



# Adaptation versus standardization: from the essential marketing paradigm

## La adaptación versus la estandarización visto desde el paradigma de marketing esencial

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### Abstract

*There is a lot of international marketing literature about the controversy of applying a product adaptation or standardization policy when launching them to external markets. Now, all of it refers to the consequence of using one or the other, but nothing is said about how the essential causes intervene in this important decision of international marketing. This document analyzes this problem from the perspective of the essential marketing paradigm and basically works on the analysis of the impact of the four essential aspects that are the activators of consumption, and how they impact on this problem in question. To address this problem, it has been decidedly entered both in the mind of the consumer and in the mind of the market. And this document presents not only the four activators or purchase motivators, but also what are their driving engines, in addition to what they represent from neuroscience.*

*Then to complete this document it is argued apologetically, as this theoretical conceptualization impacts international marketing decisions, at least, when deciding whether the product or service in question can be standardized or some type of market adaptation will have to be made of international destination. Finally, a value model is proposed in the form of "pattern" of consumption, and from which you can see all the essential problems.*

### Resumen

La literatura actual del marketing internacional acerca de la controversia de aplicar una política de adaptación o de estandarización de producto a la hora de lanzarlos a los mercados externos. Ahora, toda ella se refiere a la consecuencia de utilizar una u otra, pero ningún autor se ha detallado a identificar cuáles son las causas esenciales que nos permitan tomar tan importante decisión del marketing internacional. Este documento analiza esta problemática desde la óptica del paradigma del marketing esencial y trabaja básicamente sobre el análisis del impacto de los cuatro aspectos esenciales que son los activadores del consumo, y de qué manera estos impactan sobre esta problemática en cuestión. Para abordar esta problemática se ha ingresado de manera decidida tanto en la mente del consumidor, como en la mente del mercado. Y se presentan en este documento no solo los cuatro activadores o motivadores de compra, sino también cuáles son sus motores impulsores, además de lo que los mismos representan desde la neurociencia.

Luego para completar dicho documento se argumenta apologeticamente, como esta conceptualización teórica impacta sobre las decisiones de marketing internacional, por lo menos, a la hora de decidir si el producto o servicio en cuestión se puede estandarizar o habrá que realizar algún tipo de adaptación al mercado de destino internacional. Finalmente, se propone un modelo de valor en forma de *patronage* del consumo, y del cual se puede apreciar toda la problemática esencial.

### Keywords | palabras clave

*Activators, adaptation, archetype, code, meaning, standardization, perception, policies.*

Activadores, adaptación, arquetipo, código, estandarización, percepción, políticas, significado.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Adaptive dichotomy versus standardization

When the Canadian sociologist Marshall McLuhan defined the concept of 'global village' in 1962, discussion began between those who wanted to boost their international businesses from the adaptation of their marketing plans and those who met in standardization the best path to the most profitable businesses. While McLuhan (1989) uses this new global village neologism to describe the endless possibilities of global human interconnection that were being enabled by new access to electronic media, the author also does not anticipate that he ended up opening up an in-depth debate about international marketing that goes as far as today. Then, to reaffirm all these ideas in 1989 McLuhan and B.R. Powers wrote *The Global Village*. Also in the 1960s the author Erik Elinder (1965) predicted that there were millions of Europeans who largely lived in similar conditions even if when living in different nations, although Elinder did not get to talk about globalization of consumption nor standardization, he did emphasize uniformity and suggested international communication.

R. Buzzell (1968) defined the concept of standardization by stating that it was an offer of identical product lines at similar prices through the same types of distribution channels and with identical communication plans in different nations and countries of the world. But, as stated in the book *International Marketing from Latin American perspective* (Paris, 2015a), it was Levitt (1983) who finally raised the great controversy in 1983 with his article on globalization of markets. Levitt claimed that the world's marketers were confronted in a 'homogeneous global village', arguing that it was gestating the emergence of a single global consumer. Thus, he recommended that companies design and produce products and services for this new market, i.e., generate highly standardized high-quality products and services to market them worldwide using global product, pricing, distribution and communication policies. And this idea was very well received by the leading international companies of that time, the first to take it were the Japanese: Toyota®, Sony®, Citizen®, Panasonic®, Cassius®, among others, and many of them achieved surprising results, especially those dedicated to electronics, automotive, digital and capital goods. This led to a new model of international business organization: transnational, a type of international company that, in addition to not making adaptations to local preferences, designs its products according to the preferences of an alleged global consumer.

But not all organizations that embraced this ideology of international marketing standardization succeeded, because they encountered enormous obstacles caused by regional traditions with deeply rooted customs that are the results of very different cosmogonies and the different cultures of nations. As the American author and political scientist Huntington (1997) proposes in his book *The Clash of Civilizations*, who predicted before his death (2008) that the future of the world's conflicts was to take place among the different civilizations that make it up. This new international reordering anticipates that new human and nation conflicts will not be economic, ideological, geopolitical but cultural. Thus, it is predicted by Samuel Huntington, while presenting a future full of conflicts, but in an environment governed by international relations openly contrary to Western interests, and this author ends up by recognizing the need for the West to gain a more accurate understanding of non-Western civilizations, in order to achieve a better approach to these cultures and enhance their maximum influence. There are not even a few authors who come to bestow much of the burden of blame for the 2009 crisis, at the enormous cost borne by international organizations that sought to impose

the Western lifestyle on the rest of the world through the implementation of Levitt's global standardization policy.

