



Cultural Differences between Finnish and Japanese Cultures - Enhancing Active Project's Design Management



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- Enhancing Active Project's Design Management

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Visual aids in communication have become increasingly important especially in bi- and multi-cultural communication situations as a result of a growing number of people from various cultures interacting frequently with each other, and searching or offering services and information from each other.

The purpose of this study is to verify the current situation of the Active project's visual communication area, future design management area potential, and locate the improvement possibilities. This thesis' objective is subsequently to improve and unify Active project's visual image by creating a unified and culturally acceptable design management plan.

The theoretical background of the study was made by examining design management theories, cultural dimensions, various cultural resources and country-specific cultural information. Furthermore Finnish and Japanese culture-related colour theories and country-specific design details were studied. The research approach was qualitative and the empirical section includes information gathered from a key-person interview, and the project's existing data examination with the support of theoretical studies.

The findings of the study refer to the importance of visual communication especially in multi- or bicultural communications situations. They also reveal the importance of an established, unified visual communication plan for the project recognition.

Key Words: design management, visual communication, culture, cultural study, Japan, Finland

Miia Veltheim

Suomalaisen ja japanilaisen kulttuurin erot - Active projektin design management -alueen kehittäminen

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68

Visuaalisista viestinnän korostuskeinoista on tullut yhä merkittävämpiä erityisesti kaksi- ja monikulttuurisissa viestintätilanteissa. Lisääntyvän monikulttuurisuuden mahdollistamana ihmiset kohtaavat jatkuvasti yksilöitä muista kulttuureista ja etsivät tai tarjoavat palveluja sekä tietoa toisilleen.

Opinnäytetyön tarkoitus on selvittää Active-projektin tämän hetken visuaalisen viestinnän tilanne, design management -alueen mahdollisuudet ja löytää näiden osioiden parannuskohteet. Tavoitteena on selvityksen jälkeen parantaa ja yhtenäistää Active-projektin visuaalinen ilme luomalla yhtenäinen ja kulttuurisesti hyväksyttävä design management suunnitelma.

Tutkimustyön teoreettinen tausta luotiin tutkimalla design management teorioita, kulttuurierojen tutkimusta, erilaisia kulttuurilähteitä ja maakohtaista kulttuuritietoutta. Lisäksi tutkittiin suomalaisen ja japanilaisen kulttuurin maakohtaisia väriteorioita sekä erityisiä design-viitteitä. Tutkimus oli kvalitatiivinen ja empiirinen osio sisältää haastattelussa saatuja tietoja sekä projektiin liittyvän aineiston tutkimista edellä mainittujen teorioiden avulla.

Opinnäytetyön löydökset viittaavat visuaalisen viestinnän tärkeyteen erityisesti moni- ja kaksikulttuurisissa viestintätilanteissa. Tulokset näyttävät myös yhtenäistetyn visuaalisen viestintäsuunnitelman tärkeyden projektin laajemmassa tunnistamisessa.

Asiasanat: design management, visuaalinen viestintä, kulttuuri, kulttuuritutkimus, Japani, Suomi

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1 Introduction

Culture and design exists around us but the creation of design is not a simple one-time procedure as neither has been the creation of the culture it is originating from. Design and visual communication are valuable elements of each culture. Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) cultural dimensions study demonstrates each culture having its own unique aspects. Understanding foreign visual communication and foreign design requires understanding of that particular foreign culture.

Visual communication is important in all communication - especially in bi- and multicultural communication situations. The Japanese-Finnish Active project is suggested to launch a unified visual format, following the creation of a design management plan, to support the previously created theoretical and informative written materials produced for its various stakeholders and possible future investors. The initiative is to improve the understanding of the Active project in Japan and Finland without forgetting the existing cultural boundaries, which only visual format can overcome.

Visual format is an important area when Western people are communicating with Japanese audiences in Western people's languages, and not in Japanese. Visual messages can supplement verbal messages that could otherwise be difficult for the Japanese to understand in a foreign language. As a consequence to people now living in a visual age, adding visual images also improves clarity, interest, retention, and credibility. (Nishiyama 2000, 146.)

The Active project has existed approximately a decade before this thesis project was initiated. There is a large amount of created written communication to unify with this thesis' visual support. Simplifying written messages by managing and harmonizing the project's visual communication without forgetting the cultural differences of Japan and Finland can enhance the project's recognition in various ways.

1.1 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is enhancing the Active project's design management by studying cultural differences between Finnish and Japanese cultures. The topic of the study was created in cooperative discussions between the Active project's contact person and the author. Argumentation why this topic was chosen for the Active project was initiated from the interest of the author towards design management and visual communication, and from the Active project's lack of research in this area. It was applicable to narrow the scope of the study to enhancing design management based on cultural findings, and not widening the scope further although cultural findings might have permitted the widening of the scope

1.2 Choice of the Research Context

The choice of the research context is to create a design management plan for the Active project to enhance management of the project's visual image. The Active project was chosen based on its open possibilities for design management area development and visual communication development within the existing bi-cultural environment. The objective is to establish in the Active project case study that a thoroughly unified, culturally acceptable and attractive visual image provides a quality profile for a brand, company or even for a formal project such as the Active project.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to verify the current situation of Active project's visual communication area, future design management area potential, and to locate the improvement possibilities. The objective of the study is subsequently to improve and unify Active project's visual image by making a consistent, long-term, and culturally acceptable design management plan. While creating a design management plan for the Active project, the purpose is to enhance understanding and recognition of the project in both partnering countries Finland and Japan.

This thesis examines the Active project to find unique features, and main descriptive words, to later describe these with colours and with the harmonized visual format. Japanese cultural aspects related to the research are studied to find combining features with the Finnish cultural aspects to use the findings in conducting a culturally acceptable and culturally interesting design management plan. The cultural study area concentrates on cultural differences between Finnish and Japanese cultures and furthermore how these cultural differences affect the design.

The purpose is to create a practical design management enhancement plan for a bi-cultural project with new ideas concerning how to incorporate cultural knowledge to visual communication and design. The purpose is not to disregard the already created and functioning web pages: www.active-net.fi (2009) but to construct an improvement plan according to the new findings included in the complete design management plan.

1.3.1 Thesis Goals

Thesis goals are clarified as follows:

- 1) To incorporate learning experiences from Japanese and Finnish cultures and to find the most interesting aspects for the Active project
- 2) To create a culturally acceptable, up to date design management suggestion plan for the Finnish-Japanese bi-cultural Active project
- 3) To enhance recognition of the Active project in the two partnering countries by the created harmonized visual plan

Personal goals are explained as follows:

- 1) To gain deeper knowledge about design management, visual communicational aspects, and their benefits
- 2) To learn in-depth information about cultural differences and how culture affects unique visual preferences

1.4 Structure of the Study

The structure of this thesis study is visualized in Figure 1. The first section of the study is the introduction, which consists of the background information. The scope of the study, choice of the research context, purpose and structure of the study are explained in this section.

The second section of the study has focus on the theoretical background. General theory context and various studies of the topic are explained. In addition, visual demonstration of the research framework is included.

The third section of the study concentrates on the methodology of the study. The research approach and methods are explained furthermore. In addition, research reliability and validity are included in this section.

The fourth section of the study focuses on the empirical study area. Description of the empirical research and analysis are conducted in this section.

Finally, the conclusions section includes the author's findings and suggestions. Theoretical linkages and future research challenges are explained in this section.

1.5 Limitations

The initial plan was to conduct a quantitative and qualitative research from a larger group to collect opinions from the Active project's key stakeholders in Finland and in Japan with a designed questionnaire. Due to the Active project's many key stakeholders' problems in finding time, or possibly interest to answer the design management subject related questionnaire,

the research is based on written cultural information from books and articles and by interviewing Mr. Hannu Pirnes, one of the key people and initiators of the Active project. The initially sent questionnaire was electronically mailed to a large group of respondents but only two answers were returned from 30-40 intended. Due to partly quantitative questions, two answers did not produce reliable data for the research and needed to be disregarded. The explained limited amount of data from the project's various shareholders may generate a limitation to the success of the end-result.

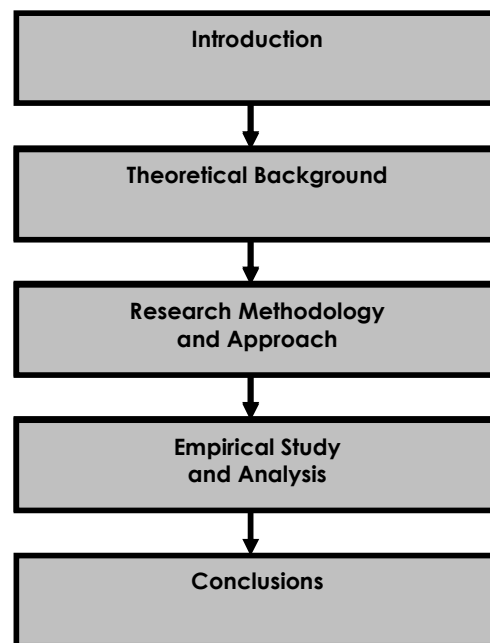


FIGURE 1: Structure of the Study

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Thesis Vocabulary

The theory of this thesis introduces design management definition, its functions and possibilities. Cultural studies are introduced and varying or unifying features are searched within both cultures. The theoretical framework is presented finally to provide a simplified format of the theoretical frame.

The vocabulary consists of culture, cultural study, design management, project image, visual communication, and visual design. The theoretical sections explain the vocabulary and the connections more profoundly.

2.2 Design Management Definition

Previously Leppänen and Ruuska (1991, 5) defined design management as a continuous development process which is initiated from the company's own aspirations, and which ensures creation of a quality image of the company and its products. The purpose was to search from the company's products, communications, and environment areas that can be combined to enhance the company image. In many ways this is still the definition but in the following more recent propositions how to define design management and how to benefit of it are explained.

Design management in its basic sense is about managing design projects. Design projects are financially covered by a business, organization or a client. The projects are carried out by a design consultancy, design team or single designer. This is the definition of design management for many people but for some others this is not a sufficient proposal for the definition. (Best 2006, 6.)

The term design management can be defined in several ways and there is no universally agreed definition. To introduce the term from one approved view the first part of the term 'design' can be seen in products, services, buildings, interiors and software processes, which can all be related to a term project. Management of the design projects is only one aspect of design management. Designing as an activity is a "user-centred, problem-solving process, which also needs to be managed and therefore is another facet of design management" (Best 2006, 12).

When design is effectively integrated with other business functions, it has a clear and positive contribution in generating a positive business development. The company's size and age and other management systems do not guarantee success and maturity in terms of design management. Therefore small companies may have highly evolved design management processes and may practise design management successfully and productively. (Jerrard, Hands & Ingram 2002, 5-6.)

In the business world many products are nearly homogenous and competition situations are more demanding, therefore the products must have a more outstanding character than before. This has caused increasing attention towards design management, the importance of quality and an aesthetically pleasant appearance. Design management enables creation of a controlled business image in the course of a systematic plan in which in harmony all parts support each other to create a consistent business image of good quality. However it is valuable to acknowledge that design management should not be considered a competition parameter over others but rather alongside others, when used in coordinated and well-

considered cooperation. “The greatest value of design management lies in its ability to create a reliable and believable picture of a firm, an image of quality - and to remain the picture also has to be a true one.” (Ahopelto 2002, 17-18.)

The most important mission of design management is to differentiate the company from the ongoing information flow and from its competitors and in addition to support the company to reach the intended customer and stakeholder segments. Corporate image is formed of four elements including product, communications, environment and behaviour of the employees. All of the four elements together communicate the corporate image to different customer and stakeholder segments and therefore they must seek towards the same direction. (Jaskari 2004, 11.)

2.2.1 Practice of Design Management

Design management is apparent across an array of selections such as fashion, software, games design, advertising, product design, architecture, media and entertainment. Within an organization design management is present in product and/or service design, brand communication, the corporate buildings, the websites, advertising campaigns and retail environments. Externally, design management can act in response to growing pressure for organizations to concentrate on regulations, government legislation, policies and changing attitudes globally to the management of local and international resources. (Best 2006, 16.)

In order to present design favourably to current and potential customers, all of the above internal and external demands need to be taken into consideration in the management of design. They need to be managed in order to maximize the time, money and resources that an organization invests in design. (Best 2006, 16.)

2.2.2 Key Categories of Design

According to Best (2006, 14) design consists of four key categories: product, environment, information and corporate identity. Design can add value to a product and therefore affect performance, profitability and gross-margin. Design-management issues may include for example product innovation, range, development and quality. Environmental fixed assets may include factories, offices and retail shops, and the furnishing and equipments within. The design of information consists of external and internal information and may include the design of advertising, sales promotion and public relations materials, design of information for managers, employees and owners. Corporate identity design outlines primarily all aspects of the first three key categories of design. The benefits of corporate identity design are difficult to

measure, but success may be seen in increase of share prices of those corporations that have adopted strong identity programs. (Best 2006, 14-15.)

