, Ying, Sun-Young, Ahra and Katrin that dedicated time to answer to our questions. We are grateful to all these persons as they made the writing of this thesis possible.

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Emilie, Lauranne and Tytti
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction: Nowadays, firms are becoming more and more global. However, are consumers becoming global too? Therefore, the challenge for the firms consists in determining if they should adapt their products or if they should consider the consumers as being global, and keep their product standardized. The purpose of this paper is to investigate adaptation strategy in South Korea, Japan and People’s Republic of China (PRC) for make-up products and its promotion considering the influence of culture on the consumer behaviour. This is studied referring to the European market. L’Oréal Paris is used as an example to illustrate the study.

Methodology: This study is a case study about L’Oréal Paris. To conduct it, we chose to use qualitative interviews and document analysis. Different kinds of interviews have been done in order to know more about the company adaptation strategy, the culture and the consumer behaviour in Asia. Written sources as external documents from L’Oréal Paris, websites, press articles, scientific articles and literature have been used to complete the primary data.

Theoretical framework: Culture is a system of meanings shared by members of a group. It is an important part of marketing because it influences the consumers’ wants and needs and because it impacts on the interpretations of products’ communication. This demonstrates that the culture impacts consumer behaviour. The study of the consumer behaviour conducts companies to adapt their products features, their packaging, their symbolic attributes, their service attributes and their promotion.

Empirical data: The empirical data comes from various sources. We interviewed three managers from L’Oréal Paris and as well girls from the following nationalities: three
Japanese girls, one Chinese girl and two Korean girls. We also interviewed a specialist of cosmetics. All these interviews were conducted in order to answer our objectives. The interviews with the Asian girls and with the specialist of cosmetics were conducted in order to collect data on the culture and on the consumer behaviour. The interviews with the managers of L’Oréal Paris were conducted in order to collect data on their adaptation and standardization strategies on the studied markets.

**Analysis:** Cultural aspects impact directly or indirectly on the consumer behaviour. The culture diversity creates the consumer behaviour diversity as it can be noticed in South Korea, Japan and PRC where the culture and the behaviours are very different than in Europe. L’Oréal Paris is trying to know more about these consumer behaviour differences in order to answer the consumers’ demands and to adapt its products and promotion strategy.

**Conclusion:** L’Oréal Paris is adapting some elements of its product range and its promotion. The three countries studied are very different culturally speaking. However, the adaptations on products and promotion made by L’Oréal Paris do not take fully into account these cultural and consumer behaviour differences. Moreover, many promotion and products aspects are standardized. Thus, the L’Oréal Paris adaptation strategy in the Asian zone is a mix between standardization and adaptation. In its adaptation strategy, the firm considers some elements of the consumer behaviour therefore of the culture. To conclude, the cultural differences may influence the make-up products and promotion adaptation strategy.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Global versus local

Thanks to the development of information technology and the improvement of the means of transport it is easier to share information and travel around the world. These improvements enable firms to become more global and act in more than one continent like Coca-cola does. Thus, global firms sell and manufacture products and services in many different countries.

But are the customers global too? Is there a global way of seeing customers? How should organizations approach customers from different countries? Global firms such as Coca-Cola or McDonald adapt their products. For example, Coca-Cola has a different sugar proportion in USA and in Europe. Mc Donald proposes a mozzarella salad in Italy and apple pies in UK. The product range is adapted according to the demand in different countries.¹

Standardization versus adaptation

Two divergent international marketing strategies have been highly debated: the adaptation and the standardization of the product offering. Standardization means to sell the same product on all the markets.²

Product adaptation is concerned with the degree to which the physical characteristics or attributes of a product and its packaging differ across the different markets³. This definition can be completed by stating that product adaptation strategy can be seen as an organisation’s logical and planned activities to meet local customers’ preferences and values⁴.

International business implies knowledge and an understanding of the behaviour, the culture, the customs and the needs of the customers. For example firms should not address people from PRC (People’s Republic of China) which is an emergent market, (revolution of the place of women in the society, purity as an ideal⁵) and from France (mature market known as the country of fashion, hedonism, beauty and well-being as an

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¹ Gesteland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 41
² Calantone R. J. et al. May 2004, pp 185-198
³ Ibid
⁴ Calantone R. J. et al. Feb2006, pp 176-185
⁵ Coste-Munière, I., Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, 2006/04/26
ideal\(^6\) in the same way. The fact that Asian market includes different countries such as Japan, PRC and South Korea with various ways of consuming and different levels of development has to be taken into account as well.

Calantone et al conducted one of the few empirical investigation reported in adaptation and standardization field. Usually, most scholars focus on adapting advertisement and communication.\(^7\) Our study focuses on product and promotion. Furthermore it concerns the details of the influence of only one factor among others on the adaptation strategy.

**Convergence versus divergence of consumer behaviour**

Another aspect of globalization is the convergence of income, media and technology. Some authors expect this convergence to create homogeneous consumer needs, tastes and lifestyles.\(^8\) However, some authors are arguing that convergence has not occurred yet and that the differences are actually increasing\(^9\). “From a managerial perspective, the choice between adaptation and standardization across markets has to consider the differences and the similarities in consumer behaviour for a particular setting”\(^10\).

**Culture bound versus culture independent**

Culture is an important variable to understand the differences in consumer behaviour\(^11\). When the behaviour of the consumer is “culture bound”, it is leading to local adaptation strategies, whereas when the behaviour is “culture independent”, it is leading to globalized strategies\(^12\). “Culture bound arises in a number of situations, some being related to the consumption situation, other being related to product attributes, that is, because of peculiar qualities in the encounter between things and people\(^13\)”. Products will be more culture bound if they closely relate to the elements of the physical environment which influence the local material culture, and which are linked to the climate (density of population, housing, flora and fauna…etc).\(^14\) Culture bounds are strong for a product when there is investment of consumers’ cultural and national background and identity in consumption. Consuming then becomes more than just a utilitarian function, as it is resulting for a penchant for the products made in the

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\(^{6}\) Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\(^{7}\) Calantone R. J. et al. May 2004, pp 185-198
\(^{8}\) De Mooij, M., Hofstede, G., Spring 2002, pp 61-69
\(^{9}\) Dawar N., P. Parker, 1994, pp 81-95
\(^{10}\) Ibid
\(^{11}\) De Mooij, M., Hofstede, G., Spring 2002, pp 61-69
\(^{12}\) Dawar N., P. Parker, 1994, pp 81-95
\(^{13}\) Usunier, J-C; 1992/2000, p 149
\(^{14}\) Ibid
domestic market. Products that entail a relationship to others are likely to be culture bound, precisely because this relationship is culturally coded.\footnote{Usunier, J.-C, 1992/2000, p 150}

The make-up market in Asia
We decided to study the cosmetics as they were found to be one of the most highly standardized industries in business to customers market\footnote{Whitelock et al. J. M., 1987, pp 32-44}. For this reason we believe that empirical research is needed in order to provide information for the firms that are willing to break into the Asian market.

We used the European market as reference since it is L’Oréal Paris home market. We thought it would be interesting to refer to the European market since Asian and European markets have many differences in their characteristics: cultures, history, and level of development etc. These differences can show us a lot of opportunities for the firm to adapt its make-up products.

The make-up Asian market is a very dynamic market which is moving quickly. It is one of the most expensive in the world what make the firms more interested in entering this market.\footnote{Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25} But as specified before, Asian market is very specific and to succeed there, firms must know how to operate in this unique, complex multicultural environment\footnote{Gestland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 12}.

The three biggest markets within the Asian zone for L’Oréal Paris are Japan, South Korea and PRC\footnote{Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25}.

L’Oréal background
The group L’Oréal was created at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century by the French chemist Eugène Schueller. It is today a large group represented in 130 countries.\footnote{L’ORÉAL, \url{http://www.loreal.com/}, accessed 2006/04/10} It owns a wide brand portfolio in different areas of cosmetics\footnote{L’ORÉAL, Annual Report 2005, p 50}. The brand L’Oréal Paris proposes skincare, make-up, haircare, hair colorant, perfumes and some other products less heavy in the portfolio\footnote{Ibid p 15}. The group is a world leader in many branches of its activity. Its Asian market is currently a growing market with about 10 percent of growth per year.\footnote{Ibid, p 6}
L’Oréal Paris is the world’s number one cosmetics brand with sales of €4 billions. The targets are consumers that are looking for effective products with a technological added value. The brand is positioned at the upper end of the mass-market cosmetics sector.24

L’Oréal Paris starts establishing its brand in Asia with the Japanese market in 199625. Then, L’Oréal Paris got in Chinese market in 199726. The group L’Oréal arrived a long time ago in South Korea (1980) but launched the brand L’Oréal Paris only in 199927.

1.2. Problem analysis
When making the decision to break into a new market, an organisation has also to decide the strategy that is going to be implemented in this chosen market. This strategy can be similar than the one in the home market if the segment is presenting similar characteristics, or it can also differ and thus requires to be changed in order to adapt to the market. Do companies sell the same products in Europe and in Asia?

The decision of breaking into a new market also depends on the consumer behaviour on this market. The product and its promotion need to be adapted considering the consumer behaviour. As an example, the symbolic of colours can differ between countries. Some colours can be less attractive according to the culture of the customer28. Do marketers must take this element into account? This is an example of how the culture might influence the adaptation of the product. How the culture is impacting on the consumer behaviour? Is the consumer behaviour influencing firms’ adaptation strategy?

1.3. Research question and objectives

Research question
Do the cultural differences influence L’Oréal Paris adaptation strategies for the make-up products and their promotion?

In order to answer this research question, these objectives have to be completed.

Objectives
- Understand the influence of culture on the consumer behaviour in PRC, Japan and South Korea.

24 L’ORÉAL, Annual Report 2005, p 58
25 Japan External Trade Organization, http://www.jetro.go.jp/fr/invest/whyjapan/success_stories/pdf/2_loreal_fr.pdf, last modified 06/04/13, accessed 06/05/03,
26 Le Monde, http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3233,56-764115851-7567110.html, last modified 06/04/25, accessed 06/05/03,
27 L’ORÉAL, http://www.loreal.com/, accessed 2006/04/10
28 Coste-Manière, I., Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, 2006/04/26
- Explain in what ways the consumer behaviour is influencing product and promotion adaptation strategies for make-up in PRC, Japan, and South Korea.
- Investigate L’Oréal Paris product and promotion adaptation strategy taking into account the influence of consumer behaviour.

1.4. Purposes
The purpose of this paper is to investigate the adaptation strategy on the Asian Zone for make-up products and its promotion considering the influence of culture on the consumer behaviour. This is studied referring to the European market. In other words, we want to investigate how the culture is impacting on the consumer behaviour and how the consumer behaviour is impacting on the degree of adaptation.

The case of a specific firm, L’Oréal Paris, will be investigated in order to understand if it adapts its make-up products and its promotion in specific markets: Japan, People’s Republic of China and South Korea. Adaptation details on products physical attributes, packaging, service attributes, symbolic attributes and promotion will be examined.

This study is addressed to the firms. It will enable them to know more about their customers.

1.5. Delimitations
- We will focus on the brand L’Oréal Paris and its make-up products.
- The financial aspects will not be broached.
- The environmental aspects of the adaptation problem will not be broached.
- Compulsory adaptations like the adaptation to industrial standards, safety standards or hygiene regulations will not be broached either.
- The impact of the physical characteristics of individuals on the level of adaptation strategies used by organisations will not be broached.
- We are not going to study the approach of media used by L’Oréal Paris and the allocation of promotional budget between advertising, sales promotion and personal selling.
- Concerning the geographic delimitations, three countries in the Asian Zone are going to be studied: PRC, South Korea and Japan. European countries will be used only as reference markets.
2. METHODOLOGY

The first step of this study was to create a group. It is an important point since it is the moment when you choose to work for weeks with the same persons. Therefore, this choice must be done carefully. Beyond the existing nice relationships, it is important to be sure that it is possible to work together. Because of our previous works together, our common background but our different skills and our ability to solve potential internal problems we decided to work together.

Emilie is specialized in marketing and logistic. Her last module was Strategic marketing and design, a subject focusing on strategy and design management. She helps the group to progress thanks to her diplomacy. Lauranne is specialized in marketing and Human Resources. Her last module was about European business which focuses more on the impact of culture on the marketing strategy. She brings her sense of organization to the group. Tytti is specialized in marketing and logistic. Her last module was Strategic marketing and design, a subject focusing on strategy and design management. She is finical and perfectionist, she allows the group to be rigorous in all the situations.

The last but not least point was that we trust each other. This confidence enables us to work efficiently sharing sometimes tasks.

However, it is difficult when you are three to keep in touch and to inform each others in real time about the work completed. Thus, in order to work in an effective way, as

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Figure 1: Methodology framework for the empirical part (with data from Gestland)²⁹

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noticed by Silverman\textsuperscript{30}, we created a research diary in order to know the research and the sources exploited by the other members of the team. We also used it as a schedule with all our deadlines and as a mean of communication between us. The progression of our work was also punctuated of common meetings, once or twice a week, to have an overview of the progression.

