

# Chapter 37

## Experiencing Commercial Videos for Online Shopping: A Cross-Cultural User's Design Approach

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### ABSTRACT

*Although online shopping has become a popular and convenient instrument for companies to buy and sell products, the design of these web-shops does not always offer the rich multisensory experiences that physical retailing offers. In the chapter, the authors argue that introducing audio-visual contents in the design could provide dynamic multisensory information to offer more engaging experiences to the consumer. Despite existing controversies regarding universalism of the emotional experiences induced by perceptual processes, the authors present evidence that suggests cultural modulations of videos experiences. Spanish and Finnish participants interacted with audiovisual products depicting videos of a culturally loaded brand design. Content analysis of participants' verbalizations helped to identify categories and subcategories that defined the representation of the video elements and their relative weight depending on the cultural background of the viewer. Although results indicate common elements affecting viewers of the two countries, they differ in the relative weight to global aesthetics features.*

### INTRODUCTION

For some years now, Internet is considered a useful tool that helps companies to rapidly spread information about their products to very diverse geographical location at a very low cost. Internet use many times reduces the cost for marketing and also permits companies to offer their customers the possibility of buying from home independently of where the product or the company is located. The reduction of the product cost and the possibility of buying from any location make Internet shopping an attractive

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instrument for companies and customers. However, displaying the product on internet for online shopping greatly differ from the displays of the product in traditional physical shops where the costumers can not only look at the products from fixed angles, but also move and look at them from different distances and perspectives, touch them and even try them, Hence, internet does not usually offer the rich multimodal experiences than physical shopping offers. For these reason, because online shopping usually display the products in two dimensional surfaces and lacks the richer sensory experiences than the physical shops offer, the design of the online shop needs to take special care of the arrangement of the visual elements, the format of presentation, the combination of colours, etc. Usually the products are introduced by presenting pictures and verbal descriptions of their features, but the designer's job is to try to induce positive impressions and good experiences in the users by distributing the element of the web in particular ways. The choice of colours, sounds, and images seeks to influence the users and induce them to by the product (Childers et al. 2002). Despite these efforts, many aspects of the real shopping environment are missing in the static web displays, and this might introduce communication barriers between companies and customers. One way of reducing these possible problems is to introduce dynamic elements by adding video contents to the online shops. Videos can be useful devices to induce emotions and change consumers' perceptions of an object. The mental representations of a product can be influenced by the emotions attached to the audiovisual contents where the product is inserted (Moran, 1981). By exposing an individual to a video-based content about a product, emotions toward the product can be created, which might lead to a positive tendency to consume it (Wang & Cheong, 2006). However, to ensure that these audio-visual elements induce positive experiential, and informational representations of the products, we need research that helps to provide guidelines for enhancing visual communication with the users. As suggested by Childers, et al. (2002) costumers of online-shops do not only use the web to buy in a more efficient manner, but they also look for entertainment. Adding video contents to the shop web design may introduce this important hedonic dimension by making the presentation of the product richer and more attractive. Videos may provide attractive contexts where to display the products, to enhance their aesthetic features or to describe the quality of their manufactured elements. An aesthetically enhanced video might increase the probability that the consumer buy the product, but also may induce him/her to visit the online shop in the future, and to forward the link to other prospective shoppers (Reinecke & Gajos 2014). Recently, Ecklers and Rogers (2014) also suggested that audio-visual contents form part of the viral phenomena, highlighting the influences that videos might have as strategies for marketing (Purcell 2010).

As we mentioned, however, there is not enough research directed to investigate the impact that different elements have on the consumer experience. In addition, sometimes companies have made ill use of videos by applying emotional sensationalism and try to catch the audience attention through unconventional designs and ideas with the risk of triggering a negative reaction on the potential consumer (Ecklers & Rogers 2014) instead of the desired positive experience. But what element catches attention and interest in the consumers when exploring an online-shop? Interest is an important emotion for online shopping that has been explored in the context of film studies. According to Silvia (2005) interest involves evaluation of the degree to which an idea or event is complex, unexpected and difficult to process, but at the same time is evaluated as possible to cope and to understand. Thus, people find interesting complex or unusual events that can be understood after some effort (Silvia 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2006).

For the theory, interest is the more central emotion that filmmakers and scriptwriters should seek in their audiences. Interest keeps the viewers in their seats, with the motivation of spending their mental resources on the audiovisual sequences and with high expectations for the future. Interest gives an

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