2.2.3 Key Stages of a Design Process

According to Best (2006, 117) key stages of a design process figure helps a client or a shareholder to understand the whole design process and its requirements. For the design team it is a map and reminds of all the steps to be taken and also at what phase their contribution is needed. The key stages are shown below:

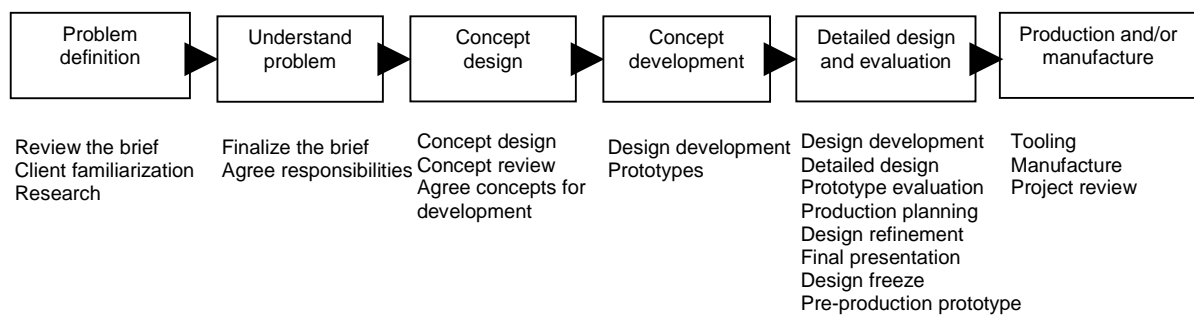


FIGURE 2: Key Stages of a Design Process (Best 2006, 117)

2.2.4 Design Management Process

The success of a design management process depends on the healthy climate of the organization in financing, marketing, communication, production and delivery. The top management must take responsibility on the company's design management and the personnel must be motivated to believe on the objectives. Finally, design management creates the representation of the company which, to succeed, must be truthful and represent quality. (Ahopelto 2002, 18.)

There are a number of areas requiring consideration before beginning the actual design project. Potential markets, suitability to the company's strategy, distribution channels, manufacturing requirements, a possible need for additional investors, existing competition, legitimacy, material choices and availability all need particular focus. (Ahopelto 2002, 79-81.)

The practical design project begins from perceiving a need and then collecting information. A thorough study and analysis beforehand will save time and money. The conclusions that are made based on this can lead to rejection or production of the idea. (Ahopelto 2002, 79-81.)

The customer is always the starting point of a design. Customer needs and preferences should guide the process because each product has a physical aspect as well as a psychological one; the customer does not evaluate the product only based on what the product is like in reality but also how the customer will perceive it to be like. The customers will have interest towards certain products based mostly on the images they have of the products instead of only their technological qualities. (Ahopelto 2002, 79-81.)

Ahopelto (2002, 82-82) visualizes design management by drawing for instance an onion (Figure 3). The onion illustrates all the elements of design management simultaneously and success is only reached when all the layers of the onion, the design management onion, are considered at all times. Peeling off a layer will not lead to success.

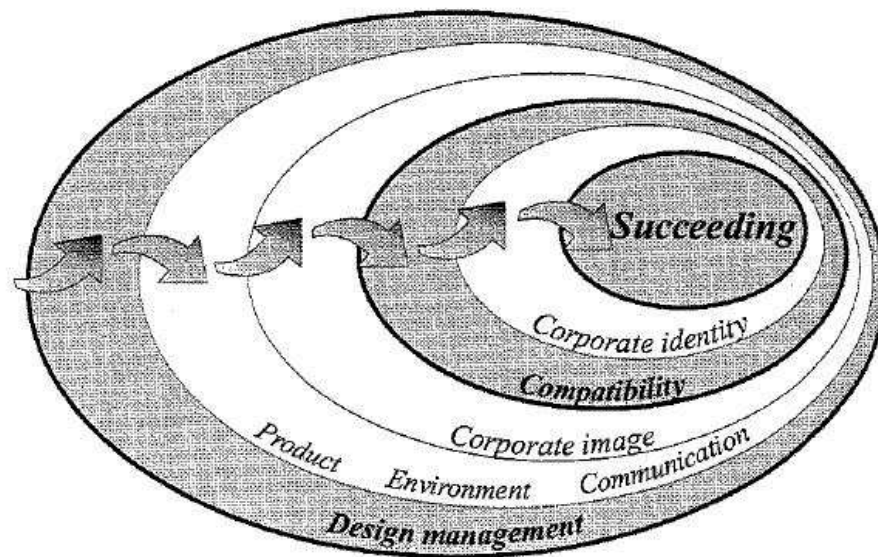


FIGURE 3: The Design Management Onion (Ahopelto 2002, 82)

Design management is almost impossible to separate from the other functions of the company as it is closely linked with many of the corporate activities. Design management harmonizes images that are generated by the messages that are directed outward from the company: products, brochures, letters, even buildings. Design is finally an area that concerns the whole organization. (Ahopelto 2002, 86-88.)

Design management has three elements; product, environment and communication according to Ahopelto (2002, 111-177). The communication, personnel, premises, products and services the company offers have to create a uniform and credible unity that will be capable to inspire target groups with confidence. Design management's objective is to connect the strategic

planning of the company with design so that the communication, environmental planning and product design can be realized supporting the corporate identity. (Ahopelto 2002, 111-112.)

Concrete product design is the most visible form of design management; it shapes the products. Ahopelto (2002, 112-115) describes the identity of the company in a spiral shape (figure 4) where the products are in the first circle, the environments where the consumers meet the organization are in the next circle and the area inside the products and corporate environments includes communication. The spiral shape reflects continuity, which is the basic demand for development and success.

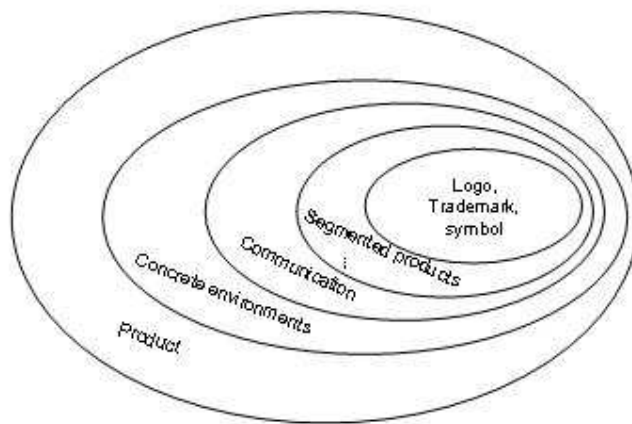


FIGURE 4: Identity spiral of a firm (Ahopelto 2002, 115)

2.3 Visual Communication and Visual Design

Words can not be defined in any other way but searching what they mean in each culture of their origin; where the word is used. Some items can be described by words, verbally, and some only visually. The existence of words depends of the culture and its history more than the existence of visually understandable descriptions. In visual communication choice of colours or different compositional structures can express the same which is expressed in language by words and clause structures. It does make a difference to express something verbally or visually. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, 2.)

Languages are subjects of control by education systems and mass media, which visual communication is less affected by. Therefore visual communication has developed more freely. The dominant visual communication is at present controlled by the global cultural and technological area of the mass media, which present ideal designers, image banks and computer imaging technology. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, 5.)

Ability to represent all ideas visually is essential to a design team. This ensures the success of a design project and the design team's capability to communicate with the client and form visual design from words. (Best 2006, 142.)

Linguistic and visual means can both be used in expressing the same communication message. Both methods can use the presence or absence of certain perspectives to guide the viewer's attention. However both styles of communication have limitations and it is significant to notice that understanding the message in different cultures depends on complicate social, political and communicative dimensions created by various origins. (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, 18-20.)

Language and visual communication are both effective communication methods. However considerations in each design case may be needed in which one is more suitable to reach the correct results - or are both methods needed simultaneously. The benefit of visual communication is that it can be interpreted without the language barrier of words and text. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 18-19) language and visual communication are different but effective ways of communication. Visual communication is not judged like language, by grammar and the meaning of words, but both visual communication and language are understood based on the interpreter's origin; the meaning of words and visual elements are created in each culture.

2.3.1 Argumentation for Visual Communication

Visual communication is critical especially in bi- or multi-cultural communication situations when strictly written communication can even fail describing the intended message (Nizhiyama 2000, 70). Nishiyama (2000, 71) explains that generally speaking, Westerners depend heavily on language symbols, and they have a tendency to forget that the meanings of words are learned and personal. In other words, they fail to identify that people attach meanings to the words they use based on their personal experience and that people can communicate with one another only to the extent that they share the same or similar experience.

2.4 Culture

The term culture refers in everyday vocabulary often to 'high culture' such as classical music, art works, human-made structures, and also to all other human creations such as fashion and local music genres (Berry, Ype, Poortinga, Seagall & Dasen 1992, 165). According to Berry et al. (1992, 165), the term culture was first used in anthropological work by Tylor in 1871, who defined it as follows: "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of soci-

ety”, Herskovits (1948) afterwards proposed a shorter definition, which became to some extent popular “Culture is the man-made part of the human environment”. Among anthropologists there is no real agreement on a single definition of culture.

To understand culture based research it is vital to note that culture is not a synonym with ‘civilization’ or ‘human society’. All human groups have specific culture; culture is the way of life the group has in common. (Berry et al. 1992, 167)

Certain patterns of thinking, feeling and acting are learned in the social environments in which one grew up and gathered life experiences. These social environments include family, neighbourhood, school, friend groups, workplace and the living community. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, 2-5) refer to the influence of these environments as “mental programming” of the mind and the customary term for such “mental software” as “culture”. Culture in the narrow sense is often considered in most Western languages meaning “civilization” or “refinement of the mind”, including education, art and literature. In the wider sense culture as “mental software” corresponds to a broader use of the word as in social anthropology culture includes all patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. Also the ordinary and menial behaviour in life are included in this definition - for instance eating, greetings, showing or not showing feelings, maintaining body hygiene, or keeping a certain physical distance from others. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 2-4.)

Culture is always learned. It does not derive from genes and is not therefore innate. Culture should also be distinguished from the individual’s personality, although the border between nature and culture or culture and personality is a matter of continuous discussion among social scientists. (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 4-5.)

2.5 Symbols, Heroes, Rituals and Values

Manifestation of culture can be explained with the following four concepts: symbols, heroes, rituals, and values. Symbols include gestures, words, pictures and symbols, or objects all of which carry a particular meaning only recognized as such by those who share the same culture. Heroes include alive or dead people who can be real or imaginary and possess characteristics that are highly valued in culture and serve as models for wanted behaviour. Rituals mean collective activities, which include for instance ways of greeting and paying respect to others, and religious and social ceremonies. However the core of culture is formed by values. Values are feelings with a negative and positive side - or can be described as broad tendencies to prefer certain situational affairs over others. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 6-8.)

According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, 7-8) values can be categorized to handle:

1. Evil versus good
2. Dirty versus clean
3. Dangerous versus safe
4. Forbidden versus permitted
5. Decent versus indecent
6. Moral versus immoral
7. Ugly versus beautiful
8. Unnatural versus natural
9. Abnormal versus normal
10. Paradoxical versus logical
11. Irrational versus rational

Humans at birth are incompletely equipped for life but their physiology provides estimated ten to twelve years receptive period during which we can quickly, and mostly unconsciously, learn all the necessary information from the surrounding environment. During this time of life humans absorb symbols (such as language), heroes (such as parents and teachers), rituals (such as toilet training and eating behaviour) and most valuably basic values (such as what is good or bad behaviour). After this ten to twelve year period humans change in principal to a more conscious way of learning. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 7-8.)

2.6 Theoretical Framework

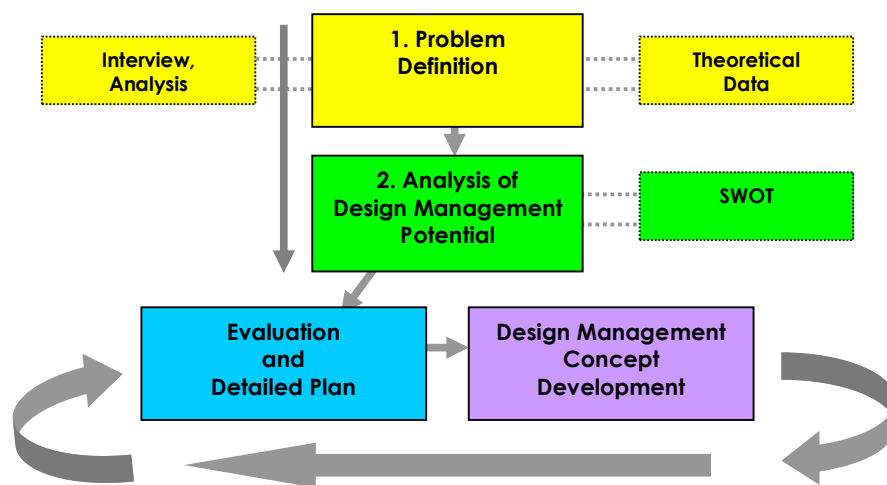


FIGURE 5: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is constructed based on the following concept: key stages of a design process (Best 2006, 117) are analyzed and restructured with findings from theoretical

background research for the thesis to create a clear, simplified framework. The result is a theoretical framework that respects commonly applied design process and this particular thesis project's requirements. Due to the open-ended nature of the Active project's design management, concept development can be followed with evaluation and a detailed plan again in the future if needed.

3 Methodology of the Study

3.1 Research Approach

The subject of the study is theoretical and descriptive in nature rather than being numerical. Therefore a qualitative research approach is used throughout the study. Qualitative research is more reliable considering the methods and material used in this particular study than would be a quantitative research approach. To conclude, one key person's interview would not deliver valid results in a quantitative research approach.