Once this organization set on foot, we began a wide search on the global topic chosen. This search was constituted of secondary data from different origins: websites, scientific articles, theoretical books, press, and books about the market studied etc. and of research of contacts in L’Oréal Paris in order to prepare the collection of primary data. All this information allowed us to see the available data and to choose our topic and then to sort the information.

2.1. Study design

Since we wrote about a specific subject for a specific company, using all the appropriated methods\textsuperscript{31}, we conducted a case study. Even if there are few purposes and research questions, the principal aim is to deepen the case the best as possible\textsuperscript{32}.

2.1.1. Approach used

As our subject includes a lot of preliminary researches in order to know more about the market, the differences (in the product and the promotion) and the customers, we chose to work with in an abductive way.

Abduction, or abductive reasoning, is the process of reasoning to the best explanations. In other words, it is the reasoning process that starts from a set of facts and derives their most likely explanations. In other words, abduction is the process of explaining what is known.\textsuperscript{33}

The following scheme proposed by Gyöngyi Kovács and Karen M. Spens illustrates the process. The abductive approach begins with a real-life observation. Then, there is a “theory matching”. It means that empirical data is going to fit to theory, and then theory is going to fit to empirical data and so on until a balance between both is found. The purpose of this approach is, in theory, to understand a new phenomenon and to suggest new theory through hypotheses or propositions\textsuperscript{34}.

\textsuperscript{30}Silverman, D., 2000/2005, p 40
\textsuperscript{32}Ibid
\textsuperscript{33}WIKIPEDIA, \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abductive_reasoning}, last modified 06/03/15, accessed 06/04/06,
\textsuperscript{34}Kovács, G., Spens, K. M., 2005, pp. 132-144
Since we are only students writing a bachelor thesis, we cannot pretend to be able to
suggest new theory so we used only the “theory matching” process of the abductive
approach in order to answer our objectives.

![Figure 2: The abductive research process](image)

This approach enabled us to use the theory as a guideline, keeping the same thread and
having in mind some delimitation, without be restricted to it if some new important
elements on the field come up.

2.1.2. Validity

The validity can be defined as “the extent to which the researchers are able to use their
methods to study what they had sought to study rather than studying something else”.36
To assure and construct the validity, it is important to use different sources among
documentation, archival records, interview, internal or external observation and to
establish a “chain of evidence” so to have correct operational measure.37
This validity can be divided into two different concepts: the internal and the external
validity. The internal validity can be done by establishing a causal relationship in the
building of the explanation and in using logical models whereas external validity can be
done by demonstrating the way to which the findings of the study can be generalized.38
For this paper no generalisation will be done since our subject just cover a specific part
of the cosmetics market. One firm, L’Oréal Paris cannot be considered as representative
of the whole cosmetic industry.

2.1.3. Reliability

The reliability can be defined as “the degree of consistency with which instances are
assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on

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35 Kovács, G., Spens, K. M., 2005, pp. 132-144
36 Gummesson E., 2000, p 91
37 Yin R. K., 2003, p 34
38 Ibid
different occasions”39. It is obtained in demonstrating that the different steps of the study can be repeated with the same results. It explains why we wrote all the methodology steps we followed in order for another person to be able to do the same study than us. This is important in a case study, where the qualitative interviews may be subject to interpretation.40 For each type of interview (managers, students and specialist), we used a specific questionnaire basis and a specific way to conduct the interviews.

The validity and reliability of our data are discussed in the following parts.

### 2.2. Secondary data

#### 2.2.1. Criteria

Regarding the sources concerning the market, we tried to use sources that were the most recent possible since the market changes very quickly. We also wanted to have some sources diverse enough to make sure to avoid the maximum of biases due to the lack of objectivity of certain documents and to insure the validity of the information.

#### 2.2.2. Different sources used

We used books, scientific articles and web sites as documentation. Documentation is an important and effective tool since it enables a broad coverage of the subject. Moreover, it is a stable and exact source as it contains names, references and details that can then be used for further researches and can be reviewed repeatedly. This variety enabled us to have different levels of information. Books allow having more basic information studied in a detailed way while scientific articles bring some new ideas. It was the same for the web sites which were up-dated. Moreover, thanks to this large overview, we could have a critical view of our own subject and evaluate our way of thinking.

### 2.3. Primary data: qualitative interview

Qualitative interview is an approach that is in opposition with quantitative interview as it is administered to fewer persons and focuses on specific subjects instead of frequencies, percentages and figures. Another difference is that qualitative interviews create a specific relationship with people since the interviewer’s role is to make people

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40 Yin R. K., 2003, pp 34-39
speak about the topic. Thus, trust is an important element in the achievement of an effective and more reliable data base. \(^{41}\)

We chose this method because it was the most adapted to our subject. We looked for information about culture, consumer behaviour and companies’ strategies. That information could not be found through quantitative interviews.

**Sample, selection of respondents**

In a qualitative study, the respondents must have a good knowledge on the subject in order to higher the information value. It is also important that the interviewees have the ability to express themselves well. Thanks to that, the interviewer can create interaction more easily and go deeper in the interview. \(^{42}\)

The subject asks for information about culture, consumer behaviour and strategy employed by the company. This is why we decided to interview a specialist of cosmetics in worldwide markets: Ivan Coste-Manière, Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, leader in press Business to Business. He contributed to the study essentially with the culture and consumer behaviour parts.

We also interviewed three managers from L’Oréal Paris working with different markets. The Area Manager of Sweden and the Area Manager of Caribbean Islands, South and Central America brought us knowledge about the L’Oréal Paris adaptation strategy and what about the differences that can exist between and inside the markets. The Area Manager of Asia, more concerned by the studied market, brought the most important part of the field concerning the L’Oréal Paris adaptation strategy on the Asian market. We also interviewed girls from Asian nationalities: three Japanese’s, one Chinese’s and two Korean’s. The aim of these qualitative interviews was to know more about culture and consumer behaviour in their respective country especially when it comes to make-up.

To make contact with them we used different ways. Ivan Coste-Manière is a teacher in IPAG, which is a business school where we were studying previously. We contacted him by email. We contacted the managers from L’Oréal Paris thanks to our home school network of former students. The Asian girls are students in Växjö University.

\(^{41}\) Rubin, 1995, p 17
\(^{42}\) Holme et al., 1997, pp 101-105
Interview construction

Interview construction is a very specific step for qualitative interview. The aim is to create a questionnaire that is flexible, interactive and continuous. Thus the interviewer will be able to change and adapt the questions with the respondents’ comments and answers. But the thread must be kept in mind in order to collect the right data. This system is called a semi-structured interview. The interviewer must list the topics that need to be investigated and then create a list of questions adapted. Those questions will be a guideline to follow.

The interviews were prepared before but they were improved in proportion as our work was progressing. We chose not to mention the word strategy in our interviews with L’Oréal Paris managers as the strategy is very protected by the firm.

The interview

The interviewer must listen carefully to the answers in order to adapt the other questions and to follow the logical flow. In that way, the respondent will speak more than if he/she is always interrupted. The interviewer must also be curious and open-minded in order to respect what the respondent is going to say and not to influence the answers. Body language must be observed and transcribed. It completes the meaning of the verbal communication. The use of the same language for all the interviewees helps to avoid an eventual language-based response bias already observed in multicultural researches.

During the interviews, we used the semi-structured questionnaire as guideline. Sometimes, when the respondent was talking about interesting subjects, we let him/her tell what he had to say. The interviews were administrated in English to the Asian girls. The use of English was not a problem as they are fluent. The interviews with L’Oréal Paris managers and the specialist of international cosmetic markets have been done in French, since they are French like us. During the interviews, one of us played the role of the interviewer. The others took notes or/and observed.

Rubin, 1995, pp 42-43
Ibid. pp 146-150
Ibid. p 17
Ibid. pp 125-136
Dawar N., P. Parker, 1994, pp 81-95
Analysing data

It is better if the interview is recorded. But this has to be allowed by the respondent who may have some privacy to respect. After the interview, thanks to the recorded conversation or thanks to the notes and memory, the dialogue has to be written down. Then, responses have to be grouped into categories that bring together the same ideas, concept or themes. Thanks to that a more complete analysis and comparison is then possible.

The interviews with Ivan Coste-Manière and the girls were face-to-face encounters. We recorded them, except the last one because we met a technical problem. The interviews with managers have been done by phone. We were not able to record them but we were two to take notes during each interview. After each interview, we discussed it together immediately in order to detect the relevant data collected.

2.4. Writing up

While we were collecting data, we wrote the theoretical part. This parallel progression allowed the improvements of both parts: because we had theory, we thought about new relevant questions and because we heard a new interesting point in interview, we looked for adequate theory.

Once the theoretical part was done and all the data collected, we started the empirical part. We chose to mix interviews, scientific articles, press and books to have different points of view and then confirm the validity of data. Indeed, mixing sources of information could help us to avoid certain biases. The annual report is written by the firm and addressed to the stakeholders. Therefore, it is like an advertisement since it shows the main strengths of the firm. The interviews from managers were also internal points of view. But by using other sources of information like the interview of Ivan Coste-Manière or articles from specialized press, we found information that confirmed or infirmed the information from the company. This variety of sources gave us a more objective point of view.

Then we began the analysis. We chose to draw a schema to facilitate the comprehension of the analysis; this schema is a summary of the analysis. The conclusion is an answer to our objectives. The final discussion proposes some recommendations for L’Oréal.

Rubin, 1995, pp 125-136
Ibid, pp 238-239
Paris and companies operating on the same markets. Then, it gives the interest of the study for further research directions, and it discusses some points linked to the subject.

2.5. Ethical considerations
During all this study, and especially during the writing stage, we engaged to respect the authors, always referencing them. We engaged to respect the interviewed people, transcribing and translating their words in the best way possible. We also engaged to respect the anonymity of people who asked for it.

2.6. Criticism towards our study
Since we are just students and we lack resources, some critiques towards our work can be done. Firstly, we only interviewed students from the campus, a limited population that is not really representative of the entire population of the Asian market studied. Secondly, we made the interviews with the managers on the phone, and not face to face. This implies that some biases might exist. For example, the phone does not allow the analysis of the non verbal communication: Is the person completely attentive? Do some questions cause some stress’ reactions? Thirdly, the managers interviewed have all the adequate knowledge to answer our questions, thanks to their training, their former functions in the society and/or the similarities with studied markets. However, they are in charge of duty free, so it is possible that sometimes answers have been biased by their specific function.

To confirm primary data, we looked for secondary data. The data provided by L’Oréal Paris itself cannot always be considered as objective, as seen previously in the methodology. Even if we tried to find updated data, some documents used can be old. For example, recent information about markets is sometimes difficult to find or too expensive to obtain. People may also be aware of the fact that certain information are not available and that a bias can always exist, even a minimal one.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
In order to fit to the purposes, the theoretical framework is divided into three parts: the culture and its variables, the culture and its relation with consumer behaviour and the standardization and adaptation strategies used by the firms.
Culture allows understanding some aspects of consumer behaviour. Therefore, it is necessary, after having defined culture, to determine which variables of the culture are linked to the consumer behaviour.

The second part of the theoretical framework deals with defining consumer behaviour and with presenting the variables of consumer behaviour influenced by culture. Consumer behaviour must be considered by companies in order to make a decision about their standardization or adaptation strategies.

Finally, the third part of the theoretical framework presents the standardization and the adaptation strategies. This part also focuses on the aspects of the product such as: the physical attributes, the packaging, the services attributes and the symbolic attributes.

**Figure 3: Theoretical framework**

### 3.1. Culture

#### 3.1.1. What is culture?
Culture can be considered as a set of

knowledge, beliefs and values, arts, law, manners and morals, and all other kinds of skills and habits acquired by a human being as a member of a particular society.

In other words, culture is a system of meanings shared by members of a group. Those meanings are learned, not innate and they are relative, i.e. there is no cultural absolute.

Culture is an important part of marketing since it influences the consumers’ wants and needs and since it impacts on the interpretations of communication around products. This is important to know in an international context, where cultures differ between different markets. Culture impacts on all the elements of the marketing mix.
3.1.2. Cultural variables
Culture can be described with variables. The following presented variables are those relevant for our study.

3.1.2.1. Space
According to De Búrca et al.\textsuperscript{54}, space can be physical or abstract. The physical space can be a location. The abstract space refers to a grouping of people based on common characteristics such as profession or religion\textsuperscript{55}. The notion of space implies the notion of in and out. This includes if people are insider or outsider, the rights and the obligations for group members, the extent to which outsiders can become insiders, and vice-versa, and how it can be achieved.\textsuperscript{56}

3.1.2.2. Language
Language is a very complex process that differs in a lot of ways\textsuperscript{57}. The language can be spoken or written. In both cases, it can cause misunderstandings.\textsuperscript{58}

The language can differ in the order of the discourse: justification before or after the main point. We will see that the dimension of Hall, high- versus low-context culture, impacts on the degree of precision of the language, the use of body language, and the tone. Those differences can change the meaning.\textsuperscript{59} Other parameters like the pitch of voice or the vocabulary (differences between generations, colloquial/formal/informal) also influence the understanding\textsuperscript{60}.