This controversy of international marketing has led to three schools: the driver of adaptation, the promoter of standardization and then a third alternative emerged which holds the middle position:

1. The School of Adaptation: local culture is taken as part of the 'input' of international marketing by paying special attention to the customs of consumers in the destination country. The potential success of the international marketing plan is based on local knowledge and products and services adapt to the preferences of their consumers. Advocates of this approach argue that cultural differences between different nations, different phases of their economic cycles, uneven product lifecycle curves, and the many lifestyles of their citizens are barriers difficult to overcome, unless it is the organization that adapts to them with their products or services. Differences between political and legal systems are also problematic, in addition to social and economic structural variables that are often not similar. Authors such as Boddewyn, Soehl and Picard (1986) are strong advocates of this school.
2. The school of standardization: this ideology advocates that the consumer is globalizing at a speed never seen before thanks to ICT (computer and communication technologies), which has an impact on an accelerated convergence of markets, according to the ideas of Theodore Levitt (its highest benchmark). Peebles (1978) acknowledges differences from the local sphere, but does not believe that they are insurmountable or decisive. Then many authors argued this ideology, some forcefully like Bruhn (2004), who even argues that the concept should be implemented at the national level in other similar or even different markets, but without producing any modifications thereof. Other pro-standardization authors such as Madeira and Silveira (2013) and Postigo (2014) consider born global to be international companies that do not follow the traditional stages of their internationalization, but bet to their emergence on the global market.
3. The middle position school: it recognizes the advantages of both extremes and tries to reconcile them with an intelligent proposal for each case. This school promotes moderation in response to both extremes, as differences are recognized at the local level, but also defend the benefits of standardization as they welcome cost reduction. Other authors who have embraced this position or intermediate route include Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulus (1997), who pose a number of internal conditions and external circumstantial situations that modify market actions and opt for adaptation or standardization as the case may be; or as stated by Onkvisit and Shaw (1987) who claim that more than a number of differences are a matter of degrees. This position is criticized for being ambiguous, unclear, and sometimes confusing.

All approaches agree on what Sainz de Vicuña (2016) says, in which the decision to internationalize a business is due to the basic principle of having companies with the capacity to projecting internationally over time with returns that allow them to

grow and expand. Although, all these schools mention the issue from the perspective of their consequences of their respective applications, none of them identify the essential causes from the basic problem of the international marketing plan. The aim of this paper is to analyze the essential causes and to do so strategic analysis will be used from the two research sites of the market: the mind of the consumer and the mind of the market. Sites from which were extracted the four essential consumer-activating aspects for home marketing and international marketing: perceptions and meanings in the consumer's mind, and codes of behavior and archetypes in the mind of the market.

## 2. The two sites of the basic aspects of an international marketing plan

As stated before, in order to study consumer behavior, we must definitively enter two sites: the mind of the consumer and the mind of the market. When Philip Kotler (2005) stated that marketing should be fully introduced into the consumer's mind, he did not really make it clear how to do it, since it is difficult to perform it without the tools that traditional marketing offers in this regard. On the other hand, this author also does not develop the mind of the market, and does not evaluate its real market potential, since the action of the 'collective unconscious' not only conditions but changes the consumer's purchasing decision when the consumer is influenced by others from the codes of behavior and links generated, but also from the positions they take when surrounded by others. Undoubtedly, all these problems provoked in marketing a deep crisis in which it is still immersed. As a result of this crisis arises 'the second myopia of marketing', which we have already denounced in our book named after it, and by which a level of failures of more than 85% of the products and services that are launched to markets are detected (Paris, 2012).

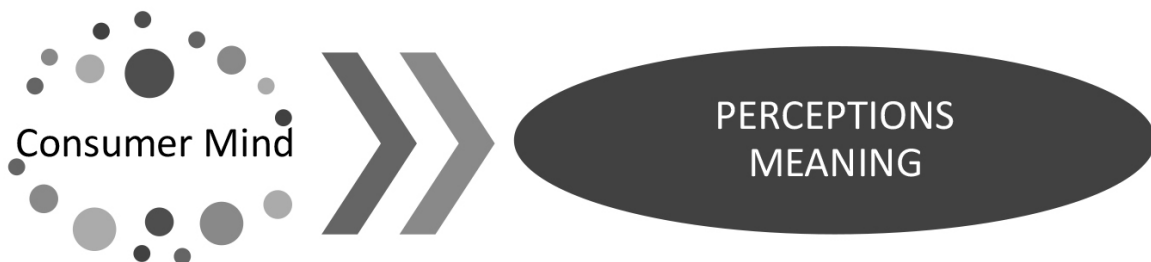
However, Kotler (Kotler, 2005) in his book *The 10 Capital Sins of Marketing* has identified and analyzed at least a dozen major failures in today's marketing, commonly incurred by international businesses. Among some of the reasons for this failure is the first sin that Kotler (2005, p. 15) states: "The company is not sufficiently market-oriented and aimed at consumers". Undoubtedly, it is the first cause of error, and this is due to the high unknowingness of the purchasing motivators, fact that was analyzed by the author in a very superficial way without reaching the essential causes of consumption. This is due, on the one hand, to the reason that marketing experts are not taking into account the changes that the market has undergone, since the consumer and the market have become much more complex and unpredictable at the domestic level, and it is much more complex internationally; and, on the other hand, the reductionism that marketing has been undergoing in terms of research, the time given to such market research and the limited investment made for the interpretation of the problem presented by today's market which, according to our essential marketing optics, it is the main cause, since the problem is not visualized in a heuristic, integral and holistic way. The great difficulty observed is that the problem is attacked from one marketing perspective, generated by some of its approaches: digital, social responsibility, green, mobile, viral, etc. But, it is never attacked from its different angles since essential marketing requires the integration of knowledge such as axiology, semiology, neuroscience, anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, communication and consumer behavior.

