Corporate Storytelling in two distinctive cultures:

The presence of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories on corporate websites of Spanish and British organizations

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Abstract

To date little research has been done on the content of corporate stories. Based on Hong, Muderrisoglu and Zinkhan (1987) it can be assumed that the content of marketing messages is influenced by the presence of emotional and rational linguistic appeals (Hong et al., 1987). The presence of these appeals in marketing messages is dependent on several cultural characteristics present in the company (Hong et al, 1987). The current study was executed to examine if this result could be generalized to corporate storytelling. In the study 61 corporate stories on the corporate websites of Spanish and British companies were analyzed. The difference between the use of emotional and rational appeals in these corporate stories was analyzed with the help of a classification system that was drawn from the classification system used in Pollay (1983). Based on this analysis it was found that there is a significant difference in the use of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories on corporate websites of Spanish and British companies. Spanish companies used significantly more emotional appeals in their corporate stories than British companies and British companies used significantly more rational appeals in their corporate stories than the Spanish companies.

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Gotham (2014) states that in recent years, as a consequence of the increased use of technology and ecommerce, the barriers of entry in the trading market have dropped significantly. As a result, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate one company from another. Nowadays using traditional marketing tools is not enough to differentiate a brand. Therefore organizations started to search for alternatives to distinguish their brand. A corporate story is one of the alternatives that can be used. Due to the implementation of corporate stories organizations can build a certain reputation and give meaning to the brand. This process is difficult to create with traditional marketing tools only (Heller, 2015; Gotham, 2014), since corporate stories are more central to the stakeholders' sense making process than traditional marketing tools. As a result, corporate stories have conquered the market as a new marketing and communication tool (Wolpert, 2015).

In a corporate story all the steps taken by the organization to reach the positionit currently holds, are conveyed (Golemanova, 2015). Alongside the formerly mentioned information, corporate stories also explain the reasoning behind the specific steps. Releasing information about the steps taken by an organization together with an explanation for undertaking them, creates knowledge about the organizations' motives, goals and raison d'être (Golemanova, 2015). This knowledge leads to a sense of understanding and sympathy among the stakeholders. The sense of understanding and connection will engage stakeholders into messages and dismantles barriers to purchase a product (Storytelling People, n.d.).

Although corporate stories are acknowledged as an upcoming marketing and communication tool, little research has been conducted on the content of corporate stories. The few studies that focused on the content of corporate stories found that when a company wants to create and shape its reputation through a corporate story, four themes need to be included; the activity theme, the benefit theme, the emotional theme and the strategy theme (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; Spear & Roper, 2013). However the style of the message told in a corporate story has not been investigated yet. Based on Hong, Muderrisoglu and Zinkhan (1987) it can be assumed that the style of the message, which is presented in the corporate story could be influenced by the cultural characteristics of the company that wrote the corporate story. More specifically, Hong et al. (1987) found that the presence of emotional and rational linguistic appeals in marketing and communication tools may differ between two distinctive cultures.

Hence, the current study will analyze the style of the message told in corporate stories of two distinctive cultures, by analyzing and comparing the presence of emotional and rational appeals.

In this case Spain and the United Kingdom were the focus of this study. Spain and the UK are the focus, since these two countries are culturally distinctive. The cultural differences between the UK and Spain influence the presence of the rational and emotional elements in texts provided in the marketing communication of the different organizations, as for example in corporate stories (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999; Mortimer & Grierson, 2010; Okazaki & Alonso, 2003).

The current study will focus only on the style of the message of corporate stories provided on corporate websites, since the number of websites present on the World Wide Web has increased over the years. Websites have become an upcoming and important communication channel, which is indicated as a highly credible resource by customers (Waller & Graves, 2004). Perceiving websites as a highly credible resource has led to customers using corporate websites for different purposes, for example to research a product or brand at their own pace and in their own time. The increased importance of the website as a communication tool has led to the focus on corporate websites alone in the current study.