In the written language, there are differences in the script. A lot of cultures use letters but many others use symbols that change between countries.\textsuperscript{61}

3.1.2.3. Hofstede’s dimensions

Power distance
Power distance refers to the extent to which a society and its members expect and accept the way how the power in institutions and organizations is distributed.\textsuperscript{62}

\textit{Cf. Appendix I pp II-III}

\textsuperscript{54} De Búrca et al. 2004, p 73
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid
\textsuperscript{56} Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 33
\textsuperscript{57} De Búrca et al. 2004, p 73
\textsuperscript{58} Deresky, H., 1997, p 101
\textsuperscript{59} De Búrca et al. 2004, pp 73-75
\textsuperscript{60} Deresky, H., 1997, p 102
\textsuperscript{61} De Búrca et al., 2004, pp 73-75
\textsuperscript{62} Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 65
Uncertainty avoidance
The uncertainty avoidance dimension represents how the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations; it is the ability to take risks.\textsuperscript{63}

Cf. Appendix 1 pp II-III

Individualism versus Collectivism
In individualism societies, individuals take care about themselves and their immediate family whereas in collectivist societies there is a concern for the priorities and rules of the group to which people belong.\textsuperscript{64}

Cf. Appendix 1 pp II-III

Masculine versus Feminine
Masculine societies have more masculine values like success or money. Sex roles are separated whereas in feminine societies, values are more feminine, the quality of life is more important. Sex roles can be overlapped.\textsuperscript{65}

Cf. Appendix 1 pp II-III

3.1.2.4. Trompenaars’ dimensions

Universalism versus particularism
For the Universalist, what is true and good can be applied everywhere. The particularist favours relationships.\textsuperscript{66}

Cf. Appendix 2 pp IV-V

Neutral versus affective
In neutral cultures, people believe that emotions should be hidden to give the appearance of keeping control. In affective cultures, expressing emotions openly is natural.\textsuperscript{67}

Cf. Appendix 2 pp IV-V

Specific versus diffuse
In specific cultures, private life and work life are separated. People are more direct. In diffuse cultures, private and public life are very close. Relationships must be established before business.\textsuperscript{68}

Cf. Appendix 2 pp IV-V

\textsuperscript{63} Hoecklin, L., 1994/1995, p 32
\textsuperscript{64} De Búrca et al. 2004, p 82
\textsuperscript{65} Hoecklin, L., 1994/1995, p 37
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid, p 41
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, p 43
\textsuperscript{68} De Búrca et al. 2004, p 85
3.1.2.5. **High and Low context**

According to Hall, the influence of context impacts on the interpretation of verbal and non-verbal communication. In high-context cultures, things are implicit; they can be understood with the body language, the context.\(^\text{69}\)

In low-context cultures, messages are more explicit. All, or almost all, is said. Those differences complicate the understanding between people from different cultures.\(^\text{70}\)

3.2. **Culture and its relation with consumer behaviour**

3.2.1. What is the consumer behaviour?

Solomon et al. describe the consumer behaviour as

The processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs or desires.\(^\text{71}\)

It is important for a company to understand well the behaviour of a consumer in order to succeed in business. If marketers study the consumers, they will know their needs and wants, so they will know which products consumers will buy and how the promotion will be the most effective.\(^\text{72}\)

There is not one unique consumer but a lot of different consumers that react differently in function of their age, gender, social class, income, geographical position, culture, race, ethnicity etc. These different consumers will react differently to marketing.\(^\text{73}\)

3.2.2. How culture influences consumer behaviour?

As seen previously, consumers are different. Culture is one of the elements that can influence the behaviour of a consumer.\(^\text{74}\)

3.2.2.1. Hierarchy of needs

The pyramid of Maslow\(^\text{75}\) is a good example to show the influence of culture on the needs of consumers.

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\(^\text{69}\) Hall, E; 1976, quoted in De Búrca et al. 2004, p 70
\(^\text{70}\) Ibid
\(^\text{71}\) Solomon, M. et al., 1999/2002, p 583
\(^\text{72}\) Ibid, p 5
\(^\text{73}\) Ibid, p 8
\(^\text{74}\) Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 103
\(^\text{75}\) Maslow, 1954, quoted in Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 103
The needs of an individual can be classified as a hierarchy from physiological needs (hunger, thirst) at the bottom, to safety needs (security, protection), to social needs (sense of belonging, love), to esteem needs (self-esteem, recognition, status), to self-actualization needs (self-development, actualization) at the top. The needs at the bottom of the hierarchy such as thirst tend to be satisfied first whereas needs at the top of the hierarchy such as realization tend to be satisfied last. Culture can impact on the needs at every level of the hierarchy. However, the higher in the hierarchy, the greater the impact of the culture is. The research is showing that both specific needs and their ranking can vary from culture to culture.\textsuperscript{77}

\textbf{3.2.2.2. The influence of culture on some aspects of consumer behaviour}

According to Jean-Claude Usunier\textsuperscript{78}, cultural differences can impact on different aspects of consumer behaviour. The following points are interesting for our subject.

\textbf{Perception:}

The culture impacts on the perception of shapes, colours and space because of the symbolic\textsuperscript{79}.

Concerning colours, managers must acknowledge that the meanings associated with some colours may be unique to one’s culture. The meaning of colours and combination of colours is different across cultures. Individuals coming from different cultures have different preferences for colours. Even thought reactions to colours are considered to be

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{maslow_hierarchy.png}
\caption{Maslow’s hierarchy of needs – West and Asia\textsuperscript{76}}
\end{figure}
individualized, universal colour preferences are thought to exist. Colours combinations are considered to be culturally bounds with certain traditions and ideologies.\textsuperscript{80}

**Motivation**

The cultural differences influence the motivation to own, to buy, to spend, to consume, to show, to share and to give. \textsuperscript{81}

**Learning and memory**

Culture influences the level of literacy and the memory since it is shaped by the education system. Familiarity with product classes is created by education.\textsuperscript{82}

**Age**

Culture impacts on the valuation of young and old within the society and on the process of buying decisions within age groups. In addition, it impacts on how the purchasing power is spread between the generations.\textsuperscript{83}

An age cohort is:

- A group of consumers of the same approximate age who have undergone similar experiences.

Need and preferences change between generations, the age has an influence on the identity of the consumer.\textsuperscript{84}

**Self-concept**

- The attitude a person holds to him- or her-self\textsuperscript{85}.

According to Jean-Claude Usunier, “the concept of the self is a kind of modal view of what people are in the society and therefore what they are allowed to do”. The ideal patterns are shown by book, TV etc.\textsuperscript{86}

**Group Influence**

Consumer behaviour can be dictated by the group belonging.\textsuperscript{87}

Some cultural aspects that can affect the international communication are the level of respect for social hierarchies. This will have an impact on the content of the message and maybe on the background used in the promotion or in the advertisement.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{80} Madden T. J., K. Hewett, M. S., Roth, 2000, pp 90-107
\textsuperscript{81} Usunier, J-C., 1992/2000, p 109
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid
\textsuperscript{84} Solomon, M. et al., 1999/2002, p 405
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, p 589
\textsuperscript{86} Usunier, J-C., 1992/2000, p 57
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, p 109
Gender roles

Gender roles can impact on the decision-making when shopping and on who in the couple is shopping.\textsuperscript{89}

In communication, the role of the women in a culture has an impact on who the message is addressing and on the content of the message.\textsuperscript{90}

Attitudes toward change

This aspect is about the resistance to change in the behaviour of consumers and the resistance to change in domains where change could knock against local values and behaviour.\textsuperscript{91}

Purchase

It is the moment when the consumer buys the product(s). He/she can be influenced by a lot of elements like loyalty programs, point of sale promotion, sales person and all other elements of the purchasing environment.\textsuperscript{92}

3.2.3. Country-, company- and brand-related product image

Few elements contribute to the consumer perception of product nationality:

\textit{Cf. Appendix 3 p VI}

- The image of imported products versus national products or the image of national products versus international products
- National images of generic products
- The national image of the manufacturing company
- The image diffused by the brand name
- The image of the “made-in” label in the sense of the manufacturing origin legally appended to the product; origin labelling is mandatory in international trade.\textsuperscript{93}

The product image is influenced by the different elements of the culture.

\textsuperscript{88}De Búrca et al., 2004, p 318
\textsuperscript{89}Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 109
\textsuperscript{90}De Búrca et al., 2004, p 318
\textsuperscript{91}Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 109
\textsuperscript{92}Ibid
\textsuperscript{93}Ibid, p 317
The “country of origin” attribute has a symbolic impact on consumers. It is often
associated with qualitative adjectives (luxury for France, beauty for Italy etc.). These
images are stereotypes. ⁹⁴

Consumers often use the image of the country of origin to evaluate the product whereas
other elements such as quality or price seem more important. The country of origin also
impacts on the perceived risk. National products or products from a specific country
give the impression of a lower risk. ⁹⁵

With the globalization of markets, the country of origin and the country of production
are more and more often different. Some studies have been done to know which of the
countries, country of the brand and country of manufacturing, have the more impact on
the perception of product quality. The answer depends on the product and on the culture
of the consumer. Both are important. ⁹⁶

The credibility of international brands is often based on a national image ⁹⁷.

### 3.3. Adaptation strategies used by companies for the
product and the promotion

As seen in the previous part, customers from different countries have different
expectations. Companies dealing with international markets and exporting products
must take into consideration those differences and choose between standardization and
adaptation for their products and the promotion used to sell the product. ⁹⁸

Effectiveness in marketing means to adapt to cultural values. Culture has been shown to
influence the use of cosmetics. Company brands are more customary in Asia whereas
the product brand is a more western, individualist phenomenon. Differentiation and
positioning strategies are western phenomena and product brands are developed for
positioning purposes, both against the competition and against other brands of the
company’s brand portfolio. The standardization or the adaptation concerns the product
in itself but also its packaging and the auxiliary services. ⁹⁹

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⁹⁴ Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 320
⁹⁵ Ibid, p 321
⁹⁸ Albaum G. et al., 2005, p 400
⁹⁹ Ibid
3.3.1. Product strategy

3.3.1.1. Standardization of product

Standardization is a simplified strategy based on experience effects, from home market, and cost reductions\(^\text{100}\). Standardized products can be sold in the same way in all countries.

When a product is extremely standardized, it is called globalization of product\(^\text{101}\). A global product is therefore a product that can be proposed internationally at the same moment\(^\text{102}\). It has been designed in this perspective\(^\text{103}\).

The specific product-market-company is impacting on the standardization/adaptation problem. For the product, a high degree of standardization exists for the following elements: packaging, brand name and physical characteristics. However, there are some variations depending on the category of product. Cosmetics were found to be one of the most highly standardized in the business to customers market. The most important obstacles to standardization are differences in consumer tastes, habits and incomes for consumer durables and non durables. Finally, universality is limited by culture and habits\(^\text{104}\).

![Figure 5- A standardization/modification decision framework\(^\text{105}\)](image)

Standardization has some advantages like reduction of costs that are not going to be studied in this study. However, it is important to keep in mind that this alternative exists.

\(^{100}\) Usunier, J.-C. 1992/2000, p 282
\(^{101}\) Albaum G. et al., 2005, p 400
\(^{102}\) De Búrca et al. 2004, p 272
\(^{103}\) Ibid, p 258
\(^{104}\) Whitelock, J. M., 1987, pp 32-44
\(^{105}\) Ibid
3.3.1.2. Adaptation of product

It is not because a product meets a success in a specific country that it will encounter the same in another country. That is why companies sometimes have to adapt their product to the local market.\footnote{De Búrca et al. 2004, p 258}

One study proved that product adaptation is related to the following factors: how a product is used or operated, labelling, quality, packaging and styling. The study is showing as well that customer is one of the driving forces for product and promotion adaptation.\footnote{Whitelock, J. M., 1987, pp 32-44}

**Physical attributes**

For physical attribute adaptation, compulsory reasons are insignificant compared to the differences in consumer behaviour and in the national marketing environment reasons\footnote{Usunier, J.C, 1992/2000, p 286}.

Few elements must be taken into consideration. One of the elements concerns the consumption patterns. It can be the consumer tastes or the frequency of consumption. The other one is to adapt product to local product usage.\footnote{De Búrca et al. 2004, p 268} Indeed, aspects like level of literacy, technical knowledge and ability to use written information must be taken into account to avoid further difficulties.\footnote{Usunier, J.C, 1992/2000, p 287}

**Packaging**

Adapting the packaging is a cheap, quick and easy way to adapt a product to a market. The material used, the language, the size etc. can be adapted.\footnote{Albaum G. et al., 2005, p 407}

Adaptation does not inevitably exclude standardization. It depends on the target market. For example, by writing in English on packaging, the firm can use the same one in many different countries. It is also possible to use multi-language packaging. Another way to standardize is to have same dimensions for packages.\footnote{Ibid, p 408}

**Service attributes**

Products can be sold with a package of service attributes\footnote{De Búrca et al. 2004, p 269}. Service attributes have an important role to play in the field of the consumer non-durables.\footnote{De Búrca et al. 2004, p 269}
Expectations regarding the service attributes are likely to differ from country to country. Another dilemma concerning the service attributes is whether to adapt to the local expectations knowing that it might impact on the firm’s international reputation or whether to provide the same service attributes than in the home market which can lead to make the firm less competitive on the international market.  