Qualitative research concentrates on the qualities a research problem might include and it searches its achievements by interpreting and seeking to understand the societal world on a micro-level. This type of technique includes observation, unstructured interviewing, and group interviewing. Quantitative research concentrates on numerical representation of observation, which can be analysed with the help of statistical analysis. (Williams 2003, 9-15.)

The main purpose of this study is to determine the current situation of Active project's design management and to locate the potential for improvements. To define the current situation and project's scope for the future the author interviewed one Finnish key person in the project, one of the project's initiators, and thoroughly familiarized with existing materials and the common features in the current use of various areas of design within the project. A variety of theoretical material was gathered to support locating the problem areas and building the suggestion plan for improvements.

3.2 Research Methods

The nature of this study is qualitative; the information was collected mainly through analysis of existing material and previous theoretical studies, observation, and an in-depth interview. Interview data was collected by electronic mail (email) interviews. Email interviews ensure the exact understanding of each answer and do not leave an error margin for misinterpreted words or meanings as might be the problem in tape-recorded interviews. The second reason for choosing email interviews was schedules; email interviews allow the respondent to answer at any convenient time after receiving the questionnaire.

Email interviews were made during early summer 2009. One of the Active project's Finnish key people and initiator, Hannu Pirnes, answered all required questions. Some secondary data was also gathered during face-to-face discussions but the primary data was collected in email interviews.

3.3 Research Reliability and Validity

Yin (2003, 109) explains that every research study should pursue a general analytic strategy: to define the priorities to be analysed and obtain the reasons (why) through diverse techniques and tools available. Research reliability and validity supports the researchers in defining if the course of study is correct and if the measures in use are consistent. A level of certainty can be obtained by drawing conclusions through valid and reliable means.

Reliability may be achieved when the same results are obtained consistently, or similar observation is reached by various observers. Reliability refers to the accuracy of the measuring instrument or process, while validity refers to the research instrument's success in measuring what it is intended to measure. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007, 149-150.) In Active project case study the same observation as the author made from the project has not been reached by various observers as at the time of research there only was one observer, the author.

3.4 Background for the Research

This thesis is based on cultural differences and the realized need to implement design management on any existing project or business. When this thesis project was initiated it was the only thesis made of the Active project's design management and in authors understanding there were no studies made of Japanese and Finnish cultures to enhance the project communication. However the project was fully made in cooperation between Finnish and Japanese project key members, which ensured the correct, non-offending, written results. The project language is English, which is not the native language of Finnish or Japanese and therefore launching design management can be understood as even more essential for this particular project.

4 Empirical Research

4.1 Description

The Active project's background-related and the Active project's design management plan-related questions leading to the design brief were conducted by interviewing the project's contact person of this study, one of the initiators of Active-project, Hannu Pirnes. Cultural

knowledge was enhanced by studying Hofstede & Hofstede's (2005 & 2010) cultural dimension theories. Furthermore Japanese cultural aspects were studied from literary sources to find combining and distinctive features with Finnish culture features. Colour theories and relevant cultural colour background information were clarified due to their perceived critical role in visual communication.

The significance of presenting the Active project more than in brief was considered unnecessary as there already are numerous previous references explaining the project. Therefore this study will not thoroughly explain the Active project's history or its entire means. However the particular knowledge of the Active project, which was considered as essential for the project's design management plan creation, has been introduced within the text.

To keep this thesis realistic in size and content, the cultural study focus is mostly limited to cultural issues related to design, therefore it is important to emphasize that the cultural studies objective was to develop the Active project's design management area. However to understand the differences in both respective cultures and how the culture affects the people, some other cultural areas are additionally explained in the study. Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) cultural dimensions research is studied from each dimensional area although some of the findings do not directly translate into design perspective they still offer critical information.

4.2 Dimensions of National Cultures

In the following research sections Geert Hofstede's study with IBM is directly referred to from its Japan and Finland country parts. The IBM study was started in 1974 when Geert Hofstede was given the opportunity to conduct a research from a large information data consisting of the values of people in more than fifty countries around the world. All of these people worked for IBM, a large multinational corporation, in its local subsidiaries. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 22-23.)

According to Geert Hofstede (2005, 23) "dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures". The dimensions illustrate differences between national cultures and in this study the dimensions are: power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and year 1980 added long-term versus short-term orientation. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 29-31.) These dimensions are visualized in figure 6 including country points from Finland and Japan, which the author has borrowed from the Dimension Data Matrix constructed by Hofstede & Hofstede (2010).

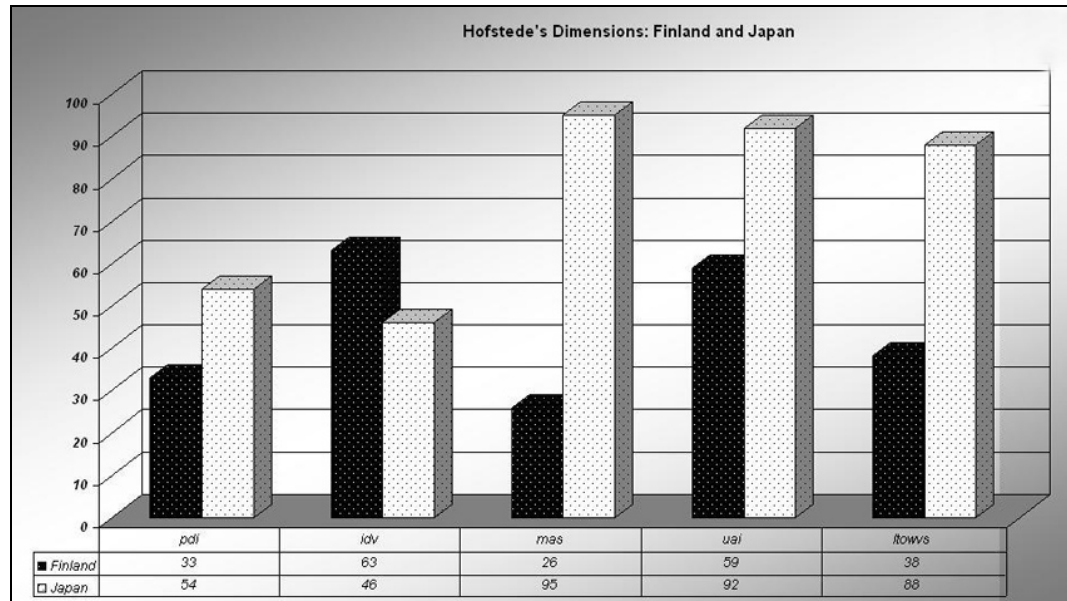


FIGURE 6: Hofstede & Hofstede's five dimensions and country scores from Finland and Japan (2010)

The following research sections purpose is to explain the differences between Finland and Japan to create a brief but whole understanding of the two different cultures. The author perceives that also basic behavioural differences can affect the preferences in design and should not therefore be fully disregarded from a cultural based design management study.

4.2.1 Power Distance

Nations can be distinguished by the way they tend to react and understand inequalities; how people experience the fact that people are unequal. Three survey items, which were most strongly related to power and (in)equality, were selected as follows:

- 1) Non-managerial employees answered on the frequency the following problem occur: "employees are being afraid to express disagreement with their managers". Points for this question were on 1 to 5 scales from "very frequently" to "very seldom".
- 2) Superiors' actual decision-making style valuated by the perception of the subordinate. The answers were used here to find either an autocratic or a paternalistic style, which were on scales including a "none of these" alternative.
- 3) Superiors' decision making style valuated by subordinates' preference. The answers were used here to find the preferred option of the autocratic, paternalistic or consultative manner. The preference was found based on the majority vote of each country's subordinates.

(Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 41-44.)

Power distance index (PDI) points tell the relationship to dependence in a country. In less points receiving power distance countries, as in Finland and Japan, there is limited dependence of subordinates on superiors. Furthermore consulting manner is preferred rather than order giving without any consultation between superior and subordinate, and emotional distance between superior and subordinate is relatively small; subordinates can approach their superiors and even contradict them. In these countries younger superiors are generally more appreciated than older ones. In the large PDI countries the situation is different and the subordinates have substantial dependence on their superiors. In those countries the subordinates and superiors have emotional distance; subordinates are unlikely to contradict their superiors and approach them directly. In these countries older superiors are more appreciated than young ones. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 45-47, 56-57)

Finland received 33 power distance index points and its placement was 66th from all of the 74 countries. Japan received 54 points and its placement was 49-50. With these points both countries were situated in the lower section of the power distance index countries. From all of the countries Austria received least points (11) and was therefore on the 74th place. Malaysia received highest points (104) and was on the 1-2 places. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 41-45.) Power distance scores for Finland and Japan are visualized in figure 7 (page 23).

In small PDI countries people read relatively many newspapers, and can discuss politics more than people from large PDI countries feel comfortable with. Confidence in newspapers is not very high. Incomes are not as unequally distributed as in large PDI countries and taxation redistributes income to make incomes after taxes more equal than in the large power distance countries. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 59-61.)

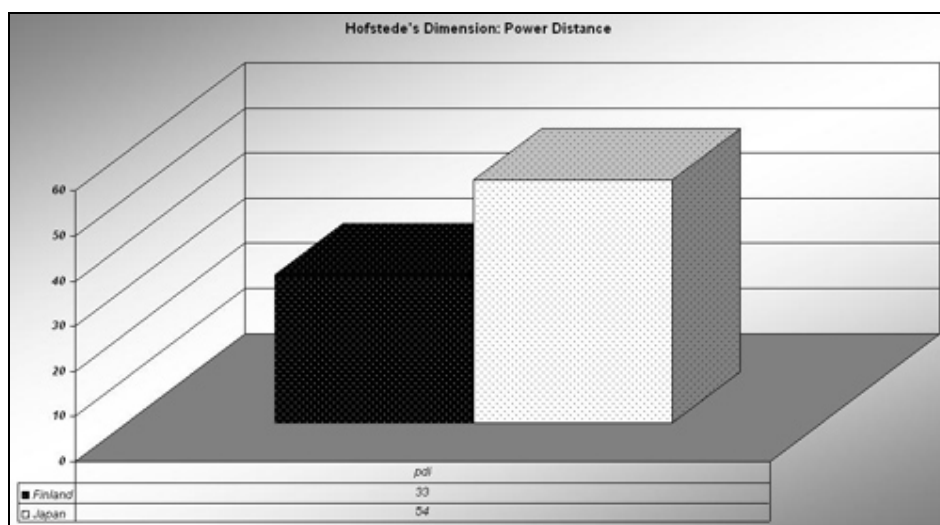


FIGURE 7: Hofstede & Hofstede's country scores in power distance from Finland and Japan (2010)

4.2.2 Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism clarifies the role of the individual versus the role of the group in different cultures. The societies in which the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual are called collectivist cultures and the majority of people world wide live in this type of societies. The following items were most strongly associated with individualism versus collectivist dimension: personal time, freedom, and challenge in individualist index - and training, physical condition, and use of skills in the collectivist index. Small points in collectivist items would mean that the country was considered individualist and high points in collectivist items would mean that the country was considered collectivist. Generally collectivist countries are poor and individualist countries tend to be rich, which can affect the value of for instance training that can be less valued in more rich (individualist) countries where training is effortlessly found. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 74-77.)

In Individualism Index (IDV) Japan received 46 points and its placements was 33-35. Finland received 63 points and its ranking was 21st. United States received the highest IDV points (91) and Guatemala received the lowest points (6) being on the 74th place from all of the included countries. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 78-79.) Individualism index points for Finland and Japan are visualized in figure 8.

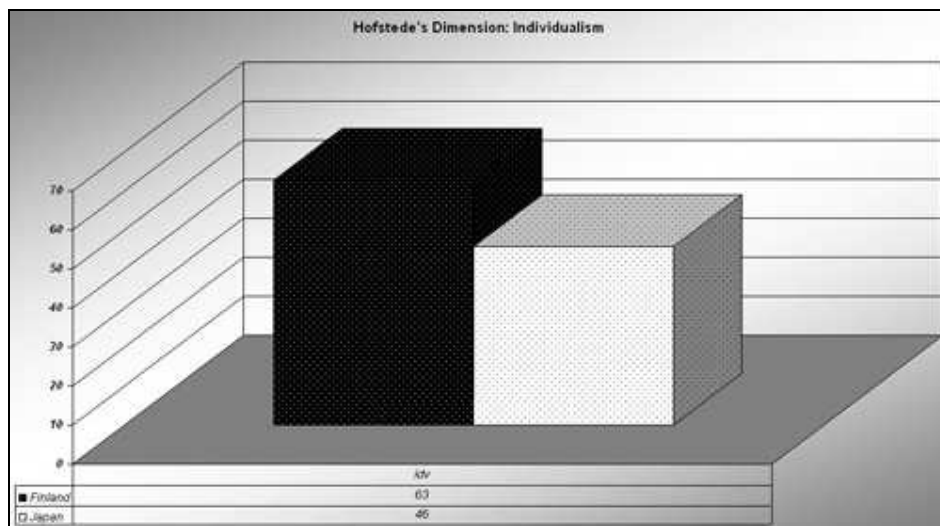


FIGURE 8: Hofstede & Hofstede's country scores in individualism index from Finland and Japan (2010)

Finland and Japan were not in the lower section of the IDV points, which indicates that an individual person or individual goals are considered somewhat more important than the group. Japan's points were smaller than Finland's indicating larger group and common values. In Finland, being 12th of 74 countries individual is considered highly important. Consequently

personal time, freedom and challenges, in which one can achieve personal accomplishments, are highly appreciated values in Finland. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 74-79.)