The results of the current study will show British and Spanish companies, which style of the message and textual appeals are used in the corporate stories of the companies present in one of their main export markets. Furthermore, due to the results of the current study the British and Spanish companies will be more aware of the manner in which the corporate stories are used in their export markets. Additionally, they will receive more insights in what the differences and similarities are in the style of the message in these corporate stories in comparison to the style used in their own corporate stories. This new insights into the appeals used in corporate stories will increase the awareness on the differences that could be found in marketing tools used by different cultures.

Theoretical Framework

Corporate stories

In general, stories can be defined as 'series of chronologically and logically related events' (Spear & Roper, 2013, p. 492). Stories have different functions they include a reflection of the world people live in (Coonfield, 2009), allow people to remember things more easily and realize and strengthen emotional connections with the subject of the story (Hansen, 2008). This emotional connection is realized because stories can tap into personal elements of the receiver's life and give the narrator the opportunity to form a picture for the receiver which is in alignment

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with the receivers' own ideas and goals. This personal factor of stories leads to understanding and connection, which would not be achieved by simply providing facts and figures (Hansen, 2008).

Based on these different functions, stories are used as a new communication tool in the business environment, for both internal and external communication. These corporate stories are 'structured textual descriptions that communicate the essence of companies to all stakeholders and help strengthen the bonds that bind employees to the company and successfully positions the companies against rivals' (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 144). The textual realization of the corporate story consists of a description of elements of the company's motives, raison d'être and history. These elements are often displayed on a corporate website in a chronological and logical way. Every company uses these elements in a different way. The different elements used in the corporate story could be structured around certain themes that together form a starting point for the strategic positioning of the organization (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). The different elements and themes used are merged together in a plot. This plot is presented in an appealing way to the stakeholders, which makes the company more attractive and recognizable for them (Janssen, Van Dalfsen, Van Hoof & Van Vuuren, 2012).

Previous studies indicated four main themes that could be present in a corporate story and are of great importance for the strategic position of the organization; the activity theme, the benefits theme, the emotional theme and the strategy theme. The importance of the first three themes, the activity, the benefits and the emotional theme was underlined by Van Riel and Fombrun (2007). The fourth theme, the strategy theme, was found to be of importance by Spear & Roper (2013). The first theme, the activities themes is proposed to communicate the centrality of a key activity the organization is involved in. This could be done by providing for example abilities, competences and accomplishments. The activity theme is important, since it reflects the continuity and centrality of the organization (Van Riel, 2000). The second theme, the benefits theme, elaborates on the attractive out comes stakeholders can expect when being involved in the organization (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Showing the benefits of working with a specific organization and the distinctiveness of the organization in comparison to other organizations is important when a corporate story needs to be convincing (Van Riel, 2000). The third theme, the emotional theme, emphasizes the emotional bond between the stakeholders and the organization. It is proposed to elicit a personal connection with the stakeholders and add an emotional dimension to the organization (Spear & Roper, 2013). The emotional theme is important, since it creates trust in the organization and support for the organization among the stakeholders (Spear & Roper, 2013). The final theme, the strategy theme, incorporates the

organization's mission, vision and values (Spear & Roper, 2013). It is important to provide these strategic elements, because it will illustrate a synergy between the corporate strategy and the corporate brand (Suvatjis, De Chernatony & Halikias 2012).

The different functions of a corporate story

In today's market stakeholders place a higher value on the experience they get from buying a product than on the quality of the product. When a company wants to show its norms, values, and goals, displaying a slogan and explaining the qualities of the product to the stakeholders is not enough (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010) . The implementation of coherent and distinguishing corporate stories is an effective response to the experience oriented focus of the stakeholders, since corporate stories are more central to stakeholder's sense making process than traditional advertisement (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010).