**Symbolic attributes**

Jean-Claude Usunier defines the symbol as:

> The sign that operates a relationship which is non-causal and non-analogous.

He quotes also a definition from the Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus that defines symbol as:

> Something that represents or stands for something else; usually by convention or association, especially a material object used to represent something abstract.

Symbols help people to understand the elements of the world.

Concerning adaptation and standardization, the symbolic attributes can be studied in two axes. The first one concerns the relation between symbolic attitudes and national product image. The second axe is concerned with culture. Cultural differences can change the interpretation of symbols. This difference of interpretation is due to the difference of perception. Both axes have been discussed previously.

### 3.3.2. Promotion strategy

#### 3.3.2.1. Language

The understanding of language, studied previously, has to be taken into account by the firm. As an example, in an advertisement, the characters and structure of text can have an impact on the efficiency of the message. If the firm does not know how to adapt its language, the communication can be misunderstood.

When using an English slogan, the firm must be aware of the different interpretations the customers can give around the world. The translation of the slogan can also be a problem as the equivalence of the words is not always that easy to find.
3.3.2.2. Context and interpretation

Context, through culture, also influences the communication. For example, certain culture will need a high context to understand the message in a better way or the interpretation of the context will be different according to the culture: Can I trust this person? How to interpret this body language?121

Culture affects how individuals interpret signals and symbols and also their attitudes towards particular products. These considerations need to be taken into account when developing the message to be communicated. Consequently, symbols, brand names, celebrity endorsement, colours in the promotional pieces in the domestic market may be inadapted in another market.122 In high context cultures, communication should imply rather than stating directly while in low context cultures it is the contrary. The application of context to international communication can be categorized as following:123

*Conversational principles*

In high context cultures it should be recognized that people ask for considerable details about the executive and the company represented. Communication must be clear. The recipient should be able to identify. The body language must be used with caution to facilitate the understanding of the consumer.124

*Presentation principles*

Formal culture must be respected. The desire for structured presentations will have an impact on the format and the content of the promotional message. The different way foreign audiences react to promotional communication must be respected and appealed to. Finally, the length of the message must be designed; it can be seen as an indication of the importance that the company attaches to its message.125

*Written word principles*

The structure of the message should vary according to the culture. In low context cultures, communication should be organized so that the central point is directly stated. The style of writing must be adapted to the culture. In high context culture it implies that there should be must politeness in the message.126

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121 Usunier J. C., 1992/2000, p 417
122 De Búrca et al., 2004, p 316
123 Ibid, p 317
124 Ibid
125 Ibid
126 Ibid
3.3.2.3. Language, context and interpretation in advertising

Since advertising is based on image and language, it is largely influenced by culture\(^{127}\). Nowadays, because of the globalization of media and the improvement of promotion tools, advertisement can be done worldwide. Therefore, firms must develop more precise segmentations with respect to the cultural fragmentation: ethnic aspects or language for example. However, advertisement is borrowing element from different cultures since advertising mirrors change social behaviours.\(^{128}\) Culture impacts on the way consumers see advertisement. For example, a study made by Andrews et al. (1991) shows that 51\% of the Indian students think that advertisement have negative effects on economic and social aspects whereas only 22\% of the American student think the same thing.\(^{129}\) Culture is also influencing the advertising appeals and the way the firm must implement and spread its message in impacting on the values and the way of thinking.\(^{130}\)

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1. Presentation of the studied markets

People’s Republic of China

Nowadays, in PRC, it is more common to use some make-up because people are better-educated, better-paid and attach more importance to their appearance\(^{131}\). Forty years ago, make-up was considered decadent and anti-revolutionary. Today, the PRC is the eighth largest cosmetics consumer in the world. The beauty and cosmetics industry ranked the fourth largest consumption zone in China in 2004. According to government and private studies, the total current value of China's beauty and cosmetics market was between 3.9 and 4.3 billions euros in 2005. Over the last six years, it had an average growth rate of 20 to 25 percent per year, benefiting both from the general rise of living standards and from the younger generations' readiness to spend an increasing proportion of their disposable income on make-up.\(^{132}\) The main consumers of this market are the

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\(^{127}\) Usunier J. C., 1992/2000, p 544
\(^{128}\) Ibid, p 455
\(^{129}\) Ibid, p 457
\(^{130}\) Ibid, p 459
\(^{131}\) Li & Fung research centre, 21 June 2005
\(^{132}\) China Daily ; http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-06/07/content_449333.htm, last modified 05/06/07, accessed 06/05/04
women around 20/35 years old (older women generally think that make-up is not good for the skin\textsuperscript{133}).

**South Korea**

South Korea is the third Asian market, in value. In 2004, its volume was 4.1 billons euros.

The sector knew an annual growth rate of 15.8 percent between 1998 and 2002. It met a 4.8% decline of activity in 2004.

During the last years, the market has found a balance between the up-of-the-line and the bottom-of-the-line.\textsuperscript{134}

**Japan**

In 2003, the cosmetic market in Japan was about 17 billions euros. It is a stable market.

Its main target is young people.\textsuperscript{135} Japanese companies hold almost 70 percent of their home market, with the leading five manufacturers (Shiseido, Kao, Kanebo Cosmetics, Kose and Pola), accounting for almost 49 percent of total value sales. It is difficult to enter such a market but it can be noticed that cosmetics importations increased the last decades.\textsuperscript{136}

**4.2. The culture variables**

It is important when dealing with marketing in different cultures to understand well similarities and differences that can exist between them. Asia consists of geographically, economically, politically, historically, and psychologically different people.\textsuperscript{137}

**4.2.1. Space**

As Asian people are generally speaking more neutral than affective (according to the Trompenaars’ dimensions of the culture), there are more subjects that belong to the “private circle” in contradiction with the public one. Consequently, it may be difficult for European people, who are generally more affective and have larger public circle, not to have conflicts with Asian people in “entering” their private circle without “permission”.\textsuperscript{138}


\textsuperscript{134} Doucet, P.A., and De Ricaud, Y., 2005/12/01, www.missioneco.org

\textsuperscript{135} Pouzet N., 2005/03/15, www.missioneco.org


\textsuperscript{137} Gesteland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 11

\textsuperscript{138} Trompenaar F., Hampden-Turner C., 1993/1997, p 79-82
4.2.2. Language

European people tend to be direct, frank, straightforward language, while Asian people prefer an indirect, subtle, roundabout language.\textsuperscript{139}

Some words in Japanese are very vague. Different ideographs are used to write what can make the comprehension and the translation very hard.\textsuperscript{140} In Japan, context plays a significant role and the rules of politeness are strict\textsuperscript{141}. The Japanese people prefer “humanity, reciprocity, a receiver orientation and an underlying distrust of words and analytic logic\textsuperscript{142}”. All these aspects are visible in their communication style and they always try to avoid public disagreement in order to save others face\textsuperscript{143}.

4.2.3. High and Low context

Middle East countries and Japan are more high-context cultures. Thus, information spreads rapidly and freely thanks to a constant contact and the links between people. They communicate in a more implicit way. Germany or Scandinavian countries are low context cultures. Information is controlled and focused. They communicate in a more explicit way. Countries like France or England are in the middle of these two concepts.\textsuperscript{144}

4.3. The influence of culture on some aspects of consumer behaviour

4.3.1. Perception

The symbolic value is one of the driving forces for PRC’s consumers’ purchases of foreign products. In the beginning of the open door strategy, foreign products were often preferred to local products since PRC’s consumer associated them with sophistication and modernity. However, it seems that it is no longer the case. One of the reasons for this decrease is the diminished symbolic and social value of foreign products. For PRC’s consumers, when design and function are their first motives to purchase rather than foreign appeal and social status, local brands are likely to be preferred. As a consequence, the symbolic value of foreign products is a critic factor of

\textsuperscript{139} Gestland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 19
\textsuperscript{140} Usunier J. C., 1992/2000, p 418
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, p 419
\textsuperscript{142} Deresky H., 1997, p 113
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, p 112
consumers’ decisions to purchase foreign products that surpasses the utilitarian value of these products.\textsuperscript{145}

One of the Japanese girls said that Japanese think that “it is better to have white skin” and that “it is more elegant and look a bit more expensive”. “They (Japanese people) walk with black umbrellas in their hands whereas here people try to have the skin a bit darker”. She added: “European put blue and other colours and it is very nice but on Asian it is not looking so nice”.\textsuperscript{146} The symbolic changes the perception of shapes and colours. In Asia, it is better to use simple shapes and white, symbol of purity.\textsuperscript{147} In Japan, PRC and South Korea, blue is associated with high quality, red with love, purple with expensive. To Chinese people black on red means happiness. For Japanese people red over white represents celebration and life force.\textsuperscript{148}

Women from countries closer to Australia will have more “American” tastes: dark colours with red lip-sticks for example. This trend can be observed in PRC where preferred and used colours are darker than in South Korea.\textsuperscript{149} The young Chinese girls prefer colourful make-up and the most famous product is the gloss\textsuperscript{150}. South Korean women prefer very light pink or beige colours\textsuperscript{151}.

\textit{Cf. Appendix 4 p VII}

Concerning the perception of communication, Japanese people prefer implicit and indirect communication whereas Korean people prefer descriptive advertisement. That is why advertisement in Japan contains soft-sell appeals. Then, because of the Japanese tradition which venerates elders, many advertisements show that.\textsuperscript{152} In Asia, Japan is the country where the advertisements contain the most information. The second one is PRC and then Korea.\textsuperscript{153}

Moreover, as cosmetics is a recent market in PRC, the firm must be aware, in its advertisement, explaining how to use the product and what kind of position it has on the market.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{145} Zhou L., M. K. Hui, 2003, pp 36-58
\textsuperscript{146} Japanese Girls interviewed 2, 06/04/09
\textsuperscript{147} Coste-Manière, J., Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, 2006/04/26
\textsuperscript{148} Madden T. J., K. Hewett, M. S., Roth, 2000, pp 96-107
\textsuperscript{149} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\textsuperscript{151} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\textsuperscript{152} Usunier J. C., 1992/2000, p 459
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, p 460
4.3.2. Motivation

Asian people, and especially Japanese, are more in the way of pure consumption: sometimes they buy a product, or receive a product, only to have it. They do not use it. European people buy products in order to do replenishment.\textsuperscript{155}

According to the Asian girls interviewed\textsuperscript{156}, make-up allows to be more beautiful, to feel more self-confident, and to show that they are in a good mood. One of the Japanese girls added that making-up the morning was a habit. For her, buying make-up is more about the quality rather than the brand name or the price.\textsuperscript{157}

Japanese customers look for quality in each detail like the packaging and listen to the advices of the salespersons in the shops.\textsuperscript{158} In Japan, the use of cosmetics is not the same than in Europe, it does not have an aesthetic function but a hygienic function. It is a rule of etiquette, a cultural code.\textsuperscript{159}

4.3.3. Learning and memory

The interview with the Chinese girl reveals an interesting point: Chinese women can follow at university special classes to learn how to make-up and dress-up.\textsuperscript{160}

Two Japanese girls related almost the same make-up application learning process. Indeed, they have been taught by their mother who did not let them go out with make-up on until they were trained in make-up art and judged that it was good enough to be shown outside.\textsuperscript{161}

4.3.4. Age

In Asian cultures, status is ascribed according to age\textsuperscript{162}. The Chinese girl’s father thinks his student daughter is too young to make-up. He thinks she is wasting her time making-up instead of studying.\textsuperscript{163} One of the Japanese girls believes that young girls were using more make-up than older women. According to her, girls start to make-up earlier and earlier.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{155} Coste-Manière, I., Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, 2006/04/26
\textsuperscript{156} Asian girls interviewed, 06/04 and 06/05
\textsuperscript{157} Japanese Girls interviewed 1, 06/04/08
\textsuperscript{158} Pouzet N., 2003/03/15, www.missioneco.org
\textsuperscript{159} Coste-Manière, I., Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, 2006/04/26
\textsuperscript{160} Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
\textsuperscript{161} Japanese Girls interviewed 2 and 3, 06/04
\textsuperscript{162} Gestland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 28
\textsuperscript{163} Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
\textsuperscript{164} Japanese Girls interviewed 1, 06/04/08
According to the Korean girls interviewed, the young generation prefers a natural make-up which was not the case before. For example, their mothers use more colours for eye shadows whereas young girls just put some eyeliner pencil, mascara and powder. “She (her mother) uses eye shadow with different colours. Now, I think that the make-up is more natural. My friends and I make-up but it doesn’t have to be too visible. We are looking for a natural effect.”