In addition, as the market is in constant change, a methodological update is required, since marketing is essentially heuristic, i.e., discovered and rediscovered every day in the mind of the consumer and in the mind of the market. Today nothing is static, as mentioned by the neuroscientific phenomenon of abruptness, which states that everything that is no longer stimulated in the minds of the consumer and in the

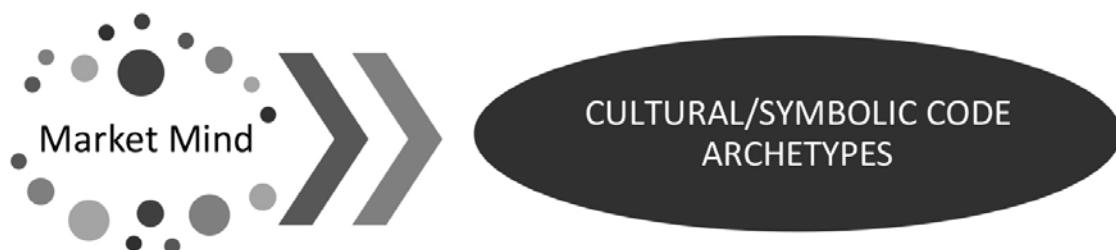
mind of the market ends up losing meaning or even disappearing as a concept in the minds of the consumer and the market. We maintain that the human mind is loaded with content through perception, acting as a basis of meanings which are interrelated and guided by codes, and end up standardizing in the form of archetypes. The Brazilian author and anthropologist Arduini (2006), has wondered in his book *Anthropology*, daring to recreate humanity: what is man? and his answer was even more surprising: “man is a mine of meanings”. And with this phrase he invites us to look what man has to offer as a consumer. Therefore, the basics for marketing should be to interpret which agent is triggering the requirement for the product or service.

In Figures 1 and 2 it is observed how we can extract perceptions and meanings from the mind of the consumer, while from the mind of the market we can obtain symbolic/cultural codes and archetypes. Although, it is worth saying traditional marketing does not prepare us to carry out these research tasks, and when these aspects largely govern market laws and consumer behavior the situation becomes very difficult. Since these four aspects are the foundations of both home and international marketing plan, not understanding them clearly means falling into ‘the second marketing myopia’.

**Figure 1. The origin of the perception and meaning of the product**



**Figure 2. The origin of the symbolic/cultural code and archetypes**



### **3. Greimas' semiotic square in the four essential aspects of marketing**

In many of our books we have applied the semiotic square of Greimas (1983) and perhaps the most significant of our applications is the one that allows us to interrelate the four essential aspects of marketing, which are the natural mobilizers of consumption. To carry out this application we start from four research projects led by this author in the Faculty of Economic Sciences of the National University of La Plata, in which we have analyzed these basic aspects of essential marketing, and the two elements that we have assumed as different are the Meanings and Archetypes, which in turn have their respective opposites (París et al., 2016). See Figure 3.

However, when we talk about meanings we mean psychic representations of goods and services in the minds of the consumer. From a neuroscientific point of view, a



meaning is a stable neural pathway, which is usually housed in the memories available to the limbic brain. At this point, as stated by biologists Audesirk et al. (2003), virtually all man's knowledge is defined as neural pathways, and by being in the mind of the human being, individuals can turn to them at any time. For this reason, meanings are the triggers of desires, since these are recovered and raised from the memories of the unconscious. Therefore, meanings are responsible for personal tastes, and by which people generate some interest and valorization for some things or ideas.

As for archetypal figurations (or archetypes), they are part of the collective unconsciousness of different societies and cultures, and must be interpreted in the mind of the market. It is a kind of preconceived box that can be charged with positive or negative emotional energy, resulting in archetypes on the light side or dark side, respectively. For example, if we load the box with positive emotional energy, such as sincerity, loyalty, trust, reliability, equanimity, joy, sympathy, and attachment, the archetypal figure to be obtained will be that of 'friend'. Now, if we load the same box with negative emotional energy such as hatred, envy, resentment, jealousy, disgust, pettiness, repudiation, revenge, intrigue and resentment, the archetypal figure will be that of 'enemy'. Now, from a neural point of view, we can visualize them as engrams of the reptile brain. According to Montserrat (2001), professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid, these engrams are stable neural interconnection structures (usually housed in the primitive reptile brain), and these complex neural networks stimulate the activation of automatic responses in which, when postures are activated, it is difficult to get rid of them; hence, the term of immovable postures. The archetypes are then primarily responsible for primitive social reactions, the origin of which lies deep within the collective unconsciousness of cultures and their societies. Examples of opposing archetypes include hero-coward, statement-tyrant, princess-witch, etc.

Following Greimas square, we now present the opposites of both previous concepts: perceptions versus archetypes, and codes of behavior as opposed to meanings.

We know that perceptions are in the boundary between external and internal reference systems. According to Mariano Sigman (2015), perceptions involve afferent and neural efferent systems, as expressed in the book *The Secret Life of the Mind*. It is the phenomenon from the human capacity to capture the physical signals of the environment that take the form of stimuli at the sensory level, and this happens from the five senses. Each of them has specialized cells that capture external physical stimuli to convert them into electrical signals, such as olfactory cilia, taste buds, visual poles, etc., which generate the electrical impulses and sensations that will foster the instant associations of neurons through the process of synapses, which are then processed in the corresponding brain areas (e.g. image signals in the occipital lobe). We call this instantaneous neural association perception. Therefore, perception is based on the basic and derived needs of the individual that requires to be activated, and of course, these have to be interpreted in the mind of the consumer and by each individual; thus, they are personal and will depend on what each person requires, although we must anticipate that human needs are generally similar.

Finally, the codes of behavior (whether cultural or symbolic) from a neuroscientific point of view are true 'neural networks' and are formed by the collective unconscious to generate relationships with the other individuals who respond to a certain society and culture. Therefore, its origin is in the collective action of people, who, when seeking to live in conflict-free and harmonious societies, create codes as networks of interrelated meanings. For this reason, the codes are based on the social conventions generated over time and from the interrelationship of various meanings already known by the individuals who are members of that society. These neural networks act as a kind

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#### 4.1. *Perception at the basis of necessity*