There are several reasons for implementing corporate stories as a communication tool. Firstly, corporate stories facilitate relationship building between organizations and stakeholders. Stories address the emotions and values of stakeholders and link important facts of the brand to events in the stakeholders' lifes (Escalas, 1998). This leads to a better understanding of what the brand has to offer, positive emotions towards the brand and a connection with the brand (Puccinelli, Goodstein, Grewal, Price, Raghubir & Stewart, 2009). In addition corporate stories can motivate stakeholders to engage in certain activities. This is achieved by instigating an emotional connection between the stakeholders and the subject of the corporate story, the company, through the corporate story (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010).The use of corporate stories as a marketing and communication tool binds stakeholders to the organization and strengthens the bonds already present between the stakeholders and the organization.

Furthermore, a corporate story could help to accelerate the identification of stakeholders with the brand. Stakeholders attempt to map the incoming information of the story told onto stories that are already present in their memory (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & Van Riel, 2013). The mapping of information could help to demonstrate the importance of the corporate brand to the internal and external stakeholders. If the incoming information about the brand fits the stakeholders' idea about their identity, reading the corporate stories will evoke a positive attitude towards the brand and will make stakeholders more inclined to purchase products from the brand. This phenomenon could be explained by the social identity theory. This theory states that people create their identity based on the groups they are a member of. These groups are an important part of the stakeholders' self-esteem and pride. In order to increase the stakeholders'

self-image, the stakeholder enhances the status of the group he or she belongs to, whereas the status of other groups is discriminated (Tajfel, 1979). If the stakeholders could map the incoming information of the corporate story to information present in their mind that fits their personality traits, they will identify the brand as something that belongs to their group. This will enhance the status of the brand as opposed to its competitors (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

Moreover, corporate stories create a memorable message for the stakeholders in comparison to traditional marketing tools by allowing stakeholders to remember things more easily than traditional marketing tools (Forman, 2013; Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). This could happen, because the company could tap into personal elements of the stakeholders' life with the help of a corporate story, which will enhance the connection and understanding towards the company. This connection and understanding will lead to stakeholders remembering corporate stories easier than traditional advertising or other marketing tools which do not evoke this level of connection and understanding (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010).

Storytelling does not only influence the relation of the stakeholders and the organization, but also the image of the organization. Corporate stories which reveal the elements that are essential to an organization and show the elements that make an organization unique could create a strong and distinctive position for the organization. The story will give meaning to the brand, a meaning which differs from the meaning of the organization's competitors (Roper & Fill, 2012). Thus, using corporates stories as a marketing and communication tool could lead to a competitive advantage over other companies.

The use of different elements in the corporate story in a certain way could form the company's reputation. Thus the corporate story could also serve as a reputation platform (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). A reputation platform is 'the root positioning that a company adopts when it presents itself to internal and external stakeholders' (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 136). A unique reputation platform can create specific associations with the organization in the mind of the stakeholders. These specific associations make it easier to create a strong and distinctive corporate brand (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Hence when implementing a corporate story in an effective way the impression and reputation of the company could be managed (Spear & Roper, 2013).

Emotional and Rational appeals

A company needs to choose the content of a corporate story carefully, if it wants to use its corporate story to shape its reputation (Dowling, 2006). Furthermore, the style of the message used by the company will influence the responses and the attitude of the receivers towards the

company (Kotler & Keller, 2008). What style of message is used by the company is determined by the appeals used in the message (Kotler & Keller, 2008). Appeals are 'attempts to persuade someone to do something by calling on a particular principle or quality' (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). Appeals help to attract the attention of stakeholders or influence the stakeholders' feelings towards the company (Kinnear, Bernhardt, & Krentler, 1995). The appeals used in the company's messages could be classified into two main categories: rational appeals and emotional appeals (Wu & Wang, 2011).

The rational appeals focus on the logical and rational decision making of consumers. Important within these appeals is the self-interest of the stakeholders (Kotler & Armstrong, 1996). Rational appeals show for example the appealing price point of the brand or other benefits of buying the product of the brand in comparison to buying the product of the competitors of the brand (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999; Bradley, 2015). Rational appeals are perceived as informational and utilitarian (Page & Brewster, 2007). An example of a rational appeal could be found in a message of Domino's "We changed our crust, sauce and cheese and hopefully, your mind" (Lukovitz, 2010). In this slogan the word cluster "we changed" refers to the performances of the organization. Referring to the performance of the organization could be classified as a rational appeal.