4.3.5. Self-concept

The consumers’ interviews reveal that girls that make-up every day do it because it is a part of themselves. They sometimes cannot go outside without it; they will feel in a bad mood, less self-confident. One of the Japanese girls revealed that she was wearing make-up because she was afraid of the opinion of people seeing her without make-up. “it is hard to be without make-up, scary that people see you with make-up and then after without make-up, hard to show your real face and I am afraid that… they find me ugly without…not ugly but…”

Japanese are nationalist, they like their country and think it is very different from other countries. Japanese women see themselves very different from the other Asian girls; they are persuaded to have a very different skin. Korean girls generally think, and are considered, as one of the most beautiful girls in Asia. They think they are very special. They want point out these particularities. For Chinese people, Japanese’s stay a model which influences them a lot in their consumptions.

4.3.6. Group Influence

The group influence can be very important. Friends are often those that help in the choice of products. One of the girls interviewed talk about “the make-up girl”, the girl who “puts make-up perfectly, she has make-up bag three time bigger than mine, she shows for me what is good what is not good”. The group allows trying products before the purchase. In Korea, make-up is well seen in the society as long as it is not “too much” and looks natural.
4.3.7. Gender roles

In Asian cultures, status is ascribed according to gender. A Japanese girl said an interesting element: “It is very bad now, girls put make-up in train, bus, in public places…and men don’t want to see that […] it is normal for a woman to look beautiful and fresh by make-up on but men don’t have to see this process […] my parents don’t want to meet me putting make-up in a public place. They think it is very rude.” According to the Chinese girl interviewed, Chinese men do not like hard make-up; they prefer a soft one with light colours.

4.3.8. Attitudes toward change

Concerning attitude toward change for make-up, Asian people are very attracted by new products. In Japan, the life cycle of cosmetic products is about six months. Japanese consumers always want new products. In China, the salespersons in make-up shops help customers to discover and try new products.

4.3.9. Purchase

The pre-purchase research is very important. That can be done by asking a person who is considered as an expert like the friends or a person in the family, by using Internet or thanks to the magazines. The service quality is one of the most important aspects in Asian countries. Japanese people are expert in cosmetics. They need and ask for a lot of different information before buying a product. For these reasons, salespersons must be well trained and ready to answer all questions about formulation of the product, concrete product benefits etc. In South Korea and PRC, people also ask for salespersons’ advices but they are not looking for a so expert advice. A Chinese girl said that when she is buying make-up in China, one or more hostesses help her in her choice. She does not find this helpful service in Sweden and blame it. “In Växjö when I go to Ålhens or H&M, you can

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174 Interview Japanese girl 2, 2006/04/09
175 Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
176 http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3234,36-764315@51-751671,0.htm
177 Coste-Manière, I., Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, 2006/04/26
179 Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
180 Korean girls interviewed, 2006/05/02
181 Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
182 Ibid
choose the product by yourself whereas in China you always have one [hostess] follow you to introduce the products, I think that is working." The Korean girls confirm it.

South Korean girls are not very loyal and they try each brand. That is why it is very important to adapt the products to the consumers’ expectations, to launch new products quickly and to choose the right influencer. Marketing is very used there to try to make people loyal, that is why consumers are used to get a present when buying a product.

4.3.10. Product image
4.3.10.1. Country-product image

In Asia, the world Paris has a luxury connotation. For example, the Chinese girl said that “in China the opinion is that Paris is a romantic place and that the products are always good”. But the label concept is something that can change. For example, France is famous for luxury and cosmetics because of its big firms in this sector. But the Japanese or American brands are famous too so this concept have to be balanced. However, L’Oréal Paris used its French touch when entering the Asian market. It was helpful but it could have succeeded with other nationalities.

The Japanese people do not like foreign products because they think that they are not adapted to them even if they come from other Asian countries. If the product comes from a foreign country, they reject it. This way of behaving is common in Japan. For example, Coca-Cola has to use a completely different packaging there in order to make people understand that it is a drink especially made for this market.

The existence of the Japanese laboratory helps L’Oréal Paris to go round this cultural aspect of Japanese people.

At the opposite, Chinese people and Korean people will prefer a made in France or made in USA because they will feel more confident with it. For example, the South Korean girls told us that they prefer using “famous brands” when they do not know a product and consider that “South Korea is not so popular for cosmetics”.

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183 Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
184 Korean girls interviewed, 2006/05/02
185 Coeffic, B.,2004/02/24 , www.missioneco.org
186 Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
187 Ibid
188 Ibid
189 Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
190 Ibid
191 Ibid
192 Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
193 Korean girls interviewed, 2006/05/02
Some foreign goods in PRC have created consumption fads and that they are dominating the domestic brands not because of the price or quality but because they symbolize status and modernity.\textsuperscript{193}

Laboratories in PRC and Japan were built also to develop the brand awareness, spreading the name L’Oréal through the research sector and showing its presence in the country.\textsuperscript{194}

The sourcing of products can be different according to the market and its specificities.\textsuperscript{195} In PRC, the majority of the products are made there thanks to a big factory. In South Korea, products come from Japan, Europe and PRC and this international sourcing is also used in Japan.\textsuperscript{196}

4.3.10.2. Company-product image

The brand L’Oréal Paris does not want to become L’Oréal Japan in Japan or L’Oréal PRC in PRC. It is L’Oréal Paris but adapted to Japan or PRC.\textsuperscript{197}

4.3.10.3. Brand-related product image

A brand image which is accepted in Asian cultures will help the company to market the core products in the region.\textsuperscript{198} The brand “L’Oréal Paris” can benefit from its “luxury aspect”\textsuperscript{199} (Cf. country-product image) even if L’Oréal Paris wants to be seen as a “luxury but accessible brand”.\textsuperscript{200} Despite this willingness to be accessible and because of this luxury image in Asian market, L’Oréal Paris is sold with higher prices than somewhere else.\textsuperscript{201}

4.4. Adaptation strategies used by L’Oréal Paris for the product and the promotion

When making products decisions in Asia, marketers must take into account some points:

- Product acceptability in the particular Asian market
- Selling features and brand-name decisions

\textsuperscript{193} Zhou L., M. K. Hui, 2003, pp 36-58
\textsuperscript{194} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\textsuperscript{195} Area Manager Caribbean Islands, South and Central America, 06/04/03
\textsuperscript{196} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid
\textsuperscript{198} Gestland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 40
\textsuperscript{199} Manager Europe zone, Sweden specialist, 06/04/04
\textsuperscript{200} Manager Asia zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\textsuperscript{201} Manager Europe zone, Sweden specialist, 06/04/04
- Labelling requirements, packaging and repackaging needs
- Service needs
- The effect of culture on product decisions.\textsuperscript{202}

Products often need to be modified to succeed in Asia: appearance, packaging, label, brand and display are variable that easily change. Companies use different strategies to position a product in Asia. The approach often used for cosmetics consist of offering a same or similar product but under different names or brands.\textsuperscript{203} Keeping these last elements in mind, the strategy of L’Oréal Paris is going to be described through the interviews with L’Oréal Paris managers and the information available in the press.

\textbf{4.4.1. L’Oréal knowledge about its market}

According to L’Oréal homepage, the company tries to know more about the Asian markets, the consumer behaviours and their expectations. It organizes tests and surveys to get information about the differences of the Chinese skin (one of the first study of this kind) according to the habits Chinese people have, the food they eat, etc.\textsuperscript{204}

The manager of Asian Zone interviewed revealed that there are some qualitative researches with tools like focus group made everywhere in the world. L’Oréal also organizes some “experiences” in giving a product to a consumer test for few days and then in asking her questions about how she used it, the frequency of utilization etc. Then, some other “experiences” are organized where some specialists look, through special mirrors, how women use the products. All these researches help the firm to know more about the routines of its consumers in order to adapt the product to each specificity.\textsuperscript{205} L’Oréal also does some “call back” researches and uses Consumer Reply Management (CRM) to know more about the customers. This last tool consists in an information data base made thanks to the documents fill in by customers in shops. It enables then to do some more customized offers to the customers and to create loyalty operations.\textsuperscript{206}

\textsuperscript{202} Gestland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 39
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid. p 41
\textsuperscript{204} "L’Oréal, \url{http://www.loreal.com/}, accessed 2006/04/10
\textsuperscript{205} Manager Europe zone, Swedish specialist, 06/04/04
\textsuperscript{206} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
L’Oréal also buys some researches that are made in the local market or participates to specific surveys with other brands in order to know more about its customers through different levels.  

### 4.4.2. Product strategy

#### 4.4.2.1. Standardization of product

In general, the names are in English but there are some exceptions. For example, in France, names are in French (the foundation “True Match” is called “Accord Parfait”).

L’Oréal tries to have the same packaging as long as it is possible. Indeed, as some products are more fluid for example, then, the packaging must be adapted. There is a common research and development basis made thanks to laboratories.

L’Oréal Paris tries to work with the same product portfolio in the European Zone. All the formulations are the same and L’Oréal tries to create range of products that can fit everyone in Europe. We will see later that in Asia the formulations are a bit different.

#### 4.4.2.2. Adaptation of product

Two of the Japanese girls interviewed said that they were not finding in Europe all the make-up products that they used to buy in Japan. The two girls revealed the main difference was that some colours were not available in Europe for some products. The other girl said that she find almost all the products that she wanted in Sweden.

Are L’Oréal Paris products the same in Europe and in Asia? What are L’Oréal Paris managers revealing about the main products changes between these two markets?

**Physical attributes**

L’Oréal adapts its colours’ palette according to the countries. For example, colour are lighter in north of Europe and Asia.

The formulation of products in Asia differs from the European’s one. Moreover, the expectations are different in all the countries in the Asian zone. For example, Japanese

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207 Area Manager Caribbean Islands, South and Central America, 06/04/03
208 Manager Europe zone, Sweden specialist, 06/04/04
209 Ibid
210 Ibid
211 Japanese Girls interviewed 2 and 3, 06/04
212 Japanese Girls interviewed 1, 06/04/08
213 Area Manager Caribbean Islands, South and Central America, 06/04/03
214 Manager Europe zone, Sweden specialist, 06/04/04

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people do not like having the same products than other countries in the Asian zone (they think that they have very special needs and do not like products that are not adapted for them) firms have to adapt some simple aspects of certain products like the brush for mascara.\textsuperscript{216}

It can also be different because of the trends. Indeed, the actual trend is not to be tanned in Asia. L’Oréal puts some Sun Protection Factor (SPF) in its foundation in order for women to be protected from the sun.\textsuperscript{217} A same product can be declined in several different versions with different SPF\textsuperscript{218}.

**Packaging**

In Asia, modifying packaging is a delicate point. In Japan, aesthetic is as important as the physical features of the product. Even the very small imperfections can be a cause of rejection of a product\textsuperscript{219}. It is also important to pay heed to the size and format standards. They have an important role in the product acceptance but they vary from an Asian country to another one.\textsuperscript{220} In Japan, the packaging for cosmetic products must be small, simple, “Zen”, few coloured, often white, like pharmaceutical products in Europe\textsuperscript{221}. Because the service quality is more important in the Asian zone and because L’Oréal Paris does not sell its products in supermarket there, the packaging is different in Asia and is more like the one we can find in selective marketing than in mass marketing.\textsuperscript{222}

Then, as said previously, some packaging also need few adaptations because of the fluidity differences of their contents.\textsuperscript{223}  

*Cf. Appendix 5 p VIII*

**Service attributes**

In Asia, cosmetics are more than just a product; they are linked to a service.