Undoubtedly, perception has been a determining aspect of marketing since the individual acquires new information from the medium, to such an extent that it can even be considered the 'input' of the human mind. Although it is also the cause of many people's mental biases, since everything perceived by man is considered as absolute reality by him/her, and today we know for sure that there is no reality in people's minds, as our minds change things for phenomenological properties. For example, we know from the phenomena of a modal perception that a semi-hidden object can be perceived in its entirety, even if it appears only partially visible in our vision, because it is juxtaposed with other things. This phenomenon was called 'the error of experience', and the members of the Cognitivist school named this phenomenon 'data-driven processes' or simply pre-attentive. James Jerome Gibson (1974) in his classic work *Perception of the Visual World* refuted perception as an indirect phenomenon to adopt a stance based on the direct perception of man. The central strategy of Gibson's ecological approach states that when describing the stimulus available for perception, it must be distinguished between its two components: 'stimulus energy' and 'stimulus information'. According to this author, energy is in the stimulus, but also information, without requiring subsequent internal thoughts. This is part of the assumption that intellectual keys of perception as a survival mechanism are the natural laws underlying each organism, therefore the organism only perceives what it can learn and is necessary for it to survive. The ecological approach when conceiving the input of perception as information, in addition to energy only, states that stimulus no longer requires practically further interpretation, but is more direct (therefore, it does not depend only on the sensitivity of the sense or senses involved), which makes it possible to construct a direct explanation of perception as a human mechanism of the interpretation of the environment.

We can define perception as the set of processes and activities related to stimulation that is achieved with one or more of the senses, through which we obtain consistent information regarding our environment, as well as the actions we take with reference to our system of internal references. In this way, perception can be visualized as a mental image that is formed with the help of experience, based on prior knowledge and the particular needs of the individual.

Hence, perception works with the brain stimuli through the five senses (hearing, touch, sight, smell, and taste), which generate an apparent physical reality of the environment from the external stimuli already converted into sensations, which ultimately produce perception in the human mind. Therefore, it is the ability to receive through all the senses, sensations, impressions or images to interpret something, so all perception includes search, selection and processing to obtain any type of information. Perception occurs right on the boundary between the conscious and the unconscious, but it becomes conscious when we can report it. It also occurs between the crossing of the external reference system (from rumors, advertising, comments, communication, etc.) with the internal reference system (memories, episodes, experiences, meanings, knowledge, etc.). However, as the Argentine neuroscientist Sigman (2015) states: "perception always has some imagination. It is more like painting than taking a photograph. And, according to the confirmatory effect, we blindly believe in the reality we build" (p. 98).

We can finally define perception as the mental and cognitive process, through which individuals capture the information of the environment and interpret it directly or indirectly (depending on the information burden). And it is from sensory systems that such information reaches the individual, which is confronted with his/her system of internal references and in this way, the individual seeks to form a coherent represen-



tation or image of the environment that is often taken as real. Therefore, it is characterized by its subjectivity, selectivity and temporality, since perceptions are instant images. Although it is true they look “more like drawings than photographs”, we can say that it is subjective since the response it generates by the same stimulus varies from individual to individual; it is temporary, as it is a short-term phenomenon defined by an instantaneous association of neurons, and is therefore not permanent as perception disappears once the stimulus finishes; and it is selective because it depends on the needs, interests and motivations that move individuals, i.e., we perceive what we want to perceive in a certain circumstance.

In addition, the emotional action of people causes perception to expand or decrease. For example, in an armed robbery, assaulted people pay so much attention to the gun because of the emotional impact it generates through fear, thus he/she loses the rest of the details of the scene. So it is the individual who selects the perceptual field based on what he/she wants to perceive. The truth is that we perceive what we want or need at every moment of our lives. If what we observe is pleasant then we expand our field of perception, if what we perceive is unpleasant, we reduce it significantly. The subject must have generated an internal ‘input’ of requirement to perceive something, for example, ‘I am thirsty’, either it has been impacted by a stimulus with very high intensity or linked to some aversion or pleasure.

It is clear that perception is always prior to significance, and there may even be perception without any significance. As an example, the psychological phenomenon of pareidolia, which consists of an ancestral ability to perceive faces, figures or hypothetical threats in certain places or that have nothing to do with reality, such as the architecture or facade of a building, the hood or the front of a vehicle, the back of an alarm clock, the bottom of a cup of coffee or tea, the whimsical shapes of clouds, etc. As we anticipated this phenomenon is ancestral and would be linked to man’s innate ability to detect threats in wild or somehow hostile environments.

Having made a brief synthesis of perception, an analysis will be done to see whether this concept can be considered homogeneous in all cultures and nations or on the contrary if it behaves very differently. Since the phenomenon has two components, its information load and its intensity or impact energy are different. It is clear that the former is more linked to local culture and its worldview, while its second component is more universal since the energy of perception only points to the level of attention of the individual. Although sensitivity to the capture of these energy intensities may have some variations in the different ethnicities and nations that make up our world, in general when the intensity of a stimulus is above the level of the surrounding stimuli, then this stimulus will be imposed on others (Weber-Fechner’s Law). In general, the impact of a certain perceptual stimulus will surely achieve the attention of the viewer in all nations and cultures, even if this does not mean that it will produce a positive or negative effect on it, i.e., this attention-calling mechanism can be considered universal and would support the standardization policy. Now, from the information burden of perception as an instantaneous union of neurons, it will depend on previous experiences, the sensations accumulated in episodic memory, and the worldview of their culture and society. Thus, it cannot be considered too universal, and this characteristic suggests a clearer inclination towards the policy of adaptation. For example, Bimbo® uses as its main argument sales and even in its slogan the perceptual concepts of ‘cute and fresh’, ideal for Latin countries, but for cooler or Nordic nations of the globe, the ideal in bread is ‘hot and crisp’.