The emotional appeals used by the organization generate a likeable or friendly brand in the mind of the stakeholders. These appeals associate the brand with happiness, fun, humor, power and peer popularity rather than mentioning the brand's qualities (Page & Brewster, 2007). Emotional appeals contribute to creating a strong connection between the brand and the stakeholders and stir up favorable feelings towards the brand (Fog, Budtz, Munch & Blanchette., 2010). An example is the message "There will be a seat left open, a light left on, a favorite dinner waiting, a warm bed made…because in your home, in our hearts, you've been missed. You've been needed, you've been cried for, prayed for. You are the reason we push on." (Schoultz, n.d.). The word cluster 'You've been missed, you've been needed, you've been cried for, prayed for' refers to how important the customers are for the company and how likeable they are toward the customers.

Customers process emotional and rational appeals in a different way. The processing of the different appeals could be explained by using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The ELM is based on the idea that attitudes are important, because attitudes guides people's decisions and behaviors (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979). A primary source where attitudes can result from are persuasive activities. The ELM indicates two routes of persuasive influence are present: the central route and the peripheral route. Which route people take in processing the

persuasive activities depends on the extent of being able and willing to think about the persuasive claim made (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). When people take the central route, elaboration is high. A high elaboration involves evaluation, recall and critical judgement of the receiver of the message. When the peripheral route has been taken, elaboration is low. Low elaboration means that the receiver is not guided by his or her assessment of the message, but her or she just follow the persuasive claim without evaluating or judging this claim (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The ELM could be applied to the processing of emotional and rational appeals in marketing tools. It was found that the effectiveness of the appeals was dependent on the involvement of the consumers that received the marketing message (Scheiner, 2015). If the consumers had a high involvement rational appeals seems to be more convincing and persuasive. Whereas emotional appeals were more convincing when the consumers had a low involvement (Scheiner, 2015).

'Rational' and 'Emotional' are the two main categories that could be classified, when the style of the message that the company communicate to its stakeholders through different kind of messages has been taken into account. The main categories 'Rational and 'Emotional' can be divided into different subcategories. The subcategories of the emotional and rational appeals and their characteristics can be found in Appendix B.

The presence of emotional and rational appeals in culturally distinctive marketing tools

The use of either rational appeals or emotional appeals in the message of the company is dependent on several factors. However, several studies, such as Leonidou and Leonidou (2009), Albers-Millers and Stafford (1999) and Mortimer and Grierson (2010), emphasized that the use of emotional and rational appeals was dependent on national cultural context.

The national cultural context could be identified based on the cultural dimensions of Hofstede. There are three cultural dimension that could particularly influence the presence of emotional and rational appeals in marketing communication. The first cultural dimension that needs to be taken into account when comparing the presence of emotional and rational appeals in marketing communication tools between two or more cultures, is the dimension of individualism. The cultural dimension of individualism recognizes two kind of cultures. On the one hand a culture could be individualistic, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Individualistic cultures focus on taking care of the individual and achieving individual goals (The Hofstede Centre (c), n.d.). On the other hand a culture could be collectivistic, such as Spain and Taiwan. In collectivistic cultures group identity and conformity are of great importance (Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999). These two different kind of cultures use rational

and emotional appeals in a different way. Rational appeals display the achievements, and the results that the stakeholders could receive from cooperating with the brand (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999). Whereas emotional appeals speak to the feelings of the stakeholders. Albers-Miller & Stafford (1999) and Hong et al. (1987) found that individualistic cultures have a greater preference for using rational appeals in advertising, since these appeals match the cultural characteristic of individualistic cultures more than the characteristics of the collectivistic cultures. By implementing rational appeals in the marketing communication of a company, the company adapts to the preferences of individualistic cultures. On the contrary Albers- Miller and Stafford (1999) and Hong et al. (1987) found that collectivistic cultures, such as Spain and Taiwan, have a preference for the use of emotional appeals in advertising. By implementing emotional appeals into the marketing communication of the company, the company will adapt to the needs of collectivistic cultures (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999).