**Salespersons**

They have to be very well trained because Asian people, in general (especially the Japanese), are expert in cosmetics and ask very specific questions before buying something. Moreover, they are waiting for a good service quality and some advices.
Therefore, salespersons have a minimum of two weeks of trainings before starting working and some other training to up-date and improve their knowledge.\textsuperscript{224}

\textit{Advices}

It is an important part of the quality. Some special tools are created to make the “advice part” easier and more technical. For example, L’Oréal Paris has a special way of testing the skins of people in order to advice them the right product to have a specific expected result.\textsuperscript{225}

\textit{Corners, point of sale}

Special corners of around 20 m\textsuperscript{2} are organized in the shop with salespersons giving advices and answering the consumers’ questions.\textsuperscript{226}

\textbf{Symbolic attributes}

Colours in packaging must be used carefully\textsuperscript{227}. Asian consumers can feel an added value thanks to the service since they attach a great importance in quality.\textsuperscript{228}

4.4.3. Promotional strategy

The most important to succeed in marketing promotion purposes in Asia, which has a collectivist culture, is to build relationship and trust between companies and consumers and to develop a strong company brands rather than relying on the development of a portfolio of competitive product brands. Finally, cultural variables increasingly explain the differences in country-level behaviour.\textsuperscript{229}

4.4.3.1. Standardization of promotion

L’Oréal Paris promotion is made on a global basis: global message, global concepts, global top models etc.\textsuperscript{230}

There are two global and general concepts for promotion: “luxury but accessible” and “global beauty brand”. Both create the global image of L’Oréal Paris.\textsuperscript{231} These parts of the promotion are the heart of the communication strategy of L’Oréal Paris. The brand name “L’Oréal Paris” is the same everywhere.\textsuperscript{232}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{224} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid
\textsuperscript{227} Gesteland R. R., Seyk G. F., 2002, p 42
\textsuperscript{228} Coste-Manière, I, Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, 2006/04/26
\textsuperscript{229} De Mooij M., 2003, pp 183-202
\textsuperscript{230} Manager Europe zone, Sweden specialist, 06/04/04
\textsuperscript{231} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
\textsuperscript{232} Area Manager Caribbean Islands, South and Central America , 06/04/03
\end{flushright}
“Global beauty brand”

This is the concept used by L’Oréal Paris, especially in advertisements and in the choice of the top models. The global beauty brand is a specific concept of the beauty. It can be implemented in the different countries easily since it highlights the specificities of the beauty of each continent and spreads L’Oréal Paris’ beauty values, a “L’Oréaliennne beauty”. For example, Laetitia Casta and Andie Mc Dowel are in L’Oréal Paris’ advertisements everywhere in the world because she communicates L’Oréal Paris’ image and can be seen as a L’Oréal Paris beauty in the different market in the world.233

**Media strategy (pressing)**

L’Oréal Paris invests a lot in advertisements. Its media strategy is everywhere a real pressure on the media market compared to the other brands.234

### 4.4.3.2. Adaptation of promotion

Promotion is generally global but the firm must sometimes adapt it to a specific target235. It is difficult to advertise products specialized for older persons in Asia since elders are respected there. So firms have to adapt their promotion in such a way that they do not lose their customers. “Firms have to be careful”. South Korean women are very sensitive when it comes to advertisement and the pictures shown.236 Moreover, there are “worldwide advertisements” made with international top models and spreading the values quoted before and some more “special advertisements” made with top models that have more local images like Gong Li (Chine) or Aishwarya (India). Thank to that, people can understand that L’Oréal Paris is an international brand but they can recognize them in a more familiar top model: same nationality and same physical characteristics.237

Each country has its own website in its own language238. Moreover they emphasize different products and have a specific presentation. It is done in order to adapt and customize the promotion239.

*Cf. Appendix 6, pp IX-X*

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233 Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
234 Ibid
235 Manager Europe zone, Sweden specialist, 06/04/04
236 Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
237 Ibid
238 Ibid
239 Ibid
The Chinese girl told us that advertisements for make-up are not the same in China and in Sweden. In China, advertisements are more oriented to the way how to use the product.\textsuperscript{240}

Therefore it is all about having the right balance between “global” and “local” advertisements in order to create the international brand image but to stay close to people from different nationalities.\textsuperscript{241}

5. ANALYSIS

As seen in the theoretical and the empirical part, culture is one of the elements which influence the consumer behaviour, what can impact on the firm strategy. The aim of our paper is to understand the influence of culture on the consumer behaviour and to explain in what ways the consumer behaviour is influencing adaptation strategy investigating L’Oréal Paris in the Asian Zone (Japan, South Korea and PRC) in order to determine if cultural differences influence L’Oréal Paris adaptation strategy for its products and promotion.

The links between the cultural and the consumer behaviour aspects are numerous and on different levels. Indeed, consumer behaviour is influenced by culture in a direct and in an indirect way. The direct way is when cultural dimensions have a direct influence on consumer behaviour. These elements of consumer behaviour will be named primary consumer behaviour aspects. The indirect way is when the cultural dimensions influence some consumer behaviour aspects which influence other consumer behaviour aspects. These elements of consumer behaviour will be named secondary consumer behaviour aspects. Therefore, there are different levels of consumer behaviour aspects.

\textit{Cf. Figure 6}

To make the analysis easier to read, we will start by the presentation of the cultural differences impacting on the secondary consumer behaviour aspects. Then, we will analyse the cultural differences and the secondary consumer behaviour aspects influences on the primary consumer behaviour aspects. Thanks to that, we will analyse the adaptation strategy of L’Oréal Paris.

\textsuperscript{240} Chinese girl interviewed, 06/04/12
\textsuperscript{241} Manager Asian zone, based in Hong-Kong, 06/04/25
5.1. Cultural influences on secondary consumer behaviour aspects

The secondary consumer behaviour aspects are the gender role aspect, the attitude toward change, the self concept, the age, the learning and memory and the group influence.

5.1.1. The gender role aspect

Firstly, the masculinity/femininity index of Hofstede influences the gender role. Japanese people have a masculinity index of 95 whereas the Chinese one is around 50 and the South Korean is 39. This also explains the value orientation in the country: more feminine (harmony, family) or masculine (self achievement, money). This diversity explains the different ways of seeing the relationship in a couple for example and the division of tasks which may be more segmented in a women/men way in Japan than in South Korea.

Secondly, the power distance influences the gender role since it implies the degree of adaptation of the power distribution. Asian people have high power distance what means that the inequalities of power are more accepted. This may imply more inequality in the gender role distribution.

5.1.2. Attitude toward change

The uncertainty avoidance may influence the attitude toward change in the different cultures. The more individuals from a culture want to avoid uncertainty, the less favourable they will be toward change. In fact, change means going toward something new. This can be seen negatively by individuals who want to avoid change as risk is too high. In the Asian zone, the Japanese and the Korean people have high uncertainty avoidance (respectively 92 and 85) whereas the Chinese have low uncertainty avoidance (39). Therefore, the Chinese people may have more facilities to change and to adapt to new situations.

Universalism versus particularism may be a variable that impacts on the attitude toward change. For the universalist, what is true and good can be applied everywhere whereas the particularist favours relationships. Sweden and Germany are 74% universalist while South Korea is 42%. For the universalist, if he/she considers that the change is good, it
will be applied in all the circumstances. For the particularist, if he/she considers a change can be good, it does not mean that it is always good.

5.1.3. Self concept
Individualism versus collectivism influences directly the self concept. Indeed, in more individualist cultures the self is going to be more considered than in collectivist cultures. As observed in the theory, Asian people are generally more collectivist.

The masculinity/femininity aspect can also be taken into account. These elements will have an impact on the way of seeing the self. Masculinity aspect emphasizes more personal point of view whereas femininity highlights harmony.

5.1.4. Age
The power distance (Hofstede) may influence the age aspect. As explained above, Asian people have high power distance. It means that the inequalities of power are more accepted. This may change the age hierarchy and the level of respect for each age group. That may explain that some categories like the elders are more respected than others in Asia.

5.1.5. Learning and memory
The individualist versus collectivist index of Hofstede influences the learning and memory as it is easier to communicate and share memories and knowledge in a collectivist country, where the “we” is emphasized. As Asian countries are generally more collectivist, they may have more facilities to learn and share knowledge.

5.1.6. Group influence
The individualism versus collectivism Hofstede’s dimension has an impact on this aspect. PRC and South Korea are highly collectivist and Japan is moderately collectivist. This cultural aspect has an impact on the group influence since individualist countries will perceive the group influence not as strong as collectivist countries.

The Neutral versus Affective dimension (Trompenaars) refers to the fact of showing its feelings or not. Japan is a neutral country (74%). PRC obtains a medium score of 55%. This will impact on the group influence since it will change the relationship between people: their conversation subjects, their attitudes and reactions.
5.2. Global mechanism showing the influence of culture on the firm adaptation strategy through the primary consumer behaviour aspects

The primary consumer behaviour aspects are the perception, the motivation and the purchase.

5.2.1. Perception

Cultural influences on the perception aspect of the consumer behaviour

Some aspects of the culture, like the language, are probably more visible. It has an impact on the perception. As it is mentioned in the empirical findings, Asian and European people have different ways of speaking. Asian people are vaguer, indirect and pay heed not to offence people whereas European people are more direct. Being frank will be well perceived in Europe but not accepted in Asia.

This notion is very close to the high/low context one. Indeed, Asian people are more “high context” culture. The influence of the context on the comprehension and the interpretation is of great importance and can create a completely different meaning and/or a misunderstanding.

The way of seeing space can also impact on the perception. For example, in Asian cultures, lot of subjects belong to the private sphere and are not supposed to be broached in public situations. This may impact on the interpretation of a conversation with salespersons or of an advertisement. The mechanism is the same with the specific/diffuse dimension (Trompenaars’ dimension). Asian countries are predominantly diffuse. This changes the perception of relationship since private and public life are closer. That explains why they are less direct and need more time to create relationships.

Emotions and the way of dealing with them impact on the perception. More emotional people may interpret situations and things in a different way, giving more sense and interpreting symbols. That also changes the perception of the communication because sensitive persons may show more their personal opinions. There are two elements in the culture which can be helpful to understand emotions: masculinity/femininity and the neutral versus affective dimensions. Indeed, Asian countries are more neutral than affective. They do not show their feelings and give the impression of controlling themselves. This tendency is confirmed by the fact that Japan and PRC have a high
masculinity level, what highlights the fact of hiding emotions. However, Korean people have a lower masculinity index. That shows the difficulty of treating all the countries of the Asian zone in the same way.

**Consumer behaviour aspects influencing the perception**

The self-concept influences the perception since it changes the way people see themselves. For example, for make-up, girls interviewed said that the make-up was a part of them. That might turn the make-up into something more personal.

The age influences the perception. In Asian cultures the perception of older people is different than in European cultures. Indeed, in Asian countries, elders are treated in a more respectful way.

Group influence is another important point since the pressure of the group and its opinion will act on the way of perceiving and interpreting situations. The interviews with the Korean girls can be a good example of the group pressure that acts on perception. Indeed, one of the girls said that make-up is accepted as long as it is not too much. Therefore, this notion of “too much” is properly group influenced since it is created and dictated by the group values.

In the same mechanism of pressure, we may talk about gender roles aspect. This will influence the role and the place of women and thus modify the perception of what can be done or not. One Japanese girl said that men do not want to see women while they are making-up. It reveals a certain relationship between men and women which can be different from countries to countries, even in the Asian zone.

The attitude toward change also influences the perception as some consumer will be more attracted to new products, new packaging etc.

The last element is the relationship people have with the brand-, firm- and country-image. For example, France has a luxury image in Asia and L’Oréal Paris a quality one. This superposition of values may create a positive attribute for L’Oréal Paris when launching products in Asian market. This image is different in the Asian zone. Chinese’s and Korean’s prefer this brand because they consider that France is well known for cosmetics. On the contrary, Japanese’s are more suspicious and think that it is not a Japanese brand and that is not a product especially made for them.
Consumer behaviour influences on the firm adaptation strategy

As demonstrated before, some aspects of the culture and of the consumer behaviour influence the perception of the consumers. This will have an impact on the perception of physical attributes, packaging, service attributes, symbolic attributes and promotion. The firms have to be aware of these differences.

Physical attributes
The physical canons are different. It is well seen in Asia to have a white skin. Thus, L’Oréal Paris adapts its products to the perception of beauty. In Asia, foundations have a very light colour and contain a special molecule in order for the skin not to tan. This tendency is a bit different in PRC where cultural influences are more “American” oriented, what implies darker colours utilisation.

Packaging
The perception of the packaging is also different. In Asian countries, it must have simple shapes and colours. In order for the customer to perceive the packaging in a more friendly way, L’Oréal Paris adapts shapes and colours.

Service attributes
As we said before, the high-low context, the language and the space influence the perception. Those elements are of great importance when considering point of sale. The way salespersons address the customers or the way the corner is organized will be very different according to the culture of the country. As Asian people are more “high context” culture, the points of sale are organized in corner and the salespersons are trained to answer the maximum of questions. Everything is made to create a rich context where the Asian customers could be pleased and have a positive perception of L’Oréal Paris. Moreover, the quality aspect is very important. It makes the perception of the service quality (advices, environment) more crucial.

The perception of the self concept might impact on the level of adaptation of the service attributes. Indeed, with a higher degree of services provided by the firm, the consumer can feel valued. This can be of great importance in cultures where the individuals consider themselves to be important, and then it is necessary for the companies to treat them the way they perceive themselves.
Symbolic Attributes
Because “made in France” has a luxury image, it was easier to gain credibility in Asian countries when L’Oréal launched L’Oréal Paris there. However, since Asian people (especially Japanese and South Korean) think they are different and need adapted products, L’Oréal Paris “played” with the sourcing effect. It created factories in China and in Japan to do researches and sell more adapted products. But this is also a question of promotion. The factories enable L’Oréal Paris to adapt its products to the consumer willingness of being treated in a unique way. The name “L’Oréal Paris” creates a positive and luxury image. Therefore, the perception of the products is optimized.

Promotion
Since Asian people generally look for more information, we noticed that L’Oréal Paris Asian web sites contain some video showing the utilisation of the products. Moreover, because they want to be treated differently, each country has its own web site with its own language.