#### 4.2. *The meaning at the base of desire*

The other essential aspect of the consumer's mind is found in the limbic memories, where the 'universe of meanings' is housed. Once the things of the environment become meaningful to man from successive perceptions, man provide meaning to them and in doing so he/she houses that meaning in one of the memories of the unconscious. Its importance lies in that it is by these meanings that man is managed through experience and knowledge, to such an extent that something that has already been meant does not require any interpretation; but rather the meaning or meanings associated with the question presented will emerge from the unconscious and thus conform the related mental ideas. Hence, the human mind functions as a huge 'bank of meanings' that are stored in the brain and are also responsible for much of the consumption. As Lewis (2015) states, "Consumers buy to meet their needs. But they go shopping to satisfy their desires" (p. 37). In other words, capitalism gives desire the role of the driving force for meaning-related purchasing. Many of these meanings, when generated and stimulated with a strong emotional burden, achieve durability thanks to their significant energy burden, which will even keep them active throughout their lives. In such cases, these meanings acquire the characteristics of impasses. In the opposite direction, when meanings are created in the mind with weak energy loads and without subsequent stimuli, they tend to disappear or re-signify.

Essential marketing, whether domestic or international, is based on all products and services being interpreted from the meaning created in the consumer's mind. These meanings were generated at some point in the person's life, and today we know, thanks to psychology, that the vast majority of everyday meanings were created in the first seven years of life (they are the ones we use automatically on a day-to-day basis). Our essential marketing paradigm also supports the fact that people can change their meanings (re-meaning process) over time, and these meanings can even disappear because of the phenomenon of abruption, as we also know that consumer memories are actually much more creative and ductile than before.

On the other hand, thanks to the work of the French psychoanalyst Lacan (2007), we can say that meanings constantly change due to circumstantial or context issues, without even being able to control it.

From a neuroscientific point of view, it is known by Damasio (2004) that meaning is physiologically constituted as a neural path created by neurons interconnected through synapses, all from the action of different neurotransmitters that interact to shape that meaning. In short, what all authors agree on is that a meaning is not a concrete thing, but the psychic representation of the thing.

Now, we must cite the sociologist Blumer (1982), who presented in 1937 his postulates based on symbolic interaction, where he practically relied on the importance of working with meanings as the basis of any social plan, and which were used in our essential marketing paradigm:

1. Humans act on things based on the meanings these things have for them, or what is the same, people act on the meaning they attribute to the objects and situations around them.
2. The meaning of these things derives from an individual's social interaction with other actors.
3. These meanings are used as a process of interpretation carried out by the person in his/her relationship with the things, and are modified through that process (p. 79).

In 1937 Herbert Blumer anticipated that meaning would require an eminently different methodology, which led to the development of our 'meaning outcrop techniques', and these techniques of meaning outcrop will respond to these postulates (Paris, 2015b).

To summarize, we will give a definition of meaning, such as the essential aspect of marketing, so we can affirm that meaning is any interpretation that a person of a given society, culture and circumstance will give to a set of material, intangible or combination concepts of both. It is the psychic representation of the thing. It is a pure creation of the human mind.

From the point of view of standardization policies versus adaptation of international marketing, meanings created by different cultures from their individuals are the main obstacles to standardization policies. Although it seems that the knowledge about things was actually very similar, the way it is structured is not, especially for those products in which free will and free determination of the individual are linked to local or national cultures. Both aspects are very questioned, whether by how simple it really is to manipulate the human mind and the collective unconscious, but also for the same automations and the consumer myopia, as well as for the numerous mental biases (Paris, 2019). As meanings are essential in the process of searching, selecting, evaluating and purchasing of each individual, then they become essential to any international marketing plan. For example, guinea pig in Argentina means friendly pet and it is very loved by children; while in Ecuador it means exclusive delicacy of the Inca emperor, much appreciated by diners for the exquisite of its meat and it is used to caress a special guest.

## **5. Mobilizing aspects in the mind of the market, the impact on adaptation or standardization**

It appears that the obsession with consumption in the capitalist world involved fighting towards the achievement of personal desires, which makes each person act autonomously, even carefree of the interests of the rest of the human world, which seems to be a jungle and in which the motto "everyman for himself" seems to be the only law, although there is an element that keeps humanity away from chaos, which involves an infamous report of selfish individuals. It is the collective unconscious, which somehow induces us to behave socially and acts as an invisible force that leads us to relate to others. Hence, markets have a mind which leads to social conduct based on human values and a common ethic governed by rules of coexistence. This collective unconscious acts as a kind of magnetic force that tends to align personal interests with the collective interests of all people.

It was Karl Gustav Jung (1984a) who best developed the idea of the collective unconscious and defined it as the "psychic inheritance", and presents it as a type of knowledge or ancestral images that everyone has, behaves and shares with each other. According to Jung these images are inherited in the structure of the brain, and it produces different ways of seeing them. They would even explain why many different nations possess similar legends and myths despite thousands of miles from each other and without having any contact in their pasts. This leads us to the idea that we can differentiate between two mental layers of the unconscious, one personal and one collective. The problem underlies when the interests of the person go in a different direction from that of their social group; thus, in those cases cognitive dissonance occurs. According to Lewis (2015) "cognitive dissonance can be defined as the feeling

of discomfort that we experience when we try to sustain two beliefs at the same time, and that when faced create a conflict” (p. 44).

The collective unconscious is endowed with purpose and intentionality, whose energy strength lies on primordial or archaic elements called “archetypes”, but also in the form of “codes of behavior”, which in turn are divided into “symbolic codes” and “cultural codes”, aspects that cannot be taken lightly, since it is known that both archetypes and codes of behavior govern many of our actions in everyday life and even in our social, work, intellectual, professional and cultural activity, as they tend to align our behavior with that of others, and whose neuroscientific correlate is the engrams of the reptile brain<sup>1</sup> for archetypes, and neural networks for behavioral codes. For example, when we get on a bus to make a long journey to home after a hard and exhausting day of work, we act according to one of the following two archetypes: ‘selfish’ or ‘courteous’, depending on whether there are women or only men inside and whether there are women with infants or elderly people, and the level of physical exhaustion of the individual will be acted upon with one or the other archetype. By activating one of these positions we practically leave the other sideways, and it will be very difficult for us to change on the fly, because we have taken a stance. Therefore, these aspects govern much of the ‘day-to-day’ of people in their social behavior, and particularly in the consumer behavior, so it is imperative that international marketing deals with these essential aspects effectively, because they are responsible for many of our daily actions linked to our lifestyle and social and cultural consumption. Through our essential marketing paradigm, we know that the issues of the collective unconscious of the market act as an invisible but decisive force that re-directs the final behaviors of the consumer at the moment of truth, i.e., when making their purchasing decisions.