In highly collectivist countries the individual is responsible for the group. For instance if one member of the extended family has incomes and twenty do not, that one person with incomes is expected to share the received salary with the rest of the family in order to help to feed them. However in individualist western European countries the government contributes to the living expenses of students instead of relying only on the parent's income - and grown-up children are not commonly expected to pay their elderly parents living expenses, even when they are adults themselves, but rather the elderly parents have themselves saved money and pension for their retirement years. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 86-88.)

Differences exist as well with the writing form of pronouns between individualist and collectivist countries. Highly individualist countries in which English is the spoken language pronoun "I" is written with a capital letter in every situation, it is also common to start sentences with the emphasis on "I". In many collectivist countries "I" is often taken off from the beginning of the sentence and the use of the word is avoided. In addition "I" is not emphasized with a capital letter when used in a text context. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 92-93, 97.)

Personality and behavioural variations between individualist and collectivist countries are significant. In Individualist countries personality tests show that people receive more extrovert points, and in collectivist countries more introvert. In Individualist countries showing happiness is encouraged but showing sadness is discouraged - in collectivist countries this is the opposite as showing happiness is discouraged but showing sadness is encouraged. Even walking speed varies between individualist and collectivist countries: individual's walking speed is slower in collectivist countries and faster paced in individualist countries. Media is the key source of information in individualist countries but in collectivist countries the social network is the key source of information. Confrontations and conflicts are strictly avoided and maintaining harmony at all times is very important in collectivist countries. In individualist countries open discussion, conflicts and confrontations are welcomed in most cases and are a sign of individual strength. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 97-98.)

4.2.2.1 Individualism and Collectivism in the Future

According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, 114) there is a strong relationship between individualism and national wealth and the movement towards individualism has created fast economic development in these countries. Japan is one example and although the Japanese media emphasizes regularly the importance of traditional family solidarity, the state provisions for the elderly people have become necessary in cases where the family has stopped fulfilling

its traditional duties. However in Japan the development towards individualism has not erased all the collectivist elements of family, work spheres, and school system. The level of the capital income enables the development towards individualism and the poor countries of the world cannot become more individualists before they are wealthier - and while the gap between the rich and poor countries increases the gap between dimensions increases further. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 114.)

4.2.3 Masculinity and Femininity

Masculinity and femininity points differentiate significantly between female and male respondents in the Hofstede and Hofstede study (2005, 118-119). Only exception is the highly feminine countries. The following work goal items were most strongly associated with the masculinity versus femininity dimension: in the masculine values earnings, recognition, advancement and challenge - and in the feminine values good working relationship with one's manager, cooperation between colleagues, desirable living area for oneself and the family, and continuous employment security. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 118-119.)

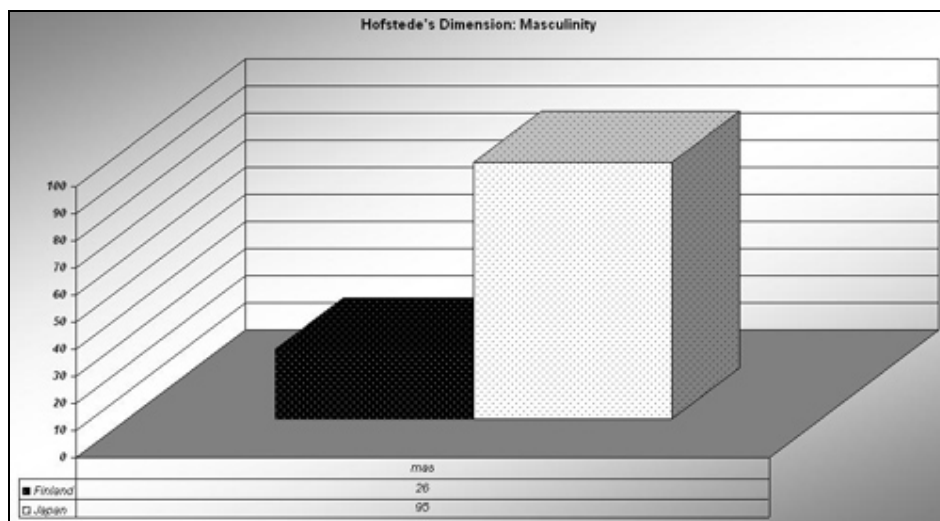


FIGURE 9: Hofstede & Hofstede's country scores in masculinity index from Finland and Japan (2010)

Unlike individualism points, which were explained previously, masculinity points are not related to the degree of economic development of a country: both rich and poor feminine, and rich and poor masculine, countries can be identified. Japan's masculinity index (MAS) points were 95 and the placement was the second from the total of 74 countries. Finland received 26 points and the placement was 68th. This was the 7th lowest from the total of 74 countries. Consequently Finland was 7th highest in the feminine points and Japan 2nd lowest in feminine points. Sweden received highest points in femininity and therefore lowest in masculinity points, and Slovakia lowest in femininity and therefore highest in masculinity points.

(Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 120-122.) Masculinity index for Finland and Japan are visualized in figure 9.

The most feminine-scoring countries, as Finland, showed little or no difference between the points of men and women respondents: both sexes expressed nurturing and gentle values. Both sexes are also allowed to cry in feminine countries, and neither sex should fight. In the most masculine countries, as Japan, men expressed to be the least nurturing and the women less nurturing than in feminine countries - although girls are allowed to cry and should never fight back when boys do not cry and should fight back each needed time. High masculine countries showed the largest gender gap in responses from all dimensions. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 125, 132.)

In masculine countries men are considered to have the most sense of responsibility, liveliness, decisiveness, and ambitiousness - while gentleness and caring are considered as female qualities only. People in the feminine countries consider all of these characteristics applying to both men and women. Masculine cultures showed double morale in the sense of expecting industriousness and chastity from women by men only, when in the feminine cultures these characteristics were expected from both sexes - or from neither - equally. In the masculine countries there was also a considerable difference between women's expectation from their boyfriends and husbands. From a boyfriend affection, intelligence, humour and personality were considered important but from a husband healthiness, wealthy life, and understanding were priorities. In the feminine countries the qualities were the same for the both - husbands should be like boyfriends. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 129-132.)

4.2.4 Avoidance of Uncertainty

The fourth dimension, uncertainty avoidance, studies "extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations". The following three items were found to strongly correlate:

1. Work stress
2. Rule orientation; agreement with the statement "Company rules should not be broken - even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest"
3. Intention to stay with the same company for a long-term career

(Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 166-167.)

In the uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) Japan's placement was 11-13th of 74 countries and the received points were 92. Finland's corresponding points were 59 and the placement was 48-49. The highest points in UAI received Greece with 112 scores, 1st placement, and lowest

UAI country was Singapore with 8 points and 74th placement. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 168-169.) Uncertainty avoidance points for Finland and Japan are visualized in figure 10 (page 28).

In high UAI countries, as Japan, difference is considered dangerous and variation from the normal is to be avoided. In lower UAI countries, as Finland, difference is considered more curious than dangerous and there is no need to strongly avoid it. The low uncertainty avoidance cultures give freer upbringing to their children, when the high uncertainty avoidance cultures have firm rules and stricter upbringing ways for their children. Lower uncertainty avoidance countries also prefer originality, when on the opposite higher uncertainty avoidance countries prefer strict assignments and one correct answer instead of broad answers and open-ended learning situations. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 174-176.)

In lower UAI countries people are happier; they have fewer worries about health and money; they are readier for risky investments and humour appeals in advertising messages. In higher UAI countries people are less happy; they have more worries about money and health; they prefer conservative investments and expertise creates more interest in advertising messages than humour. The quantity of books and magazines is larger in lower UAI countries; as in Finland compared to Japan where books and magazines offering are smaller. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 180-181.) Therefore interest towards the printed media can be concluded to be larger in countries as Finland.

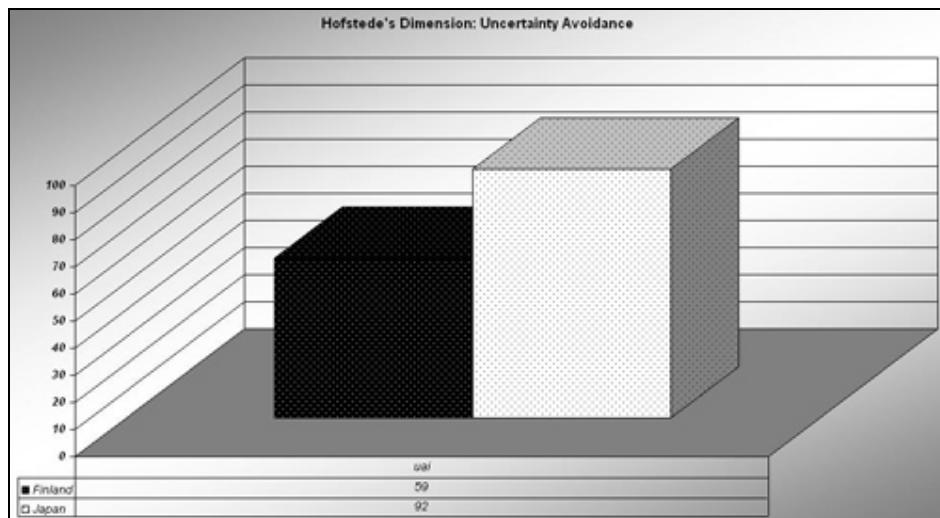


FIGURE 10: Hofstede & Hofstede's country scores in uncertainty avoidance from Finland and Japan (2010)

4.2.5 Long- and Short-Term Orientation

Long-term orientation refers to “the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards- in particular, perseverance and thrifts.” Short-term orientation, as the opposite, refers to “the fostering of virtues related to the past and present - in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of “face”, and fulfilling social obligations.” (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 210.)

In the long-term orientation index (LTO) Japan received 80 points and its place was 4-5th. Finland received 41 points and was 16th. The highest points from 39 countries received China with 118 points and 1st place. The lowest points received Pakistan with 0 points and 39th place. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 210-211.) However later the number of general country points was increased up to 93 total points when Minkov used the most recent “World Values Survey data from representative samples of national populations” (Hofstede & Hofstede 2010). This led to Finland’s country points lowering to 38 and Japan’s country points risen to 88 in the long-term orientation (Hofstede & Hofstede 2010). No other of the previous dimensional points changed for Japan or Finland. The most recent data of all five dimensions is presented in a graph in the beginning of this thesis section. Long-term orientation points for Finland and Japan are visualized in figure 11.

Finland is in the upper middle section of the LTO points meaning that Finland scored somewhat higher long-term than short-term orientation points. Japan was in the higher section of the LTO points leaving no significant sign towards the short-term orientation. Short-term orientation cultures, in which Finland had the lower middle points, expect generally efforts to produce quick results; and have social pressure toward spending. In the long-term orientation cultures, as in Japan, people prefer sustained efforts to receive slow results, and being considerate with resources rather than spending. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 211-212.)

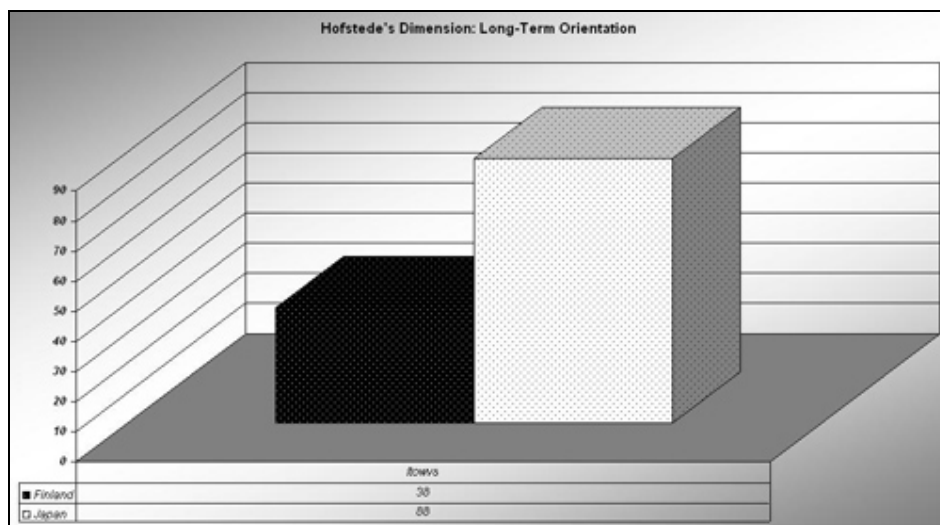


FIGURE 11: Hofstede & Hofstede’s country scores in long-term orientation from Finland and Japan (2010)

Humility and shame are seen as human virtues in high LTO countries, and on the contrary in low LTO countries these are seen as feminine features rather than general behavioural goal. In high LTO countries old age was considered to be starting earlier than in low LTO countries; but in high LTO countries people also expected to be more satisfied with their life at an elderly age. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 213-214.)