Cf. Appendix 6 pp VII-VIII

For the same reason, L’Oréal Paris has different advertisements with Asian top model in addition to western one. The aim, once again, is to create an international L’Oréal Paris but with Japanese values in Japan, Korean values in South Korea and Chinese values in PRC. All these elements will create a positive perception since they all follow the rules dictated by the culture and the consumer behaviour. Moreover we can notice that it is important to respect the neutral/affective aspect of culture in the construction of the messages.

The perception of the self concept may influence the level of adaptation of promotion with the same mechanism than the one for the service attributes adaptation explained above. For example, the brand uses local models. Women can identify to them since they share the same physical characteristics, they have the same culture and the same nationality.

The age is also important since it informs on how to address people. It will be done on a more respectful way with elders because the Asian cultures respect older people more.

The perception aspect influences the adaptation of physical attributes, packaging, service attributes, symbolic attributes and promotion.
5.2.2. Motivation
Cultural influences on the motivation aspect of the consumer behaviour

First, the culture influences the hierarchy of needs in a different way whether we consider Asia or the West part of the world. At the bottom of both pyramids of Maslow we can find the physiological needs because they are the most fundamental. On both pyramids we find safety in second position. Safety needs emerge when the physiological needs are fulfilled. The two pyramids differ on the third element: the western part of the world considers that belonging is more important whereas for Asia it is affiliation. The fourth need is different as well, the Western’s considers that prestige is the most important, instead Asian’s believe that admiration is best. Finally, in fifth position comes for west the self-satisfaction. In Asia, the most important is the status. As a consequence, it can be said that people from Asia, since they have their physiological and safety needs satisfied, are going to focus on needs that take into account the rest of the society. The notions of admiration and status imply that there are some other people around who create a scale of comparison. In the western part of the world, after the physiological, the safety and the belonging needs, the rest of the needs are more individual oriented. (This notion is not explained in the first part since it is linked and influenced deeply by the culture.)

This hierarchy of needs can be linked to the individualism versus collectivism Hofstede’s dimension. Indeed PRC and South Korea are highly collectivist and Japan is moderately collectivist. Thus the motivation of people will depend more on the other members of the group.

Masculinity versus Femininity Hofstede’s dimension can also play a role in the motivation. Japan is a very masculine country, PRC is in the average and South Korea has more feminine values. The motivation of Japanese may have more masculine values like money or power whereas the South Korean motivation may have more feminine values like family or well being.

The uncertainty avoidance dimension is another important factor of influence in the motivation. It evaluates the ability to incur a risk. Japan and South Korea people have high score, they need for a lot of information in order to feel secure. They look for quality in each detail like the packaging. They listen to the advice of the salespersons in the shops to be sure that the product is adapted to them. At the opposite, Chinese people, who have a lower score, are not afraid by the decision-making.
**Consumer behaviour aspects influencing the motivation**

The learning and memory aspect impacts on the motivation. For Japanese girls, make-up is an ancestral tradition; they learnt how to proceed by their mothers and their mothers by their own mothers etc. Sometimes, they did not learn it; it is innate, in the common memory. For Chinese girls it is different. The use of make-up has been controlled for many years, women have forgotten how to proceed, and they need to be trained for that, some of them follow courses in this purpose.

The self-concept has an impact on the motivation since the make-up is considered by the interviewed girls as a part of themselves. Wearing make-up, they will feel more beautiful and then they will feel more self-confident.

The group influence has a great impact on the motivation. It is often thanks to that the person discovers a product. The group creates a motivation to own. As seen previously, the group influence depends on some cultural dimensions, but it can also be linked to other consumer behaviour aspects, that are likewise conducted by culture. The age, for example, is important. At the age of the interviewed girls, the age cohort has a great influence. It is important to be “in”, respecting the group rules. Using some specific products can be one of the rules. The age motivates a purchase since there are differences in the way to make-up between generations. Young Korean girls for example use lighter and more natural make-up than their mothers. The group and the society dictate the trends. These trends, like the fact not to be tanned, influence the motivation.

The gender role impacts indirectly on the motivation. Indeed, the society is conditioned by believes about gender role. It will inevitably influence people. The use of make-up to be “beautiful” can also be an implicit masculine rule: women must be beautiful for men.

The attitude toward change influences the motivation. This influence can be positive like when consumers always ask for new products. It can also be negative if people are scared by novelty.
**Consumer behaviour influences on the firm adaptation strategy**

As the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is not the same in Asian countries, the motivation is changed when buying a make-up product. The firm must have that in mind when creating new products and promotion.

*Physical attributes*

In Asian zone, girls learn about make-up thanks to their mothers or their friends. To follow the motivation inspired by groups, L’Oréal Paris must adapt the formulation of its products (SPF in foundation to keep a white skin).

*Packaging*

As highlighted in the field, the Japanese culture uses make-up for a more hygienic function than aesthetic one. These characteristic is taken into account by the firm. The approach of the packaging is simple, like for the pharmaceutical products.

*Service attributes*

As the learning and memory has an important place in Asia, L’Oréal Paris trains salespersons to advice the customers in the most technical way as possible. All those elements answer in a positive way to the specific motivation of Asian people.

*Symbolic Attributes*

We have no information allowing analysing this point.

*Promotion*

As seen in the empirical part, L’Oréal Paris promotion is global. However, there are some adaptations according to the culture. This adaptation depends on the consumer behaviour aspects. For example, the women’s main motivation to make-up is to feel good and beautiful. However, we see in the self-concept aspect that they have to recognize themselves in the advertisement to give it credit. That is why L’Oréal Paris adapts the advertisement with local top models. Women can identify to models. All these points are also respected on the websites; in a more detailed way since it is easier and cheaper to do.

Since the Asian people have generally a high uncertainty avoidance, L’Oréal Paris uses every effort in its promotion to give them information on how to use the products, how it is made, what kind of molecule etc.
Information about group influence is of great importance for advertisement and communication as it “shows” who the firm has to target in order to spread its message to the maximum of persons.

The motivation aspect mainly influences the adaptation of promotion.

5.2.3. Purchase

The influence of culture on the purchase aspect of the consumer behaviour

The space is an aspect of the culture that may influence the purchase process of the consumer. The vision of space varies across the cultures and this might impact on the relationship between the buyer and the seller. In Asian and European cultures, the notion of space differs. Asian’s have a more private consideration of space and it is considered as rude to enter this space without permission. This is an important concept to consider during the purchase.

The language is an aspect of culture that directly impacts on the purchase. Language can cause misunderstandings and it is conducted in parallel with body language that can change the meaning of the content. It means that even people sharing the same language can meet nuances, which can create misunderstandings. Consequently, language has to be considered carefully during a purchase. Furthermore, Asian people are more roundabout in their way of speaking whereas European people tend to be more direct.

The power distance also influences the purchase. Indeed, across cultures the relationship between the buyer and the seller is subject to change as the power distance differs between cultures. As an example, in China the power distance is 78 whereas it is only 68 in France and 31 in Sweden. This means that the buyer and the seller in China are going to have more formal relationship and that is going to be well accepted by both parts. This different kind of relationships is going to interact on the way the purchase is done. The language that is used is not going to be the same.

The uncertainty avoidance can also influence the purchase. Across cultures, the uncertainty avoidance is varying. As an example, in Japan the uncertainty avoidance is 92, whereas in France it is 86, and only 29 in Sweden. In the purchase, the consumer that wants to avoid uncertainty, like the Japanese, is going to be less likely to impulsive
purchase. This kind of consumer is going to gather more information before the purchase because he/she is more afraid of the risk at stake.

Individualism versus collectivism can impact on the purchase. If a society is more collectivist the individuals are not going to have the same values and they are not going to spend their time and budget on the same kind of purchase. For example, in China, the individualism is 10 whereas in Italy it is 76. This is going to impact on the pre purchase and on the kind of purchase. An Italian girl might feel less guilty after buying one item of make-up than a Chinese girl, as in Italy individualism is high and acts that are done in order to please oneself are considered to be the norm.

Neutral versus affective is also a variable that can impact on the consumer behaviour during the purchase process. The communication between the seller and the buyer will not be the same. The arguments used by the seller to make the consumer buy the product are not going to be the same either. As an example, Japan is 74% neutral whereas France is 30%. Arguments used in Japan should be more technical while in France they should imply a more emotional dimension.

Finally, specific versus diffuse is another aspect that is going to impact on the consumer behaviour. This aspect might influence the relationship between the firm and the consumer, and, by this way, might influence the purchase as well. Indeed, in specific cultures the relationship between the company and the consumer will be more formal whereas in diffuse cultures the company will have to create a relationship with the consumer before thinking of business. Then, the purchase is influenced by the fact that a relationship has to be established before. It might take more time to convince consumers in diffuse cultures. Great differences between countries can exist. For example, PRC is 25% specific whereas Sweden is 90%.

**Consumer behaviour aspects influencing the purchase**
The perception might influence the purchase. As an example, the way of how consumers from different cultures perceive colours can impact on the purchase. If the colours of the packaging are not favoured by a culture, it is going to make the purchase more difficult.
Motivation also plays a role in the purchase process. Asian people are more in a way of pure consumption whereas Europeans shop more for replenishment. This is a different way of seeing purchase.

Learning and memory may impacts on the purchase. Indeed, the learning and the memory is shaped by the educational system. The familiarity with the product classes is created by the education. The level of familiarity with the product is impacting on the way the purchase is done. The less the consumer have knowledge about the product the more the firm will have to communicate knowledge to the consumer. Therefore the purchasing process might be likely to change in order to cover the lack of knowledge of the consumer. The firm will have to use other tools, like a sales force that is trained to explain better to the consumer the way to use it.

Age can influence the purchase. Indeed, one Japanese girl revealed that young girls were using more make-up than older women. This means that in Japan the younger generation will be more attracted to make-up and will be the main target.

Group influence might have an impact on the purchase. Consumer behaviour can be dictated by the group belonging. Friends are often those that help in the choice of products. One of the girls interviewed talked about one of her friend called “the make-up girl” because she uses make-up perfectly. This friend is always advising her on what to buy and what not to buy. This means that the group influence can be very strong and that influences the process of purchasing.

Gender role can impact as well on the purchase. The way men see make-up in a culture and the influence they have on women can impact on the purchase. Indeed, a Chinese girl said that Chinese men do not like the hard make-up. This element might influence the purchase and prevent the girls from buying make-up that is too flashy.

Some cultures have a more positive attitude towards change than others. That can impact on the consumption of new products for example. People from cultures with positive attitude toward change may accept better products that are less adapted. They might be less reluctant to try new different products.
The influence of consumer behaviour on the firm adaptation strategy

As explained before some part of the perception and motivation aspects are taken into account in the strategy adaptation. Then, those quoted elements have an impact on the purchase issue.

*Physical attributes*

We have no information allowing analysing this point.

*Packaging*

We have no information allowing analysing this point.

*Service attributes*

The purchase impacts directly on the service attributes. Indeed, the changing level of familiarity towards make-up items across different cultures has to be considered by the firms when they adapt their service attributes. Cultures with a lower level of familiarity will need to be well “trained” by the firms in order to accept the product better. As an example, L’Oréal Paris adapts its service attributes by educating the sales force in Asia and creating the possibility for the consumer to receive detailed advice from the sales persons. It is not the case in Europe. L’Oréal Paris adapts its service to the uncertainty avoidance of Asian people.

The service attributes may as well play another role. As the Chinese are collectivist, stronger service attributes might be necessary to convince them to buy make-up items that are addressed to a more individualist use.

Since Asian cultures have a high uncertainty avoidance, they are less subject to impulsive purchase. The role of the sales person is to go against this tendency convincing consumers to buy new products.

*Symbolic Attributes*

The consumer does not only buy make-up for its utilitarian purpose, he/she buys a formulation, a packaging, a service, etc. All these elements create the symbolic value of the purchase.

*Promotion*

We have no information allowing analysing this point.

The purchase aspect mainly influences the adaptation of service attributes.
Figure 6: Relations between cultural dimensions, consumer behaviour aspects and company’s adaptation strategy.
6. CONCLUSION

As it is explained in the analysis, the elements of culture influence the consumer behaviour since they change the way of analysing a situation, reacting to it and behaving in general. For example, people with high uncertainty avoidance culture will perceive and react in a more negative way to change or to impulsive purchase. There are many different elements in culture and the way of influencing consumer behaviour is diverse enough to explain the diversity which can be observed between two markets like the French and the Japanese one. Moreover, the consumer behaviour is also made of different elements which complete each others. The culture can impact on the consumer behaviour aspect in a direct and indirect way what creates the complexity of consumer behaviour.

Those consumer behaviour aspects will be analysed and used by the firms in order to create and implement the most profitable strategy. For example, in L’Oréal Paris, marketers and researchers try to understand the needs and wants of the actual or future consumers. They organize many surveys and studies in order to investigate the differences between markets and to answer to the demands.