Therefore, in the second research space, i.e. the mind of the market, we will determine the following aspects: archetypes and codes of behavior.

### ***5.1. Archetypes as the basis of posture***

As Jung (2005) states, an archetype has the following characteristics that define it:

These are not legacy representations, but legacy possibilities for representations. Nor are they individual inheritances, but essentially general, as can be seen as archetypes being a universal phenomenon. (para. 3)

As observed above, archetypes function as true empty boxes (pre-formed and that we all possess), which can be charged with positive or negative energy giving absolutely opposite results. For example, depending on the information a person has on a given subject, if the person has scientific arguments on the subject in question, this person can be considered ‘wise’ which is a positive archetypal connotation. Now, this same person, when he/she does not know the subject matter in question, but nevertheless thinks without valid foundations or arguments, archetypal character will be of ‘chatty’, which would be the dark side of the same box linked to the knowledge of the individual. Therefore, archetypal figures may be required to identify certain aspects of human behavior and in particular consumption (those that incorporate certain character postures). The interesting thing about archetypal figurations is that they are recognized by all individuals, even belonging to different societies and cultures.

<sup>1</sup> An engram is a very complex structure of stable neural interconnection networks that produce automatic responses even of behavior, as psychic engrams are executed through the conscious action of the individual.



However, in order to determine the archetypes defined by Jung (1984b) we have promoted in our books the use of projective research techniques, as well as the application of opposite semantics among other tools (Paris, 2015b).

To address this exciting topic, it is worth asking the following question: what are archetypes? For Jung, archetypes are archaic remnants or essential images, i.e. unconscious representations. Archetypes are structures of the collective unconscious. Some of them are on their positive-negative side: mother-stepmother, father-guardian, hero-coward, friend-traitor, idol-failure, despot-martyr, prophet-phony, wise-charlatan, priest-witch, saint-demon, etc., but a common aspect among them is that they are present in all societies and cultures, since somehow societies and their cultures converge towards these archetypal figures.

A noteworthy aspect of the archetype is that it does not have a specific shape, but it functions as an 'organizing principle' about the things we see or do and determines a quasi-automatic course of action. That is why Jung refers to them as species of 'boxes' or as molds that are in our minds and are part of our being, and whose content can be charged with positive energy (light side of the archetype) or with negative energy (dark side or archetype shadow). For example, the hero and the coward share the same box and can be activated with either energy depending on the circumstances that occur. To clarify this aspect, imagine the same person: if having a positive box, he/she will become a hero in a plane crash (because was instructed for such accidents and knows what to do and possesses the energy to do it); but in the face of the eminent sinking of the ship on which he/she is sailing he/she will act as a coward in trying to save himself/herself first, as cannot swim and gets panic in the water. As is apparent in this case, the energy for having that box will depend on the situation presented to the individual and the previous experience and knowledge. Carl Gustav Jung (1984a), explains it as follows:

The contents of the personal unconscious are affective burden complexes that are part of the intimacy of mood life. On the other hand, the contents of the collective unconscious are called archetypes. (p.10)

As Pepe Martínez states (2008):

Archetypes are symbols that represent relationships that are especially meaningful to humans. For example, the hero is the archetypal model of courage. Archetypes are universal references, i.e. consistent icons across space (different countries and values) and time (different historical epochs). (p. 69)

Because of this aspect of the archetype from the point of view of standardization versus adaptation policies, it can be considered as the main ally of standardization policies by one of its main characteristics already identified by Jung. Archetypes occur in all cultures, and they are similar. Thus, it is lawful to use the hero figure in an advertisement linked to the sale of a toilet cleaner, at least in the capitalist world.

## **5.2. Behavior codes as the basis of the bond**

Behavior codes function as a network of interrelated meanings that serve the task of filtering people's behaviors, i.e. they can be described as filters of human behavior, and are formed as constructs or pattern of interconnected meanings in neural networks called symbolic codes or cultural codes. The first of these codes is handled primarily with natural symbols (these derive from the unconscious contents of the psyche), and therefore represent a huge number of variations of primitive and essential images that manifest in gestures and body postures that are generally easily interpreted. Many of them have archaic roots with an origin in the most primitive societies, to such an extent



that even some superior primates are handled with these types of symbolic codes. In fact, when a gorilla raises his arms and hits his breasts, he is using a dominant type of symbolic code; just as two people who threaten to move their arms suggestively and violently during a fight.

On the other hand, the cultural code occurs when a person uses cultural concepts and rituals that have been used to manage those 'truths' that come from the work of man in his quest for reality, and they do so through knowledge science, art, religion and other forms of cultural communication. Now, the more rational people act, the more they control their emotions, and the more arguments used the more priority they will be given to the so called 'cultural codes', whose origin is obviously found in culture, which is defined as the personality of a given society.

From a neuroscientific point of view, codes of behavior are neural networks made up of neural pathways that have been intertwined by the action of a group of dopaminergic neurons, as Jonah Lehrer explains (2011) the interesting thing about this system is that it has to do with expectations. Dopaminergic neurons continuously generate patterns based on experience. The same author states that evolution has programmed us to care about each other through bonds, hence the importance of generating mental constructs in the form of codes of behavior that facilitate and order human coexistence in harmony.

The French author Clotaire Rapaille (2007) mentions that the different behaviors, customs and habits that different societies possess and that are created between different cultures are not really defined by the knowledge they have, but rather by the way knowledge was structured, even sometimes by circumstantial, casual or fortuitous reasons.

We see the code of behavior as a pattern of mentally interrelated meanings, which forms a fabric that acts as if meanings were the filter elements of social and cultural behavior. The truth is that with them we manage ourselves in everyday life, and through them we generate bonds with others, permanently filtering the information of the environment, taking only the 'mandate' and what comes from the depths of our collective unconscious and that is transferred to our daily life, since all our social and cultural acts are practically governed from them.