In short-term orientation (low LTO points) cultures marriage is a moral arrangement, living with in-laws is not favoured, children receive gifts for amusement and love, and should learn tolerance and respect from others, birth order is not a status matter, and success and failure is considered to follow luck. In long-term orientation (high LTO points) cultures marriage is rather a pragmatic arrangement, living with in-laws is considered to be a normal living situation, children receive gifts for education and development, and should learn how to be prudent, younger children have less status and older children in the family have authority over them, and success is attached to efforts and failure to lack of efforts. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 217.)

Short-term orientation furthermore includes values of freedom, achievements, rights, and thinking for oneself. Leisure time is considered important, and short-term profits are more important than profits 10 years from now. Long-term orientation includes values of learning, honesty, accountability, adaptiveness, and self-discipline. Leisure time is not considered important and profits 10 years from now are more important than this year's profit. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 225.)

4.3 Japanese Culture versus Finnish Culture

The Japanese have been able to develop distinctive personality traits, social skills, artistic achievements and fully their own cultural identity by concentrating on their internal resources during the long period of continued isolation imposed by the Tokugawa government. This period gave the Japanese a strong self-identity and the prolonged separation from the outside world was influential in spreading uniform cultural patterns. Currently Japanese prefer to maintain their old traditions and only include the best features of the Western world; "Japanese spirit, Western technology" is used in many multinational corporations to emphasize corporate pride and national identity. (Nishiyama 2000, 2-3.)

There is a clear separation in Finland; but there is no clear separation between private life and work life in Japan. Nishiyama (2000, 38) refers to the business behaviour by describing companies supporting employees financially and in addition satisfying the social needs and providing strong emotional support to each employee. It is common for instance in some com-

panies to provide a marriage support among fellow-workers and later if a suitable couple is found a wedding hall for the employee's wedding ceremony and reception.

The compensation scheme in Japan is distinctively different from the Finnish compensation scheme. Nishiyama (2000, 38-39) illustrates the concept of "living-wage" or "need-based-wage" in which employee's economic needs are fulfilled by a range of allowances paid in addition to the base salary - for instance housing allowance, family allowance, commuting allowance and a bonus system. The housing allowance supports living arrangements based on the employee's current position level in the company, the family allowance is paid to a married employee based on the number of children up to three or four and a nominal amount for his dependent-wife, the commuting allowance is consistent with a lifetime employment because no employee should feel pressured to change his workplace when he changes his place of residence; a worker who lives far away receives a higher allowance than his colleague who lives closer to the work address, finally Japanese bonus payments are budgeted as overhead costs for the company and the employees receive a bonus twice a year at 'Obon', the mid-summer Buddhist festival in July, and at 'Kure', the end of a calendar year in late December. According to Nishiyama (2000, 39) each bonus salary varies from two and a half months to three months of the base salary.

According to Nishiyama (2000, 19) "harmony is one of the most important Japanese cultural values". Harmony should be maintained in everyday life and also in interpersonal relationships. To Japanese it is embarrassing to have interpersonal conflicts or to show aggressiveness in any public situation. (Nishiyama 2000, 19.)

4.4 Japanese Culture in Finland

The internet, quick data transfer and a world-wide trend of Japanese popular culture have increased the interest in Japanese popular culture into a mainstream fashion in Finland. Finnish teenage girls in particular have discovered Japan and its various clothe styles. Japanese popular culture has furthermore evoked discussions about its values and the affects on teenagers in Finland. Sex and violence in Manga comics and Anime cartoons have been opposed in Finland and many Finnish people are not aware that the same features in Manga and Anime have caused disapproval also in Japan. The diversity of Japanese popular culture's values and contents is part of its fascination for Finnish people. (Valaskivi 2009.)

Since 1980 Japanese popular culture has become steadily fashionable internationally and also in Finland. Japanese aesthetics, sumo-wrestling, gardening, home decoration and pieces of art have become known in various world shows and fairs. Japan has been seen as exotic but in the same time civilized culture. The Japanese home decoration style has become fashionable

within several years in Finland and in other Western countries, and simultaneously food; particularly sushi has been a popular and fashionable delicacy. (Valaskivi. 2009.)

Finnish people have become gradually familiar with Japanese visual style in television; Maija Mehiläinen (Maija the Bee) was broadcast in Finland in 1986. Japanese language studies interest Finnish teenagers and Japanese cartoons have taught a Japanese style of drawing and telling stories. Furthermore, Japanese stories feature often female heroes, which creates interest among girls in Finland. (Valaskivi 2009.)

4.4.1 Flora and Fauna as Visual Elements in Japan

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan MOFA (2009), there are estimated 4500 native plant species in Japan. Furthermore, the most differentiating climatic features are the wide range of temperatures and significant rainfall, both of which create a suitable environment for various floras. This climate also accounts for the fact that almost 70% of Japan is covered by forest, and the foliage changes colour from season to season.

Japanese pine and cedar, called 'matsu' and 'sugi' in Japanese, are common throughout the Japanese archipelago and are very familiar to Japanese people. Pines are also considered to be holy trees. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2009.)

4.4.2 Flora and Fauna as Visual Elements in Finland

In research conducted by the Research International Finland (1994) Finnish people preferred a traditional style of design, mostly Finnish art, but also some European and Scandinavian art styles. The preferred items are natural settings (91 percent of the responses), outdoor scenes (86 percent of the responses), wild animals (51 percent of the responses), and non-religious art (56 percent of the responses). For outdoor scenes people preferred water, seas, lakes, and fall sceneries. 58 percent of the respondents thought that art should bear resemblance to reality and in cases of non-realistic visuals they should portray imaginary objects in "random uneven patterns, with soft curves, equally often in bold and playful design".

4.5 Feel Finland - Finnish Culture for the Japanese

An event called Feel Finland was launched in 2003 to bring and introduce Finnish cultural and scientific know-how to the Japanese. Feel Finland gathered together approximately 20 events, which presented Finnish design, fine and media arts, music, architecture, and for instance science and technology know-how from various areas. According to the Finnish Foreign Ministry "Japanese interest towards Finland is greater than

Finland is ready to take in” - Finland’s competitiveness, endurance from the 1990s depression, children’s high reading ability, and Finnish artists’ international success has lead to enthusiasm to learn and hear more about Finland. (Suomen Ulkoasiainministeriö 2006.)

Feel Finland event was intended to give Japanese the opportunity to experience and familiarize, ‘feel’, Finland inside Japan. Press conferences to promote the event were held in Finland and Japan, and the sponsor of the event is the president of Finland, Tarja Halonen. Together with arts, design and technology presentations, elderly care and technology were visible in the event. (Suomen Ulkoasiainministeriö 2006.)

4.6 Japanese Design

Current issues have always been a familiar theme in Japanese design. Currently ageing population of the nation and increasing environmental awareness have been factors of consideration in the contemporary Japanese society. Ecological and universal design are created to feature products that are as widely usable as possible (‘universal design’) and products that are incorporating environmental concerns (‘ecological design’). (Fukagawa 2007.)

Distinctive Japanese craft includes attention to detail, careful selection of materials, a distinctive objective in functionality, and conceptual elasticity. These factors are combined to produce environmental-friendly and at the same time user-friendly designs. Such a practical beauty has existed in Japanese design for more than a century. (Fukagawa 2007.)

Appendix 1 introduces Kanae Tsukamoto’s highly acclaimed Bitowa lacquer ware and next to the lacquer ware Chazutsu containers. Traditional Japanese skills are said to be combined with novel design techniques in the Bitowa design containers. Chazutsu containers are used for tealeaf storing. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan 2007.)

Tokujin Yoshioka’s Media Skin mobile (appendix 2) uses soft materials to assimilate to the human body. A white PANE chair (appendix 2) is part of Tokujin Yoshioka’s interior collection and a lamp from Yoshioka’s ToFU collection (appendix 3) is modern and transparent. Japanese designer Tokujin Yoshioka has gained an international reputation for originality, and experimental design. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan 2007.)

A Toyota Prius (appendix 4) is an example of environmentally concerned Japanese technology and craftsmanship. The Prius was launched in 1997 and it can use either a gasoline engine or an electric engine; and thus significantly reduce emissions of carbon dioxide. (Yamane 2007.)

4.7 Finnish Design

Finnish design is known for its pure and simplified forms and lines. Particularly 1950s Finnish design attracts design professionals world-wide but also modern Finnish design, which incorporates traditions and innovation has got international interest. (Suomalainen Design 2009.) Ecological design is made available for visitors of Finland and local Finnish people. Recycled materials are used for making design and many retailers for instance in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, sell these products. (Vastuullinen matkailu 2009.)

Alvar Aalto was a well valued Finnish designer. His traditional stool design (appendix 5), and Alvar Aalto vase design (appendix 6) are examples of a quality and traditional but yet appreciated Finnish design. During his lifetime Alvar Aalto designed furniture and interior decoration, summer houses, private houses, residential areas, industrial sites, city centers, and cultural buildings. His architectural works can be seen in Finland, Europe and in the United States. (Suomen rakennustaiteen museo 2007.)

Designer Mikko Paakkanen's chandelier called Medusa (appendix 7) is an example of a modern form and design; the form of the lamp can be changed in an instant. Designer Harri Koskinen's subwoofer (appendix 8) design is compact in size, clean and simplified, but accurate and dynamic with bass response. Both designers are young, Finnish, and represent modern design from Finland combining practicality, technology and design. The above works were presented in the 2008 Hardcore New Finnish Design Exhibition in New York. (Suppanen 2008.)

4.8 Analysis of Japanese and Finnish Design

Similarities can be seen in the attached design examples from Finland and Japan. Simplified lines and clear use of colours have attracted the respective designers. Attached Finnish design examples favour white colour, and Japanese examples white and red. Materials are similar: glass, hard plastic and porcelain - but in Finland wood is also a preferred material. Both countries have experienced an increasing interest towards ecological design factors to some extent and emphasize this information on their design-related websites.

4.9 The Meaning of Colours

Each colour has its symbolism in the minds of people in each diverse culture. When taking the form of communication, colours are powerful and irreplaceable (Lee 2008). Colours awake feelings and affect in how people perceive the intended association: colours' effects are physiological, psychological, and sociological (VanAuken 2006). The colours chosen to repre-

sent a company's brand can communicate an assortment of messages, and it has been proven that colour does impact on customers directly (Gunelius 2007).

Without considering the cultural meaning of each colour, colours have a further functional impact on the ability to attract attention, readability, eye-strain, and even the ability to be seen at night. This produces valuable information when choosing colours for website pages, signs, and various marketing media. The following list describes functional impacts of colours:

- Yellow is the most visible of all colours
- Black on yellow is the most legible of all colour combinations; the second one is green on white and red on white; many traffic signs use these colour combinations because of their easy legibility.
- Black on white is the most effortless to read on computer screens and on paper.
- Red, orange and yellow tend to make objects look closer than in reality and larger in size. They are more visible and easier to focus upon, and create excitement. These colours can also cause people to over-estimate time.
- Violet, blue and green tend to make objects look more distant and smaller in size. They are not as easy to focus upon as red, orange and yellow and they have a calming effect. These colours increase concentration but may also cause people to underestimate time.

(VanAuken 2006.)

People are comfortable when colours remind them of familiar items or situations. A soft shade of blue reminds people of the sky and it psychologically calms them down. How and why colours communicate meaning is necessary knowledge to successful designing. Occurrence of colours in nature is universal. As an example, green is the colour of vegetation and this can be considered timeless and a universal association to human beings. (Morton 2004.)

4.9.1 Research on Colour

Various researches prove that colour is meaningful and it has an essential role in people's visual experiences. The following are research revelations from various studies collected by Morton (2004).

- 1) In research made by the secretariat of the Seoul International Colour Expo 2004, 92.5 percent of respondents said that most importance is on visual factors when purchasing products. The physical feel, hear and smell were valued the most important only by less than 7 percent.
- 2) In the same research 84.7 percent of the total respondents thought that the value of colour importance when buying products accounts for more than half among the various other factors affecting choosing the product.

- 3) Research conducted by CCICOLOR, Institute for Colour Research, revealed that between 62 and 90 percent of people's judgment about a person, environment, or product is based on colour and that people's subconscious judgment of the previous is made within 90 seconds of initial viewing.
- 4) Research by the University of Loyola, Maryland, revealed that colour increases brand recognition by up to 80 percent.

Psychologists have documented that colour improves memory. Colour helps people to store and process images more effectively than fully colourless (black and white) images. As a result people will remember the item or scene better; and advertisements in colour are read up to 42 percent more often than the black and white versions of the same advertisements. (Morton 2004.)

4.9.2 Colour and Brand Identity

Colour is one of the most significant components when building brand identity. The objective of the brand identity system is to encode the brand into people's memory. Considering the visual system, the most influential components are consistent and recognizable colours and shapes. Therefore shapes should be distinctive at least within the same product category and colours within the brand. (VanAuken 2007.)

4.9.3 History of Colours in Japan

The first history of Japan written in the 6th Century was a mixture of true history and mythology. It included the four first colour terms of the Japanese language: aka (red), kuro (black), shiro (white) and ao (blue + green). Today these four colours are the ones that can have the Japanese 'ma' preposition, which means real, genuine and perfect: makka (bright red), mak-kuro (pitch-black), masshiro (pure white) and massao (sky blue). It has been discussed that at that time the words did not refer to colours but rather to two percept of ional groups: light, bright (in Japan the sun is described as red) and dark (black) as well as pure, distinct (white) and blurred but full (blue). (Hintsanen 2009.)