The second cultural dimension that needs to be taken into account is the dimension of uncertainty avoidance. Cultures with a low level of uncertainty avoidance do not mind taking risks. Whereas, cultures with a high level of uncertainty avoidance societies do mind taking risks, and like to maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior (The Hofstede Centre (c), n.d.). Mortimer & Grierson (2010) found that the level of uncertainty avoidance present in a country could influence the use of emotional and rational appeals in marketing communication. Rational appeals are quite direct, whereas emotional appeals are less straightforward. Mortimer & Grierson (2010) found that societies that score high on uncertainty avoidance, such as Spain and France, use more emotional appeals in advertisements. The use of emotional appeals in marketing advertising could adapt to the kind of thinking in high uncertainty avoidance societies, since they are less straightforward and therefore lead to fewer risks. Societies that score low on uncertainty avoidance use more rational appeals in advertising (Mortimer & Grierson, 2010). Since these rational appeals are quite direct, which fits the cultural characteristics of a low uncertainty avoidance society, because these societies have just a few rules in their culture and do not mind taking risks (Mortimer & Grierson, 2010).

The third cultural dimension that needs to be taken into account is the dimension of power distance. Power distance refers to which degree society members accept and expect that power is distributed unequally in a society (The Hofstede Centre (c), n.d.). In societies with low power distance, such as the United Kingdom, people strive to equalize the distribution of power (The Hofstede Centre (c), n.d.). It was found that the level of emotional and rational appeals in marketing communication could be influenced by the level of power distance present in a country. Rational appeals provide the receiver of the message with informative facts about the

product, while emotional appeals elaborate more on the feelings of the receiver. Zandpour, Campos, Catalano, Chang, Cho, Hoobyar, Jiang, Lin, Madrid, Scheideler and Osborn (1994) found that the members of low power distance societies are inclined to making their decisions based on the information and evidence they receive and the reasoning they do (Zandpour et al., 1994). Therefore rational appeals will be used more often in the advertising of companies present in these societies. On the contrary, in societies with a high power distance, such as Spain, people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place, which needs no further justification (The Hofstede Centre (c), n.d.). Since justification is not relevant in these kind of societies, making decisions based on information, evidence and reasoning is less important. Therefore emotional appeals will be used more often than rational appeals in the advertising of the companies present in these societies (Zandpour et al., 1994).

Besides the three cultural dimensions of Hofstede, Hall (1976) identified another cultural difference that could influence the use of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories; the difference between high and low context cultures. Context could be defined as the directness of communication. High context cultures are cultures in which the communication is indirect, relational and intuitive (Okazaki & Alonso, 2003). Low context cultures, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, prefer direct and informative communication. The level of the context of the communication could influence the use of emotional and rational appeals. Emotional appeals are more focused on a relational bond with the stakeholders. Rational appeals are more factual oriented and have an informative character (Lin, 1993). It is assumed that high context cultures, such as Korea, China and Spain, will rely more on emotional appeals in their marketing communication (Miracle, Chang & Tyler, 1992; Cheng, 1994). These emotional appeals focus on relational and intuitive communication and thus matches the characteristics of high context culture. Rational appeals will be provided more often in the marketing communication tools of low context cultures, since rational appeals have an informative character and are direct. Being informative and direct is of great importance for low context cultures.