Religious, military, academic, theatrical, etc. behaviors as well as gestures or customs represent ritualized behaviors, which are codified and assumed by societies as natural. These codes involve a number of meanings, and because the meanings are cultural, the codes are also cultural, so they are typical of each society. Hence, it becomes totally valid to study these rites from international marketing at the time they are brewing and we do so through the methodologies offered by anthropology, such as observation. The set of codes of a given society is what defines the filters through which it perceives, interprets and understands its world in the daily basis, and it is what usually makes us uncomfortable when we get in a different country, precisely the knowledge of its codes. The codes become collective patterns within a given society and in a certain culture, and these codes are transferred from one person to another through the generations (sometimes with some semantic changes with the corresponding contextual adaptations, and rarely with structural or background changes). Codes are the keys to the behavior of different communities and ethnicities, so if you want to understand them you will have to interpret them from deciphering what you are looking through them, since this knowledge is not written anywhere. Now, if the social bonds pursued by these codes are interpreted and create a bridge with the market and its consumers, a strategic alignment with the market mind code can be achieved, and then the communication will be aligned or 'in-code'. In this case, the consumer (subject to demand) will see how companies' promises are compatible with his/her illusions. And in this way the messages of the offer (object of the offer) will generate the desired response. But,

when the perceptible elements do not match the code, then there will be dissonance, which will result in a strong rejection by the consumer. In these cases, we will say that the promise of the offer will be ‘off-code’.

From the point of view of standardization versus adaptation policies, codes of behavior, when governing consumption, need to be analyzed in depth as they generally report changes in different cultures, becoming a real problem for standardization attempts. For example, the ritual of cognac consumption is very different in Mexico, Colombia and Argentina. Mexicans drink it cold and with soda or water, Colombians at room temperature and in a shot glass, and Argentinians have a ritual that requires heating the glass with a lighter and drinking the cognac by short sips while chatting. The product is the same, but its codes of behavior vary even between Latin American sub-cultures.

## 6. Consumer behavior from the essential marketing paradigm

Figure 4 presents how the consumer's lifestyle is formed by the personality itself and its culture, and it can also be visualized how the attributes must relate to the personal and social values of the individual to conform the new products and services of the offer, so that the orientation to the purchase facilitates the commercial action of the company.

### Figure 4. Consumer values and lifestyle

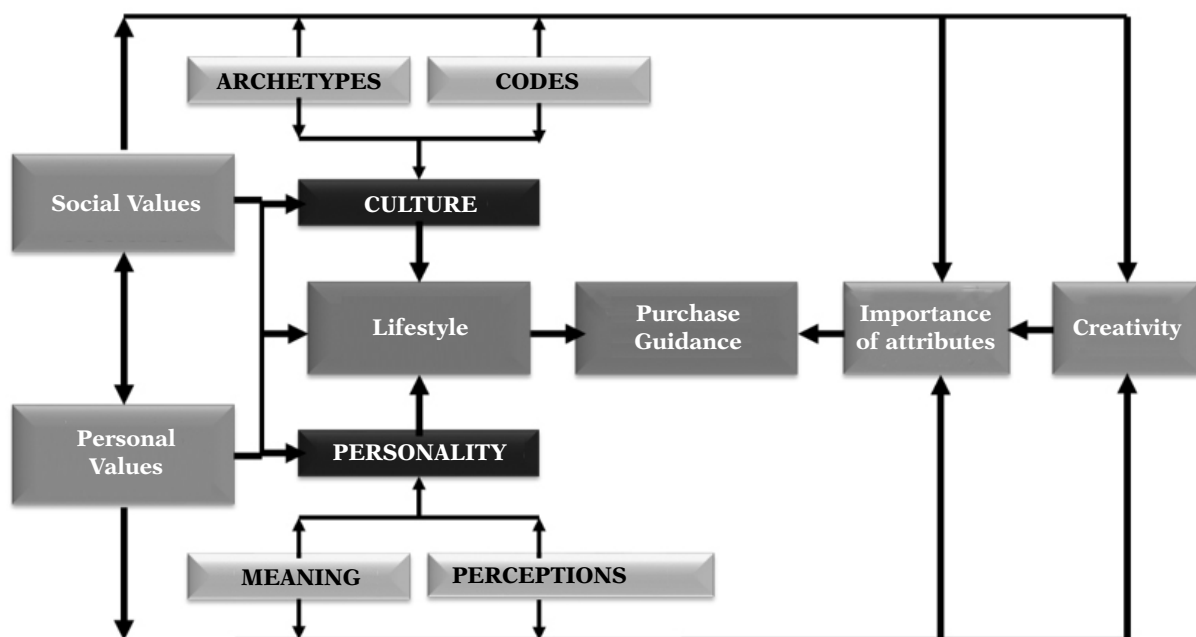


Figure 4 shows that we present a business management model from our essential marketing paradigm, and which is based on the one hand on perceptions and meanings that are created based on needs and desires; and on the other hand on codes of behavior and archetypes that are based on the bonds and postures. It is also seen that values are lifestyle precedents and act as determinants of both personal and social aspects and principles through ethics. Then, if values are cancelled, as a result identity would be lost, because it is linked to a certain culture (which can be seen as the personality of a certain society) and of course this is added to the individual's own personality.

One of the aspects that has been more interpreted is the so-called buyer behavior code or pattern of purchasing behavior, also referred to in the marketing literature as patronage. The model in Figure 4 inspired by Carman's work (1978) shows how values influence a particular pattern or model of consumer behavior. As Francisco Saravia (2009) states:

Values become the causes of people's interests and they assume a number of roles that, in turn, are the reasons for the activities in which they spend their time. Each set of variables (terminal values, instrumental values, interests, roles, and activities performed in free time) influences purchasing behavior. (p.49)

In addition to the role of the researcher with his/her methodologies, it must also be added the marketer's own creativity, in order to provide distinction to the marketing plan, but always on the basis of what is researched both in the mind of the consumer and in the mind of the market.