The Asian market has its own specificities and its own culture. The way people perceive the product or the promotion, the way they motivate their choice or purchase is unique and L’Oréal Paris adapts many of its product elements in that way. First, about the product, L’Oréal Paris changes some physical aspects like the colours of the product (perception)\* or the formulation (self concept, group influence)\*. It also adapts the packaging attributes putting more details to the quality or the aesthetic aspect (perception)\* and highlighting the luxury image of the brand (brand- and country-image)\* thanks to a more “Zen” and simple packaging. Moreover, the service attributes appear in a more obvious way in the Asian zone (uncertainty avoidance, purchase)\*. There, the salespersons are especially trained to answer all the questions possible (learning and memory)\* about the molecule of the product or the way of using it, and they advice the customers in the most technical way (uncertainty avoidance)\* thanks to some special programmes helping to know more about the specificities of each skin. The point of sales is also adapted with a more “luxurious” and personal concept (motivation, perception)\* and the symbolic attributes are taken into account in the colours range (perception)\* which is lighter.
The promotion is adapted to the consumer behaviour differences too. L’Oréal Paris uses local top-model to enable people to recognize their own country in the advertisements. It creates some special web sites for the countries (self concept, perception)*. Moreover, in China, L’Oréal Paris adapts its promotion to the fact that Chinese expect more information about how to use the products (attitude toward change)*.

Many adaptations are made by L’Oréal Paris because of the culture differences in the Asian Zone. But this can be balanced. A lot of aspects are not adapted even if cultural differences should suppose it. It is the case of the promotion. It has an important standardized part since the entire concept and the “spirit” of the brand are the same everywhere: “global beauty brand” and “luxury brand but accessible”.

Even if Japan, South Korea and PRC are culturally different, the field work revealed few differences in the adaptation of the products between these countries. Moreover, these differences are more for physical than for cultural reasons.

However, even if the general opinion is that the main concepts are standardized, it is important to remember that the adaptation often concerns details on the product, its packaging, its services, its symbolic attributes and its promotion. As an example, the service package, even if it is not as obvious as the core product, makes the difference in the Asian market.

L’Oréal Paris has to do some choices and its strategy may be to find a right balance between “worldwide” and “special” promotion and products in the Asian Zone. That can be sum up by the L’Oréal Paris concept, the “Global beauty brand” concept: a worldwide French brand which knows how to be loved and adapt itself in other countries than France.

To conclude and to answer our research question, cultural differences may influence L’Oréal Paris adaptation strategy for the make-up products and their promotion.

The following model shows the elements of culture used (unconsciously or not) by L’Oréal Paris for its adaptation strategy, physical attributes, packaging, service attributes, symbolic attributes and promotion.

* The elements into parenthesis are some examples of elements of culture or consumer behaviour which implies the change done. The conclusion model recapitulates all of them.
Figure 7: Relations between cultural dimensions, consumer behaviour aspects and L’Oréal Paris’ adaptation strategy.
7. FINAL DISCUSSION

7.1. Recommendation

Since a link between culture and adaptation strategy has been demonstrated, it might be interesting for companies like L’Oréal Paris to study in depth the different cultures of its markets. This will allow adapting some aspects of product and promotion in a more effective way.

7.2. Further research directions

Our research is focusing on the culture and the consumer behaviour influence on the firm’s adaptation strategy, investigating L’Oréal Paris case. It would be interesting to study the impact of the other elements on the adaptations strategies. Indeed, these kind of empirical researches are needed by firms in order to help them in their adaptation strategies on new markets. Further researches could focus on the impacts of political and legal environment, economy environment or on the level of technology.

Our research focuses on three of the biggest markets in Asia, (Japan, PRC and South Korea). We believe that empirical research is needed as well on other markets in order to provide firms with knowledge about the market that is as accurate as possible.

Finally, it would be interesting to study the adaptation of the two other elements of the marketing mix, that is to say the price and the distribution in order to bring to firms a complete overview of how the elements of the marketing mix can be subject to adaptation when a firm is breaking into a new market.

7.3. Further discussion

7.3.1. A global consumer: divergence or convergence of consumer behaviour?

The culture creates a wide range of consumers but there is also the emergence of a global consumer culture, in which people, according to Solomon et Al\textsuperscript{242}, “are united by their common devotion to brand-name consumer goods, film stars and rock stars”. Consumer culture is generated by the capacity of consumption to create cultural values and behaviours\textsuperscript{243}. The emergence of a global modern culture is often confused with the

\textsuperscript{242} Solomon, M. et al., 1999/2002, p 583
\textsuperscript{243} Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 145
convergence of local cultures, which lead to a wrong description of the globalization phenomenon.\textsuperscript{244}

Traditional international trade doctrine denies the influence of culture in the international marketing. This denial of consumer culture is based on the assumption that products have no reality as cultural artefacts. As a consequence, consumers are assumed to invest in a product only for its utilitarian value. In this case, products convey no cultural meaning.\textsuperscript{245} However it is difficult to find proof that consumers are globalized at a micro level. The trend toward globalization depends mainly on which area of the consumer behaviour is concerned.\textsuperscript{246}

However, some authors are arguing that convergence is a persistent myth of international marketing. They are stating that there is evidence that consumer behaviour is diverging in Europe. Culture is an important variable in explaining the differences in consumer behaviour across Europe.\textsuperscript{247} The new perspective on consumer behaviour is based on the cultural meaning of things. If culture matters for consumers then it is more likely that they are going to spend more on products that are more bound to cultural interpretation.\textsuperscript{248}

Cultural differences seem to matter little as they rarely appear as the key explanation for the behaviour. However local cultures allow a deep understanding of consumption in particular contexts. Local cultures do not disappear but a common culture is superposed on the local one.\textsuperscript{249}

\textbf{7.3.2. Make-up: a paradoxical trend?}

The actual trend for make-up is paradoxical. On one side, the beauty notion almost all over the world is determined by European tastes and standards. Blond hair, blue or green eyes and white skin are longed by a lot of women. To look like this beauty model, some women dye and smooth their hair, avoid sun, wear colour contact lenses and, sometimes can also undergo an operation to slit up eyes, to have skin whiter, to be tall, to change nose or lips etc. ! On the other side, there is the emergence of the ethnocosmetic. It is about cosmetics adapted to the skin and the hair of people. At the beginning, this new trend was considered as a marketing trend. It was a free créneau in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 148
\item Ibid, p 138
\item Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, p 145
\item De Mooij, M., Hofstede, G., Spring 2002, pp 61-69
\item Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, pp 148-149
\item Ibid, p 148
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
market. Today, this is a reality: skin and hair are different and need specific cares. Marketing and researchers have to take into consideration these fundamental differences to adapt their products.

These differences in skin and hair have an important role in the adaptation of products’ formulation. Companies like L’Oréal Paris create local research institutes to perform on this domain.

7.3.3. A new beauty model?

However, we can wonder if the beauty model that we all refer to nowadays is going to last. Indeed, we have to consider the emergence of countries like China and India, which count a great number of inhabitants, and the influences they are eventually going to exert on the rest of the world. When becoming economically more important, a country sees its cultural radiation increasing in proportion. Therefore, we can wonder if the beauty ideal of tomorrow is not going to be the Chinese or the Indian type and become the new reference of all trends.

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Interviews: person, place of interview, date of interview

Aico, Japanese Girls interviewed 2, Växjö, SWEDEN, 06/04/09

Coste-Manière, I., Dealer of advertising company Parfums Cosmétiques Actualités, Nice, FRANCE, 2006/04/26

Guillois, V., Manager Europe zone, Sweden specialist, by phone from Paris, 06/04/04 Sun-Young and Ahra, Korean girls interviewed, Växjö, SWEDEN, 06/05/02

Iku, Japanese Girls interviewed 1, Växjö, SWEDEN, 06/04/08

Laclavière, E., Area Manager Caribbean Islands, South and Central America, by phone from Miami, USA, 06/04/03

Manager Asian zone, by phone from Hong-Kong, 06/04/25

Mayumi, Japanese Girls interviewed 3, Växjö, SWEDEN, 06/04/09

Ying, Chinese girl interviewed, Växjö, SWEDEN, 06/04/12
Appendices
Appendix 1: Hofstede’s dimensions

1. Power distance

Table 1: Main characteristics of power distance dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Power distance</th>
<th>High power distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Inequality in society should be minimised</td>
<td>- Inequality expected and accepted in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Equal rights for everybody</td>
<td>- Power is the same as privileges and advantages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Power Distance scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Zone</th>
<th>European Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 54</td>
<td>France: 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: 60</td>
<td>Sweden: 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC: 78</td>
<td>Germany: 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy: 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Index 100 is for country with high power distance.*

2. Uncertainty Avoidance

Table 3: Main characteristics of uncertainty avoidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>High Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Only essential rules necessary, often informal</td>
<td>- Detailed formal rules necessary but not respected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tolerance and moderation are the values</td>
<td>- Conservatism, extremism, law and order are the values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Uncertainty avoidance scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Zone</th>
<th>European Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 92</td>
<td>France: 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: 85</td>
<td>Sweden: 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC: 39</td>
<td>Germany: 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy: 75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Index 100 is for country with high uncertainty avoidance.*

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3. Individualism versus collectivism

Table 5: Main characteristics of individualism and collectivism dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Collectivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Guilt culture, “I” is highlighted</td>
<td>- Shame culture, “we” is highlighted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Individuals are more important than the group</td>
<td>- The group is more important than the individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Individualism versus collectivism scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Zone</th>
<th>European Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 46</td>
<td>France: 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: 18</td>
<td>Sweden: 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC: 10</td>
<td>Germany: 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy: 76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Index 100 is for country with high individualism.

4. Masculinity versus femininity

Table 7: Main characteristics of masculinity and femininity dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculinity</th>
<th>Femininity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Progress and material success are important</td>
<td>- Preservation of resources,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values</td>
<td>consideration and care are important values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;Achievement society&quot;</td>
<td>- The average achievement becomes the standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The elite sets the standard</td>
<td>- Welfare society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Masculinity versus femininity scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Zone</th>
<th>European Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 95</td>
<td>France: 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: 39</td>
<td>Sweden: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC: 50</td>
<td>Germany: 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy: 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Index 100 is for country with high masculinity.
Appendix 2: Trompenaars’ dimensions

1. Universalism versus particularism

Table 9: Main characteristics of universalism and particularism dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universalism</th>
<th>Particularism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- People focus more on rules than on relationships</td>
<td>- People focus more on relationships than on rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There is only one truth or reality</td>
<td>- There are several perspectives on reality relative to each participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Universalism versus particularism scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Zone</th>
<th>European Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 62%</td>
<td>France: 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: 42%</td>
<td>Sweden: 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC: 51%</td>
<td>Germany: 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy: 62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The closer to 100% the result is, the more Universalist the country is.

2. Neutral versus affective

Table 11: Main characteristics of neutral and affective dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Affective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Emotional state hidden or internalised</td>
<td>- Immediate reactions shown either verbally or non-verbally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- People do not express what they think or feel</td>
<td>- Active body language with expressive face and body signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There is a discomfort with physical contact outside “private” circle (family or close friends)</td>
<td>- Physical contact is easy and natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Embarrassed when displaying of emotion</td>
<td>- Raise voice easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discreet in verbal and non-verbal expressions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 12: Neutral versus affective scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Zone</th>
<th>European Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 74%</td>
<td>France: 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: unknown</td>
<td>Sweden: 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC: 55%</td>
<td>Germany: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy: 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The closer to 100% the result is, the more neutral the country is.*

### 3. Specific versus diffuse

### Table 13: Main characteristics of Specific and Diffuse dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Diffuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public space is more “open” whereas private space is more “closed”</td>
<td>Public space more “closed” and private space is more “open” as soon as you are in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appears direct, open and extrovert</td>
<td>Appears indirect, closed and introvert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and private life separated</td>
<td>Work and private life are often closely linked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14: Specific versus diffuse scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Zone</th>
<th>European Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 58%</td>
<td>France: 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: 50%</td>
<td>Sweden: 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC: 25%</td>
<td>Germany: 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italy: 75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The closer to 100% the result is, the more specific the country is.*

*All the results are made thanks to an average of the answers given during Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s studies (when all the questions act in the same way of the “opposition concepts”).
Appendix 3: country-, company- and brand-related product image

Figure 8: Several layers of country-, company- and brand-related product image

Usunier, J-C, 1992/2000, figure 10.1 p 318
Appendix 4: Principal coordinated analysis for colours association in PRC

Figure 9: Principal coordinated analysis for colours association in PRC

Madden T. J., K. Hewett, M. S., Roth, 2000, pp 90-107
Appendix 5: Differences in the packaging

Figure 10: “True match” foundation in Japan

Figure 11: “True match” foundation in UK
Appendix 6: Differences in the L’Oréal Paris websites

Figure 12: First page of the French web site

Figure 13: First page of the Chinese web site
Figure 14: One of the two first pages of the Japanese web site

Figure 15: One of the two first pages of the Japanese web site