Seasons affect significantly in colour symbolism in Japan; as an example adult women consider it unsuitable to wear autumn colours during spring time. Nature has been the inspiration and on many occasions colours in Japan have been named after flora - in rare cases after minerals or animals. In Japan coats of arms are often decorated with flora, for instance the Emperor family's chrysanthemum, when in Western countries for instance lions and eagles have been popular. (Hintsanen 2009.)

4.9.4 History of Colours in Finland

In Finland many meanings of colours have been inherited from western cultures. Finnish people have not had a distinctively original colour culture but rather interest in certain colours has come together with primarily Western customs. (Hintsanen 2009.)

In 1931 established colour and lacquer factory Syrénin Tehtaat Osakeyhtiö's owner Otto Syrén tried in 1950 to standardize his own colour map and colour shades in Teuva into a common Finnish colour system. He did not succeed in this and the factory's activities were finished in two decades. The word colour, nowadays in Finnish 'väri', was borrowed from the Swedish word 'färg' but originally a coloured subject was described in Finnish as "hairy". For instance the colour of grass was described as hairiness of grass; in Finnish 'ruohoncarwainen'. (Hintsanen 2009.)

Research International Finland conducted a study in Finland in 1994 by interviewing 507 Finnish people via telephone. The result is mentioned to represent the Finnish population in terms of sex, age and regional distribution. The research showed that colour and design were the most important criteria for all the studied product categories when studying interest in pieces of art. 90 percent of the respondents also admitted that colours affects in their mood. The favorite colours of Finnish people were primarily blue, and secondarily brown, white and green. (Research International Finland 1994.)

4.9.5 Colour Definitions

In the following thesis sections meaning of basic colours to Japanese and Finnish people are explained further to present the various associations' that a different cultural origin creates. In some descriptions Western colour associations replace strictly Finnish and Eastern colour associations replace strictly Japanese as in those situations information was found only from West and East colour symbolism and not by individual countries. The following colour introduction will further provide details on how the main colours are perceived and provides a start for finding suitable colours for the Active project.

4.9.5.1 Green

In Japanese green is called 'midori'. It is the colour of eternal life and symbolises future, youth and energy. Green also symbolises the emperor. (Hintsanen 2009.)

According to Yu (2008, 11) green is the colour of life in Japan and in Western countries including Finland green is associated with spring, new birth, money, and even Christmas when combined with red. In Finnish green is called 'vihreä'.

4.9.5.2 White

In Japanese white is called 'shi' and 'shiro'. It is the colour of funerals as in other Eastern Asian countries. White is furthermore a colour of death, grief and purity. Women have worn kimonos with visible white silk showing from neckline and wrists to symbolise the purity of its wearer - this came into fashion in early 20th century. Traditionally Japanese women wear white kimonos when they marry and move to their husband's family. This has been considered a symbolic death. The relatives often wear a dark or black kimono in weddings. (Hintsanen 2009.)

In ancient times white was the symbol of the god of divine light. White describes everything shiny: shiraki (white tree), shirara (white blade), shiratama (white gemstone) and shiratsuyu (white baptism). In Shinto religion white is the colour of strong spirits and messages from gods. (Hintsanen 2009.)

In Finnish the colour white is called 'valkoinen'. White, together with blue, are the colours of the flag of Finland. Finnish people usually consider white together with blue as a sign of a quality product. (Hintsanen 2009.)

Nowadays in Finland white is the colour of purity and it is often used in weddings and christening occasions. However white bridal dresses were not common in Finland in the 19th century, as brides simply wore their best clothes, but came into fashion in the beginning of the 20th century. Young people participating in the confession often wear white in Finland but only half a century ago they wore black which was considered a formal and serious church ceremony colour. (Hintsanen 2009.)

According to Yu (2008, 12) a white carnation is a symbol to death in Japan but in Western countries including Finland white is the colour of brides, angels, good people, hospitals, doctors and peace - which can be symbolized in the form of a white dove.

4.9.5.3 Yellow

In Japanese yellow is called 'ki' and 'kiroi'. Yellow symbolizes aristocracy, childishness, mercy and joy. In the 1357 war every Japanese soldier wore a yellow chrysanthemum mark as a sign of courage. In Japan, as in many European languages, a novice is called a 'yellow beak' ('kuchibashi ga kiiroi'). Yellow is often attached to thinness and highness, for instance 'yellow voice' (kiiroi koe) belongs to a child or a woman. (Hintsanen 2009.)

According to Yu (2008, 13) yellow is the colour of courage in the minds of the Japanese and on the other hand in Western countries including Finland yellow is symbolized with hazards, cowardliness, weakness, but also with hope. In Finnish yellow is called 'keltainen'.

4.9.5.4 Red

In Japanese red is called 'aka' and 'akai'. The Japanese distinguish 7-10 shades of red, which are all related to different issues and feelings. Shades of red are associated with courage, happiness, energy and blessings as well as madness, stress and even danger. Red can be found from many terms, phrases and diction. The red being, in Japanese 'aka-chan', means a baby and Japanese believe that "the red thread of fate" takes a man to a certain woman. Red is the colour of extremes to Japanese: a red lie 'akauso' is a shameless lie; a red stranger 'akanotanin' is a perfect stranger; and being as "red" 'akahadaka' means being naked. The Japanese also say they turn red from anger 'makka ni natte okoru'. (Hintsanen 2009.)

In Japan funeral invitations are traditionally written on a red card. At the same time red is related strongly to femininity. In many countries the sun is drawn as yellow but in Japan it is red. The wedding dress of a bride often features red colour together with white and includes a crane symbol. Cranes are drawn with red and white colours and they symbolise vitality and wealth. (Hintsanen 2009.)

Red and white together are the colours of the Japanese flag. The flag is considered to look like a red sun on a white sky. The same colours have been used in the temple maid's clothes as they refer to divine origins. (Hintsanen 2009.)

In Finnish red is called 'punainen'. Many Finnish people consider red as very strong and unsuitable to some occasions as a colour; for instance a red bridal dress can be inappropriate to some Finnish people. Controversially red is furthermore attached to joy and therefore wearing it in the funerals is not appropriate in the minds of many in Finland when for example wearing blue in funerals is not usually offensive. (Hintsanen 2009.)

According to Yu (2008, 14) red in Eastern countries including Japan is the colour of brides, happiness and prosperity but in Western countries including Finland red is associated with danger and stop signs on roads but also with love, passion, Christmas when combined with green and excitement.

4.9.5.5 Orange

In Japanese orange is called 'daidai' and 'kin' (means also gold). Japanese associate colour orange to love. Orange is also the colour of happiness and feeling happy. (Hintsanen 2009.)

In Finnish orange is called 'oranssi'. The word is quite new although the colour has existed for a long time. 'Orange yellow' has been the descriptive word even in the mid-20th century when talking of orange in Finland. (Hintsanen 2009.)

4.9.5.6 Blue

In Japanese blue is called 'aigami' and 'ao'. Japanese associate negative emotions to blue and it is often related to criminal minds - for instance 'a bad man wears a blue hat'. When Japanese say that they are blue 'kare wa aoku natta' it means that they are pale from a shock. (Hintsanen 2009.)

Despite the negative relation blue is strongly present in Japanese culture. Indigo blue was a common colour in Japanese clothing due to the old days Japanese believed that indigo blue helps to keep the snakes away. Cobalt blue was used in ceramics and a colour called Prussian blue was popular in 'ukiyoe' wood drawings in late 19th century. The first green leaves of spring are called 'aoba' - the blue leaves. (Hintsanen 2009.)

In Finnish blue is called 'sininen'. According to Hintsanen (2009) the colour is related to nationality and also quality as in corporate and product colours in Finland. A blue colour together with white is the colour of the Finnish flag (Hintsanen 2009).

4.9.5.7 Pink

In Japanese pink is called 'momo'. Japanese relate the colour pink strongly to spring, which is the colour of blossoming cherry flowers. Pink is also a feminine colour and it does not communicate a serious approach. Furthermore, pink is related to indecency. Historically, a delicate shade of pink called 'kurenai' in Japanese was very popular in the Heian era, and normal citizens were forbidden to use it. One of the first collections of poetries in Japan (600-700 era), called 'Manyoshu', praises this colour, which strongly attracted women. (Hintsanen 2009.)

According to Yu (2008, 16) pink in Eastern countries including Japan is associated with marriage and in Western countries including Finland with especially female children and new born babies, love and Valentine's day. In Finnish pink is called 'vaaleanpunainen'.

4.9.5.8 Violet

According to Yu (2008, 17) violet is associated with wealth and self-cultivation in Eastern

countries including Japan but in Western countries including Finland with depression, sadness and a conservative nature.

In Finnish violet colour is called 'violetti'. The word was for a long time considered foreign; even after 1950 blue-red (sinipunainen) was more familiar to Finnish people than violet. Previously Finnish people called violet 'gretliini', 'kretliini', and 'kretuliini' but nowadays Finnish people do not recognize the word anymore. (Hintsanen 2009.)

4.9.5.9 Purple

In Japanese purple is called 'murasaki'. Royal purple represents power and wealth. In competitions purple has been the colour of victory and the highest division sumo-wrestlers wear violet. In Shinto temples the priests wrap the most valuable items in purple colour. (Hintsanen 2009.)

According to Yu (2008, 18) purple colour symbolizes wealth in Eastern countries including Japan and in Western countries including Finland it symbolises royalty. In Finnish purple colour is called 'purppura'.

4.9.5.10 Grey

In Japanese the colour grey is called 'mezumi' and in Finnish 'harmaa' (Hintsanen 2009). According to Yu (2008, 19) grey is the colour of aid and travel in Eastern countries including Japan but in Western countries including Finland it represents plain, sad, dull and boring associations.

4.9.5.11 Brown

In Japanese the colour brown is called 'cha', literally this means tea leaves. Tea was introduced to the Japanese during the Heian era (794-1192). However many consider a brown colour the colour of the Edo era as that is when tea became the drink of the noblemen and tea as a dye colour started to be used for instance in clothes dyeing in Japan. (Hintsanen 2009.) In Finnish the colour brown is called 'ruskea'.

4.9.5.12 Black

In Japanese the colour black is called 'kuro' and 'sumi'. Historically black was the colour of death and dullness, and even nowadays it is associated with evil. Furthermore the colour black symbolises beauty as for instance black hair (kurokami) means beauty in itself. Historically black teeth have been the sign of real beauty. (Hintsanen 2009.)

According to Yu (2008, 20) black in Eastern countries including Japan is the colour of a career and knowledge but also of evil, mourning and penance. Furthermore in Western countries including Finland black is the colour of funerals, death, and bad people and also of a rebellion.

In Finnish the colour black is called 'musta'. The same word is presented already in Henrik Florinus' Latin-Swedish-Finnish dictionary 'Nomenclatura Rerum Brevissima Latino-Sveco-Finnonica' published in 1678. Nowadays in Finland the colour black is associated with grief and funerals but also to formality as in men's formal black suits. (Hintsanen 2009.)

4.9.6 About Pantone

Pantone Inc. has been the world's colour authority for more than 45 years. It has been the inspiration of design professionals in "products, services and leading technology for the colourful exploration and expression of creativity". Pantone ensures standard language for exact colour communication thoroughly from all of the professionals using colour in their work to customers buying the end-products. "The PANTONE MATCHING SYSTEM is the definitive international reference for selecting, specifying, matching and controlling ink colours. The PANTONE FORMULA GUIDE, a three-guide set consisting of 1,114 solid PANTONE colours on coated, uncoated and matt stock, shows corresponding printing ink formulas for each colour." (Pantone Inc. 2009.)

In the following Pantone® colour selection is used to explain in theory which colour is discussed. The given colour names (definitions) may be located from Pantone's website, www.pantone.com, and other Pantone sources by the Pantone names; for instance 1 EC (cool grey).

4.9.7 Colours of Japanese and Finnish Websites

Choosing suitable colours for both Japanese and Finnish viewers' ideals, demands research on existing websites in addition to respective colour culture research. In the following thesis sections six common Japanese and Finnish websites are studied for their chosen colour information. Colour definitions are marked by using Pantone® international classification to ensure no error in the exact colour defining.

In Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (appendix 9) has chosen to use various hues of blue and dark red on the white background as the website colour. The Pantone® classifications for the colour selections are for blue hues: 285 EC, 661 EC, 2985 EC, 2728 EC, 648 EC, and for red: 485 EC. Fonts are in 2736 EC dark blue, 485 EC dark red and 426 EC dark grey. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2009.)

Web Japan (appendix 10), a website sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2009), has chosen a light yellow and white background with black, green and green-grey text fonts, together with bright red and orange leaf illustration. The Pantone® classifications for the website colour selections are for the light yellow background: 614 EC, for the green-grey font: 4515 EC, and grey font: 424 EC. Leaf illustrations are made with 484 EC red and 718 EC orange.

Japan Design Net (appendix 11), Japan's largest design portal supporting all people involved with design (Japan Design Net 2009) uses white, light green and light blue background colours for black, white, grey and light blue text fonts. The Pantone® classifications for the website colour selections are for light green: 346 EC, and light blue: 641 EC. Fonts are in 425 EC grey and 641 EC light blue.