## 7. Consumer analysis from the essential paradigm to its international application

It is expected that a new marketing paradigm will require a new research methodology, even more so today, when many authors have been criticizing the traditional methodology of consumer analysis and market research. Especially from the moment authors such as Clancy and Shulman (1998) who, in their book called *the marketing revolution* published in the 1990s, already anticipated that the marketing revolution would not be guided by new data or new technology (although both will contribute to it).

In reality, information is the input and technology is the tool. Inputs always contribute, tools change to adapt to the moment, but concepts are the ones that endure. After more than twenty years of having published the book, this assertion has demonstrated the success of their prediction, because these authors were already brazenly critical of the consumer analysis systems and research methodologies used. Even in the early 21st century, Kevin J. Clancy and Peter C. Krieg, in their book *Marketing, not intuition*, insist that most companies do not investigate well, so the authors state the following:

We believe this is the case of many marketing successes: the right product was in the right place at the right time. Intuition, creativity and 'catching the wave' were surely much more important than a logical process or a solid investigation into obtaining the result. (Clancy & Krieg, 2004, p. 65)

But, the harsh criticisms continue to this day, for example, the Danish neuroscientist Martin Lindstrom in his book *Buy-ology* (2009) also stated:

By 2003, it was clear that traditional market research methods or focus groups were no longer used to find out what consumers really think. That was because our irrational mind, endowed with cultural prejudices rooted in tradition, parenting and a whole series of subconscious factors, exerts a powerful but veiled influence in our decisions. (Lindstrom, 2009, p. 21)

Also from our experience as both domestic and international marketing consultants, we realized that an analysis methodology was required, which would adapt to the requirements that demanded the determination and interpretation of the four essential and basal aspects of the marketing plan: perceptions, meanings, codes and archetypes. For this reason, we developed a heuristic, holistic methodology with a marked eclecticism, without this meaning an ideological contamination that would involve using hybrid methods according to the expressions of Schütz (1999), since these are corruptible and often confuse the researcher when choosing subjective or objective methodologies, and to definitively end with the dichotomy that has caused so many problems

to science. Hence, Schütz invites us to maintain the coherence of the research and to guide a research scheme without taking parallel routes, as tempting as they may seem to us. In other words, Schütz invites us to maintain the 'purity of the method'. Now, even if our methodology is fundamentally empirical, we do not neglect the scientific method in its application, as stated by Alfred Schütz (2012):

We should emphasize that the careful description of the processes that allow one man to understand the thoughts and actions of another is a requirement of the methodologies of the empirical social sciences. The question of how a scientific interpretation of human action is possible can be solved only if it is previously adequately determined how man can understand the action of the other in the natural attitude of daily life and common sense. (p. 33)

Therefore, in our research methodology the aim is not to concentrate in the consequences of man's actions but to try to determine their causes. Therefore, we are interested in knowing "what for" and "why" people do what they do. What will force us to determine these "what for" and "why" of the consumer, since our field of action is the market and within it man, in his role as national or international consumer.

## 8. Integration of essential aspects in the face of consumer analysis

It is clear that according to our essential marketing paradigm the decision of the consumer to purchase has its base in some of these four motivators already presented in this article. It is also true that it is not always so easy to identify them and in many cases it seems that several of them act simultaneously, although it is also true that one of them is always the determinant.

One aspect to make emphasis on is that even though the essential market research methodology requires greater expertise, the implementation of the domestic or international marketing plan is greatly simplified, since the determination of the essential purchase motivator works as a facilitator of tactical marketing. To facilitate these initial difficulties, we have created specialized consumer research techniques, such as the meaning outcrop technique, and we have adapted other research methodologies to interpret perceptions, codes of behavior and dominant archetypal figures, which seek to give the researcher a powerful tool to narrow that appreciation. We have included these techniques in our book *Essential Market Research* (Paris, 2015b).

Although we must clarify that even though we will surely bridge the gap between meaning in the consumer's mind with the researcher's perception, it will remain being a perception, since reality will always be distinguished in what is scientifically perceived by man. According to Popper (1985), what we are doing with these research techniques and methodologies is try to observe the reality in order to get a greater number of aspects of that reality and thus achieve a greater approach to the truth, which in this case is in the mind of the market and the consumer. But, we must clarify that we are still assuming that what the specialized researcher will collect will remain being a perception, even if it is closer to reality and surely also more professional and effective. However, we are aware that the most rational decision does not involve obtaining the best results, because in human affairs there is almost always the chance and anticipated conjectures mobilized by the confirmatory effect and denial of variance that can also further hinder the results. But, with experience, expertise and the number of observations, chance tends to balance and disappear. For this purpose, the researcher must be free from all bias and particular interest and be a correct implementer of the techniques in order not to be part of the same result. Hence, expertise is a requirement when applying the research techniques and methodologies presented and that we pro-



mote to determine these important four aspects of essential marketing, mainly for their international application.

## 9. Discussion and conclusions

As presented in article, we have not questioned whether a standardization policy is feasible or not, or whether adaptation is required because of the consequences that this policy would entail, no arguments were described for or against both policies, neither for rejecting them, but the idea was to analyze through the essential foundations of the international marketing plan whether the four essential aspects drive or limit the concept of standardization or adaptation. On the one hand, perceptions and meanings act in the mind of the consumers on their needs and desires; and the codes of behavior and archetypal figurations act on the bonds and positions adopted by individuals. The real causes that can support or hinder one policy or the other are in this aspect. It means that from the essential marketing paradigm, we affirm that these four strategic aspects can collaborate or can also hinder the development of one or the other international marketing policy. Not identifying which of these are the factors, not interpreting them and then working with them from the basis of an international marketing plan means like working blindly on an unsteady conceptual basis, and of course with very little chance of achieving the long-awaited market success.

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