The current study

Corporate stories are acknowledged as an upcoming marketing and communication tool. Still little research has been done on the content of these corporate stories. The current study will investigate if the content of the corporate stories is influenced by the cultural characteristics of the company that wrote the corporate stories. Previous research have shown that the content of traditional marketing and communication tools, such as advertising, could be influenced by

different cultural characteristics. The content of the marketing and communication tools is, amongst others, dependent on the style of the message. The style of the message is formed by the use of emotional and rational appeals (Kotler & Keller, 2008). The four main cultural dimensions that could influence the use of emotional and rational appeals in traditional marketing and communication tools are individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and high versus low context (Albers- Miller & Stafford, 1999; Mortimer & Grierson, 2010; Zandpour et al. (1994); Miracle et al, 1992; Cheng, 1994). It was found that cultures which are collectivistic, have a high level of uncertainty avoidance and power distance and have a high level of context in their communication use emotional appeals most often in their traditional marketing messages, while cultures which are individualistic, have a low level of uncertainty avoidance and power distance and have a low level of context in their communication use rational appeals most often in their traditional marketing messages (Albers- Miller & Stafford, 1999; Mortimer & Grierson, 2010; Zandpour et al. (1994); Miracle et al, 1992; Cheng, 1994).

Previous research considering the influence of cultural characteristics on the content of marketing messages is particularly focused on traditional marketing messages, such as advertising. Little research has been conducted taking the modern marketing tools, such as corporate stories, into account. The current study will investigate the influence of cultural characteristics on the content of corporate stories. The cultural characteristics that will be taken into account are individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and the level of context of the communication. The influence of the cultural characteristics on the content of the message expressed in the corporate stories will be investigated by comparing the presence of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories told on corporate websites of companies in the United Kingdom and in Spain. United Kingdom and Spain are the focus since they differ on the four cultural dimensions that influence the ontent of traditional marketing messages. In addition, Spain and the UK are important trading partners. The Spanish market is the eighth largest export market for the United Kingdom (GOV.UK, 2013). In 2011 UK goods and services exported to Spain were worth 15.28 billion pounds. The United Kingdom is also an important export market for Spain. The UK belongs to the five biggest export partners of Spain (Landenweb, n.d.). Based on the literature the current study will focus on the question: What is the difference or correspondence between organizations from the United Kingdom and Spain and the presence of emotional and rational appeals in their corporate stories on their corporate websites?

Method

Research Material

Based on the idea that marketing tools differ across cultures, the current study investigated the influence of cultural factors on the presence of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories. This has been done by conducting a quantitative research in the form of a corpus analysis. A corpus analysis was used, since it is an objective and systematic tool to investigate communication content (Krieger, 2003; Saldanha, n.d.). With the help of a corpus analysis an overview of the abstract rules by which a language is governed and the relation of one language to another could be provided (Krieger, 2003; Saldanha, n.d.). Thus, a corpus analysis gives good insights in how often certain linguistic phenomena are present in one language and how this relates to the presence of this phenomena in another language (Krieger, 2003; Saldanha, n.d.). The corpus analysis was executed across corporate websites from Spanish and British organization. The 'About Us', 'History' and 'Story' sections on these websites were analyzed, since Spear and Roper (2013) found that corporate stories could be identified in these sections.

Selection of Websites

The corporate websites that were analyzed in the corpus analysis are websites from companies listed on the London Stock Exchange Market and the IBEX 35 of Madrid. The IBEX 35 of Madrid is a list of organizations in Spain that is composed two times a year. The list includes the 35 organizations that have the highest trade value in euros in Spain (Bolsa Madrid, n.d.). The 35 Spanish companies were clustered according to industry. Eight organizations belonged to the banking and financial industry, five organizations were active in the energy industry, four were involved in the media, IT and telecommunication industry, three organizations were rooted in the infrastructure industry and four were active in the constructing and engineering industry. Moreover there were organizations operating individually in an industry, such as in the insurance industry, the fashion industry, the health industry, the steel industry, the aviation industry and the retail industry. The current study included all the different industries to form a representative sample of the Spanish and British trade market, which have led to more generalizable results. The industries of the British sample were matched to the sample of the industries selected in the IBEX 35.The samples were matched to assure comparability of the different samples used. Matching the British and the Spanish companies resulted in a total sample of 70 'About Us', 'History' and 'Story' web pages of British and Spanish companies.

The organizations with the highest trade value on the stock markets were chosen, because they operate on the international market. Since the organizations are active on the international market, all organization published English versions of their corporate websites.