Design Forum (appendix 12) in Finland, which provides information on recent Finnish design internationally world-wide and locally in Finland (Design Forum Finland 2009), has chosen neutral colours for the website. Background colours are white and light grey; fonts are black except for the red subtitle indication. The Pantone® classifications for the website colour selections are for background colour light grey: 2 EC, and for the red text font: 696 EC.

The Foreign Ministry of Finland (appendix 13) has used yellow, light yellow, dark blue and white as background colours, and dark blue and black fonts. The Pantone® classifications for website colour selections are for background colour yellow: 1215 EC, light yellow: 7401 EC, and dark blue text font: 2955 EC.

The Finnish Design House Idoli (appendix 14) has chosen various hues of grey as the website's background colour, and white, red and dark grey text fonts. The Pantone® classifications for the website colour selections are for grey hues: 427 EC, 5EC, 9 EC, 10 EC, 446 EC, 447 EC and 426 EC. The red font colour is 485 EC and the dark grey font is 426 EC.

As a conclusion all six websites have common features despite the country of origin being different. White and light grey are used as a majority background, yellow, blue and grey as minority background colours. Red is used for emphasis text colour or to bring colour to a website in four cases of six in total. Japanese websites combined more colours in total than the Finnish websites. Readability was common for both countries sites but Finnish sites are even further simplified than the studied Japanese sites.

4.10 Design Management Potential in Active Project

At present, the Active project does not have any functioning management for design. However managing design properly, creating and managing visual support is valuable with any ongoing business or project to ensure its success (Best 2006, 6).

This study's objective is to simplify written messages by managing the project's visuals and making them understandable and interesting to people from both partnering countries. Nishiyama (2000, 72) confirms that telling or writing something does not always guarantee the intentional message has been accurately communicated. He further explains that this can become a severe problem especially in intercultural, interpersonal communication.

Design management potential in the Active project is studied in the following to investigate the area. Examination into the potentially open-ended and continual project is described. Areas which would typically be studied in marketing audits are disregarded as unnecessary to the study. Outlines of a design management potential brief format created by Jerrard, Hands and Ingram (2002, 95-125) are studied. The included areas are described in the design management potential format (figure 12).

4.10.1 Active Project's Introduction

The Active project was launched in 2002. The Active project is a research and development project intending to develop better and more cost-effective elderly care services by combining Finnish and Japanese know-how. The reason for initiation was that societies are meeting new challenges due to rapidly aging population, which increases costs while proportional share of taxpayers is declining. Therefore there is a need to develop a new cost-effective and high-quality care service for elderly people. The Active project's objective is to bring together Finnish and Japanese know-how by exchanging results achieved in both partnering countries research studies to develop an improved and more cost-effective elderly care service. (Pirnes 2007, 10.)

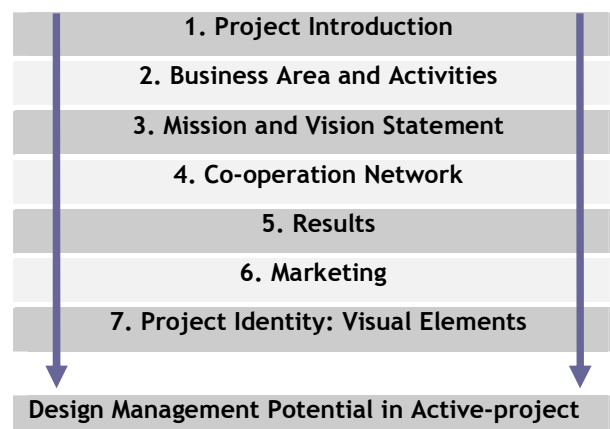


FIGURE 12: Design Management Potential Brief Format

4.10.2 Business Area and Activities

The Active project's business area is research and development of elderly care services. The project combines Finnish and Japanese expertise and shares research results achieved in both partnering countries (Pirnes 2007, 10). According to Pirnes (2009) the project probably is "the only joint Finnish-Japanese co-operation project of this kind".

4.10.3 Mission and Vision Statement

The Active project does not have a formal mission and vision statement on its current website. The mission and vision of the project was clarified by interviewing Hannu Pirnes (interview 8.6.2009) and is to become the leading project within this field.

4.10.4 Co-operation Network

The main co-operating partners in the Active project are today Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki School of Economics, Tohoku Fukushi University, City of Espoo, City of Vantaa and Tohoku Fukushi Corporation. In addition a large number of universities, research institutes and companies are co-operating with Active partners in a variety of Active sub-projects. (Pirnes 2007, 10.)

Co-operation between Finnish and Japanese partners enables finding versatile know-how and in addition offers a possibility to combine and evaluate findings. Close co-operation is also a motivating factor for all participants of the Active project according to the principles of network knowledge and strategic nets (Pirnes 2007, 10).

4.10.5 Results

Results of the Active project are presented in the following:

- 1) Scientific reporting. Key persons have published research results in the world's leading journals and conferences. The most recent research project was decided to start in autumn 2009.
- 2) Yearly seminars for Active participants and a larger yearly conference for all interested persons organized every second year in Japan and Finland.
- 3) Internally, project-based reports.

- 4) Reporting to financing organizations according to their rules.
(Pirnes 2009, interview.)

4.10.6 Marketing

The Active project is a Finnish-Japanese project and as there is no actual marketing plan (Pirnes 2009) it may be concluded that marketing is conducted in Japan and Finland in preliminary various publications and articles in the world's leading journals. These can be seen to provide information of the project. In addition seminars and a larger yearly conference (Pirnes 2009, interview) can be seen to provide visibility and a common forum for the Active project. The project is not in other ways promoted actively and it does not have a distinctive marketing budget.

In addition to the published articles, seminars and conferences, which can be seen to provide essential publicity, the main promotional channel is the website. The current www.activenet.fi website presents brief details of the project in Finnish, English and Japanese. In addition Active innovations are presented in Finnish and English, and in Finnish more brief details on ongoing projects, publications, current partners and contact details are found. (Activenet 2009.)

When using "the most popular search engine in the world, Google" (Laycock 2007), and writing the search criteria 'Active Project' to the www.google.com (accessed 2009) webpage, the first four pages appearing do not include the respective Active project. The visibility in Google is therefore poor and without knowing the Active project's website address very difficult to access. The name of the project has been commonly used among other projects and companies including welfare, beauty, software, and many other areas, when studying the Google search results in autumn 2009.

4.10.7 Project Identity: Visual Elements

The project logo is created in typeface Verdana with white font colour on the Pantone ® 8203 EC blue background. Currently all publicity-providing articles and publications do not feature the project's logo. In addition the previous are not designed with a similar font, layouts and colours to achieve a common style. The project's website features two fonts: Verdana and Times New Roman, and some publications found from the website feature also a third font: Arial.

4.11 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis can be used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a particular organization (Best 2006, 30), and in this study a project. Identifying the factors, which can or already do have an impact on the project enables developing an appropriate response to possible problems and further development of strengths (Best 2006, 30).

Positive effects	Negative effects
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

FIGURE 13: SWOT Analysis Model

4.11.1 Strengths

The Active project has a unique position as probably the only joint Finnish-Japanese co-operation project of its field. It has a close co-operation of valuable partners from both Japan and Finland. Finally the ambition to succeed and become the leading project within field is a valuable strength.

4.11.2 Weaknesses

The Active project has no functioning marketing strategy, which may be seen as a major weakness. The project has not been promoted to wider audience and does not have chosen public relations responsible. Finally there is no actual marketing budget to cover costs of more visibility.

4.11.3 Opportunities

First opportunity is to raise the profile of the project to a new level by creating a common visual style to bring all of the existing material together and enable realization of one project instead of independent research groups. Furthermore to strengthen the unit with a brand discussion and understanding of one project, which has design guidelines and rules.

4.11.4 Threats

The Active project has a common name and differentiation can produce some troubles. Not

all project personnel may see the need of improvements and feel that designing and managing a common visual style may not be needed in this kind of projects. Suggested threat of stability can be a larger threat if extended to other areas of project development.

4.12 Possibilities of the Web Pages

In nowadays world websites are a valuable source of information to a growing number of people. The amount of information on websites affects the number of people visiting the pages. The more people visit the pages the more visibility is gained. Therefore websites are suitable for both advertising, visibility, and for finding information. The more the website has interactive sections such as room for own opinions or discussions, the more actively visitors return to the website. (Pekkarinen 2001, 90-91.)

4.12.1 Active Website

The current Activenet website (appendix 15) is readable and clear but there is not a clear congruence between the different included pages. As mentioned previously, the project's website features two fonts: Verdana and Times New Roman. The background colour is white and only the logo is placed on a large coloured background box, which cannot easily be applied to other printed or electronic materials. Text fonts are in light grey, black and two hues of blue. The Pantone® classifications for Active website's colour selections are for the fonts: 5405 EC dark blue font, 307 EC light blue font, 11 EC light grey font; and for the logos the background 8203 C light blue and white text font.

To achieve a common and attractive layout; the fonts, colours, and basic layout should be unified.

4.13 Enhancing Visually the Active Project's Design Management

Based on theoretical and empirical research, there is a need for a visually functional and visually recognizable project image, which presents visual elements that transmit also project values and strategy in a culturally understandable and attractive way. All areas of the included design plan seeks to communicate internally and externally the same intended message of one, unified Active project. Enhancing the project's visual communication and management of design brings a variety of benefits, which have been described previously.

In earlier thesis sections culturally based colour findings, culturally preferred design features, the Active project's related features, and what is used in modern design in Japan and Finland are described. Appendix consists of picture material, which is included for the research's vis-

ual support. Furthermore the website examples from both countries are studied to search into culturally attractive decisions in existing websites. Based on these findings enhancing the Active project's design management includes the following areas: a renewed visual plan, its implementation plan, and future possibilities, which are explained in the following.

4.13.1 Visual Plan

The Active project's visualisation emphasizes the following project features: cleanliness, simplified, unified, bi-culturally attractive, formal yet up to date. A common text font, a logo suitable for all printed and electronic materials, colour selection, and a new slogan are all created to renew the visualization of the project. This part of the design management plan, unified visualisation, will make recognition of the Active project easier for its various audiences.

The created visual plan seeks to combine distinctive design features from both partnering country cultures, Japanese and Finnish cultures, based on the previous theoretical research summarized previously.

4.13.1.1 Text Font

Verdana is suggested as the Active project's official text font. It is featured in different forms throughout the project including the logo, the slogan, the text in all printed and electronic materials, and on the websites. Verdana is clean, easy to read for its clear letter type, and a formal typeface. Yet Verdana is versatile as can be seen in the renewed suggestion for the logo, and the Active projects website.

4.13.1.2 Colours

As indicated previously, the Active project represents real and genuine cooperation to find valuable solutions for elderly care. The previously explained Japanese 'ma' preposition represents real, genuine and perfect. Bright red (Makka), pure white (Masshiro), and pitch black (Makkuro) are all included in the colour selection suggestion. The major favourite colours of Finnish people, blue, brown, white and green (Research International Finland. 1994), were studied and white with a modern combination of blue and green (turquoise), are used in the renewed website.

According to Pantone Inc. the upcoming spring 2010 fashion colours are among others turquoise, amparo blue, and tomato purée (Pantone Inc. 2009). This confirms that turquoise is an up-to-date colour and can be used in designs searching for a modern look. The Active pro-

ject’s renewed look requires a fresh colour selection while taking into consideration traditional values.

The colour selection for the Active project would be from Pantone® colours as follows: pure white, pitch black 426 EC, light turquoise 572 EC and 7457 EC, turquoise 3262 EC, bright red 485 EC, and light grey 1 EC. A light turquoise shade 572 EC is suggested to be used in any colour demanding situation as the new main colour for the brand.

4.13.1.3 Logo and Slogan

The renewed logo features a Verdana font, with narrowed letter spacing -75. Typing “Act” in the beginning of the word “active” is emphasized by using Italic text formatting to accentuate the Active project’s ongoing research and objective in new findings and continuous improvements. Only the visual format of the logo is changed to maintain some similarity and ensure people can recognize the new logo easier also in the future.

Flora, especially flowers are favourable decorative items in Japan. Previously mentioned chrysanthemum was Emperor family’s flower and was used in the coat of arms in Japan (Hintsanen 2009). The Active project’s logo decoration, a red flower inside the letter C, originates from a simplified layout drawing of the chrysanthemum. Using the red flower inside the logo moreover distantly looks like the red round circle in the flag of Japan and respects in this way the project’s cultural cooperation and its partly Japanese origins. The renewed red logo flower resembles the previous white logo flower but is a simplified, clean, and distinctive coloured version of it.

The slogan is created to explain the nature of the Active project. The new slogan is meant to be effortlessly memorised and to affect positively on the project’s atmosphere. Two slogans were chosen to be the final two: “Finding Solutions for a Better Future” and “Acting for a Better Future”. The latter was chosen for the design plan for its short, easy to memorise, and punctual message. The Active project is acting for a better future.



FIGURE 14: Creating the Slogan and the Logo

Following the slogan creation, the dimensions of the new logo and slogan attached together were chosen based on graphic dimensions. The slogan is now written with lowercase font size equal with the height of the dot on the letter “i” in the logo; this leaves only the capital let-

ters rising above the general type height. Vertically the slogan is now finished on the same line from which the logo typing initiates, and horizontally the slogan is placed on the same line with the logo letter A's middle line. The dimensions are visible in the visualized screen shot (figure 15).

The final logo with attached slogan and finalized dimensions is clean, simple, yet well visible. It can be effortlessly attached to presentations, web pages, and various marketing material. The Active project's future might include creation of posters, informative cards, stickers and possibly giveaways and the created logo with slogan can be attached to all printed materials. The new slogan with the logo and finalized dimensions is visualized in the figure 16.



FIGURE 15: Dimensions of the Slogan and the Logo



FIGURE 16: Final Slogan and Logo

4.13.1.4 Website

The Website is a continuous marketing and information channel for the Active project and its stakeholders. At present the site should be renewed. The new suggested plan seeks to create a unified format with up-to-date colours. The renewed site would be clean, simplified and readable, and at the same time modern and attractive for both Japanese and Finnish viewers.

The clear white majority background including Pantone® colour 572 EC turquoise indicator boxes and picture boxes are suggested for the renewed Activenet Website. The logo will add additional colour to the header section, and the logo's text "Active" together with the slogan "Acting for a Better Future" would be with Pantone® colour 3262 EC darker turquoise. The bright red flower figure inside the logo's letter C would be with Pantone® colour 485 EC bright red. The same red is suggested to be used in addition to indicate each chosen content page from the page contents indicator. The general text font colour would be black for its

readability but the red font in the header section, and the footer section's www.activenet.fi (web page address) text would be with grey Pantone® colour 1 EC cool grey to allow the actual informative text to be the most visible part on each Active project's Website page. The search box would be white, the surrounding search box area light turquoise 7457 EC, and picture boxes would have cool grey 1 EC narrow lines. The renewed website suggestion is illustrated in appendix 16.

4.13.2 Implementation

Design management plan implementation is suggested to be made by including key people of the project in discussion and informative launch of the accepted plan. Various visual areas need clear communication and distribution to ensure wide usage. The new text font, colours, slogan and logo require distribution to the Website creator and to everyone creating published material for the project. Creation of a electronic design manual is suggested to be considered. Electronic information sharing is fast, effortless, and does not disappear to distance such as the geographical distance between Finland and Japan.

4.13.3 Future Possibilities

The nature of design management can be seen to require frequent supervision on various areas to ensure recognition through consistent use of agreed elements. The theoretical framework described previously in figure 5 explains the open-ended nature of the Active project's design management. The design concept development can at any time be evaluated, a concept can be developed, and followed with evaluation and detailed plan if needed. New areas of design can also be developed by using the same theoretical frame, which might be needed when new subprojects of the Active project are launched in the future.

5 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the current situation of the Active project's visual communication area, design management area potential, the project's future objectives, and visual communication improvement areas. The main objective was to enhance the Active project's design management based on the findings and related cultural research. The finalized design management plan is intended to function as guidelines for the Active project's image development. During the research the following conclusions were reached.

Based on the SWOT analysis and theoretical findings, there is a recognized need to consider the visual communication area together with the written and informative communication area. Furthermore, a common agreed visual style will support in enhancing recognition of one project instead of independent research groups. The project unit, key people and key stakeholders, can be strengthened by launching a unified project image, which includes design guidelines and rules. This is seen internally to improve understanding of one, unified project. In addition, marketing strategy development is recommended as a next step for the project.

The Active project has a unique position as probably the only joint Finnish-Japanese co-operation project of its field. This creates opportunities to promote the know-how and unique nature of the project to larger audiences. In case larger scale investors are wanted in the future, these qualities create promising opportunities. Ensuring a successful future may be a matter of considering all project areas, including smaller areas as visual communication and management of design.

This study's objective to harmonize and unify the respective research area's visual communication may be seen as the initiating step towards further improvements that have been disregarded until presently.

5.1 Managerial Implications

This study provides details on the importance of visual communication in multi- or bicultural communication situations. Furthermore it includes findings on how lack of management of design and lack of unified visual communication can be a weakness or even a threat from other areas well managed project. This study also includes theoretical suggestions how to compare different cultures, and implies how common cultural aspects may be found from two different cultures, to create a culturally acceptable design management plan for a project.

In addition to the Active project, also other bi-cultural projects may use the research results of this study in order to understand the importance of established unified visual communication and find reasons to include a budget for design management.

5.2 Future Research Challenges

This research study examined creation of a bi-culturally attractive design management plan and focused on finding information on the importance of visual communication in bi- or multicultural communications. This study did not focus on branding or marketing strategy issues because of including each area would have made the thesis extensive in size. Therefore a branding and marketing strategy development plan are suggested as future research areas.

Understanding the Active project's nature in continuous research and development, each new subproject requires a marketing plan, and management of design following the project's design management plan. Consequently future research includes a challenge in offering each new subproject an up-to-date marketing plan and concentration on correct management of design. These will offer possible topics for future researchers.

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Appendix 1 Japanese Craft



Appendix 2 Tokujin Yoshioka's Media Skin Mobile Phone and PANE Chair



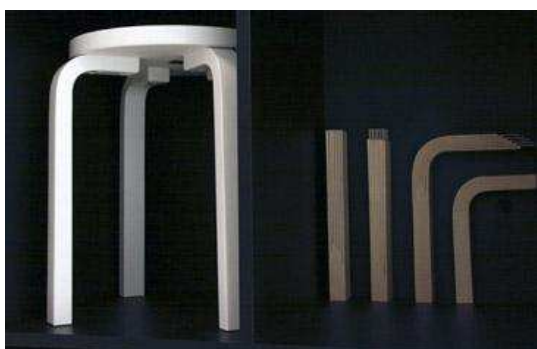
Appendix 3: Tokujin Yoshioka's Lamp from ToFU collection



Appendix 4 Toyota Prius



Appendix 5 Alvar Aalto Stool Design



Appendix 6 Alvar Aalto Vase Design



Appendix 7 Mikko Paakkanen's Chandelier "Medusa"



Appendix 8 Harri Koskinen's Subwoofer Design



Appendix 9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Website

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
外務省

skip navigations | Japanese (日本語) | Other Languages
Register Email Updates | Text Size: A
Advan

Announcement | Foreign Policy | Economic Affairs | Regional Affairs | Mofa Info | Visa | Culture | Feedback | Links



Meeting between Foreign Minister Okada and Foreign Minister McCully of New Zealand (October 28)

- Visit by Prime Minister John Key of New Zealand
- Prime Minister Hatoyama's Attendance at ASEAN-related Meetings
- Meeting between Foreign Minister Okada and US Secretary of Defense Gates
- 2nd Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit
- 2nd Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting
- G20 Pittsburgh Summit



● VISA

● Study in Japan [↗](#)

● JET Programme

● Working Holiday

● Visit Japan

● Invest Japan

● About Japan: Web Japan [↗](#)

● Japan Overview (JNTO) [↗](#)

"What's New" [More...](#)

[Press Release](#)

Appendix 10 Web Japan Website

Web Japan

■ About This Site ■ Site Map ■ Privacy Policy
» Other Languages

Search [Go!](#)

Category Search [Go!](#)

■ Content

 **Trends in Japan**
Short, engaging dispatches on the latest and hottest trends in Japan.

 **Kids Web Japan**
A cool site about Japan for kids.

■ What's New!!

Nov.05, 2009 Food 
"New addition!" Trends in Japan:
"Food & Travel - The Kanto Lantern Parade" 

Appendix 11 Japan Design Net Website

Japanese | Back Number | Site Map

JDN
JapanDesignNet

DESIGN NEWS | DESIGN EXPRESS

- Meiji University to establish world's largest manga library
- Toyota to launch Toyota brands in South Korean market
- Sarah Jessica Parker to launch signature fragrance • TV

About Japan Design Net

JDN: The Think Tank of Design

2009 11 4

Search JDN | Search inside JDN

about J.D.N. Inquiry

* = in JPN

Graduation works 2005*

NEWS*

EVENT*

PRODUCT INFO*

ICHIOSHI/COMPETE

DESIGN EXPRESS

Design Calendar*

REPORT*

ICHIOSHI! COMPE NEWS
-World Design Awards-

9th Andreu World International Design Competition 2009

→ Marking its 9th anniversary this year, the Andreu World International Design Competition is a design contest, that is organized by Spain's most renowned wooden furniture manufacturer, Andreu World. This year, the competition sought unique designs

PR

デザイン 発表UP
イカド エキス
DESIGN EVENT/ACE

Exhibition,
Seminar etc

デザイン 発表UP
イカド エキス
Competition
Information

Appendix 12 Design Forum Finland Website

DESIGN FORUM
FINLAND

Promoting design since 1875

SHOP

DESIGN FORUM FINLAND

- Design Forum Finland
- Historia
- Organisaatio

AJANKOHTAISTA

PROJEKTIT

VIESTIÄ

KILPAILUT JA PALKINNOT

HÄYTTELYT

**KAJ FRANCK -PALKITTU 2009
HANNU KÄHÖNEN**

Tämänvuotinen Kaj Franck -muotoilupalkinnon saaja on muotoilija, taiteilijaprofessori Hannu Kähkönen.

[Lehdistötiedote](#)

Appendix 13 Foreign Ministry of Finland Website

Etusivu | På svenska | In English | Sivukartta | Palaute

a a+

Kirjoita hakusana


ULKOASIAINMINISTERIO
 Merikasarmi, PL 176, 00023 Valtioneuvosto
 puh: (09) 160 05 tai 578 15
[Kaikki yhteyshiedot](#) | [Saapumisohteet](#)

[Ajankohtaista](#) | [Ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikka](#) | [Kauppapolitiikka](#) | [Kehityspolitiikka](#) | [Kansainvälinen yhteistyö](#) | [EU](#) | [Ihmisoikeudet](#) | [Maat ja alueet](#) | [Palvelut](#) | [Ministeriö](#) | [Edustustot](#)

Ministeri Värynen kannustaa järjestöjä kehitysyhteistyöhön Afganistanissa

Suomalaisten kansalaisjärjestöjen työ sai tunnustusta ja uusia ideoita ulkoministeriön puolivuositain järjestämässä seminaarissa. Valmistella olevan kansalaisjärjestölinjauksen ohella keskustelua käytiin niin Afganistanista kuin Atlantin yli ulottuvasta yhteistyöstä ja järjestöjen ilmastotyöstä.

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- Matkustaminen
- Matkustustiedotteet maittain
- Matkustustiedotteet uusimmat
- Matkapuhelinpalvelut
- Suomen kansalaisen matkustusasiakirjat
- Ulkomaalaisen maahan tuloluvat
- Rekrytointi
- Rahoitus ja tuki
- Palvelut yrityksille
- Kirjasto

Appendix 14 Design House Idoli Website

DESIGN HOUSE



IDOLI

[Etusivu](#) | [Yritys](#) | [Idolit](#) | [Palvelut](#) | [Sijainti](#) | [Palveluksessanne](#) | [Live](#) | [Kuvagalleria](#)



Finnish Design
 WILderness -näytös
 suomalainen muotoilu esittelee
 väriensä, muotoilunsa ja
 innovaationsa alkua.
 Muotoilun aika ja ajattomuus,
 ja tämä hetki kohtaavat
 erämaailuonnon.
 Täällä traditio, materiaalit ja
 erityispiirteiden kunnioitus
 peikistetty esteettisyys on
 ympäristönsä.

finnish
 design idols
 go wilderness

Appendix 15 Active Website

Active | www.activenet.fi - Windows Internet Explorer



http://www.activenet.fi/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Active | www.activenet.fi

ACTIVE

Etusivu Active-hanke Projektit Julkaisut Toimijat Yhteystiedot

Active

Suurten mahdollisuuksien hanke

Väestön ikääntyminen voi myös vauhdittaa yhteiskuntamme kehittymistä.


Active-projekti kehittää parempia ja kustannustehokkaampia vanhustaluita yhdistämällä suomalaista ja japanilaista osaamista, vaihtamalla tietoja ja kummassakin maassa saatuja tutkimustuloksia sekä toteuttamalla yhteisiä tutkimusprojekteja. Päätoimijoina Active projektissa ovat Laurea ammattikorkeakoulu, Helsingin kauppakorkeakoulu, Tohoku Fukushi yliopisto Sendaista Japanista, Espoon kaupunki, Vantaan kaupunki ja Tohoku Fukushi Corporation Sendaista Japanista.


Active vanhustalut kuuluvat hyvän elämään.


www.activenet.fi



Appendix 16 Renewed Active Website

[Frontpage](#)
[Active](#)
[Projects](#)
[Publications](#)
[Partners](#)
[Contact Us](#)


 LAUREA - AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU


 Helsingin Kauppatieteiden Akaemia
 HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS


 東北福祉大学






Active

An option that will be turned into a great opportunity

Due to a rapidly aging population we will meet new challenges in our societies. The Active-project develops better and more cost effective elderly care services by combining Finnish and Japanese know-how, by changing research results achieved in both partnering countries and by executing shared research projects. The main co-operating partners in the Active project are Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki School of Economics, Tohoku Fukushi University from Sendai, Japan, City of Espoo, City of Vantaa and Tohoku Fukushi Corporation from Sendai, Japan.

Good life can be achieved through Active elderly care.

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