The current study focused on these English versions of the corporate websites exclusively. Using the English versions of the corporate websites does not need to exclude the presence of the cultural characteristics of the companies in the corporate stories. Since it is proven that language and culture are interwoven (Jiang, 2000; Aiswarya, 2015). It was stated by several social scientists that culture could not exist without a language and that simultaneously language is influenced and shaped by culture (Jiang, 2000). Language could be used as a symbolic representation of a culture, since it reflects the historical and cultural backgrounds and the ways of thinking that are present in a culture (Jiang, 2000). The connection between language and culture is also found by Zander, Mockaitis & Harzing(2011). Zander et al. (2011) found that the use of a native language when communicating did not lead to significant different utterances than the use of a foreign language, such as English (Zander et al., 2011). Using a common corporate language, such as English, will not lead to cultural accommodation or a loss of culturally diverse characteristics (Zander et al., 2011). Thus the exclusive use of English corporate stories will not influence the results found in the current study.

To guarantee that the company is not overly influenced by other cultures it was checked if the company had a headquarter in the home country, either Spain or the United Kingdom. If the headquarter was situated outside the home country the company was excluded from the research. Finally this has led to an exclusion of five Spanish companies and four British companies. Thus the final sample of corporate stories decreased to a number of 61, consisting of 31 British corporate stories and 30 Spanish corporate stories. The final sample of the companies used in the current study and the link to the corporate website from which the corporate stories were analyzed can be found in Appendix A.

Analysis of themes and appeals

The corporate stories on the corporate websites were analyzed on the presence of emotional and rational appeals. Pollay (1983) and Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) identified these emotional and rational appeals as clusters of key phrases. The current study identified and registered several words or word strings as an emotional or rational appeal when the meaning of these words or word strings could be grouped together as a cluster of a key phrase of the corporate story. The message of Virgin from 2012 could be used as an example here. In the message 'We stand for value for money, quality, innovation, fun and a sense of competitive challenge' (Virgin, 2012), the word cluster 'We stand for value for money, quality and innovation' are rational, whereas the words 'fun and a sense' are more emotionally oriented.

If several words or word strings together establish an emotional or rational concept, could be determined based on the classification system included in Appendix B. The classification system of the current study was based on the classification systems of Pollay (1983) and Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999). However, the classification system in the current study was slightly adapted to corporate stories. To adapt the classification system of Pollay (1983), to corporate stories three alterations were implemented. Firstly, some categories of the original scheme were deleted, since not all classifications of Pollay (1983) could be applied to corporate stories. For example the subcategory 'vain' described in Pollay (1983) as 'VAIN (VAIN); having a socially desirable appearance, being beautiful, pretty, handsome, being fashionable, well-groomed, tailored, graceful, glamorous.' (p. 83). This subcategory was excluded, since it was not applicable to the content of corporate stories.

Secondly, the number of key words given per category was decreased. The purpose of decreasing the number of key words was making the subcategories more to the point. An example is the rational subcategory 'productive'. In Pollay (1983) this subcategory was described as 'PRODUCTIVITY (WORK); references to achievement, accomplishment, ambition, success, careers, self-development. Being skilled, accomplished, proficient. Pulling your weight, contributing, doing your share. Examples: "Develop your potential", "Get ahead"'(p.81). After decreasing the number of key words the current study described the subcategory 'productive' as 'Word clusters that point out that the brand is productive; Achievements, accomplishments, ambitions, being successful, have certain contributes. Examples: 'Develop your potential', 'Get ahead'.

Finally, examples were included in some categories of the classification system. This was done to make the subcategories easier to understand for the coder and to show the coder how the corporate story should be analyzed. An example is the subcategory 'durable'. The subcategory 'durable' was described in Pollay (1983) as 'DURABLE (RUGGED); long-lasting, permanent, stable, enduring, strong, powerful, hearty and tough' (p.80). To make the subcategory more to the point some examples were included. After including some extra examples the current study described the subcategory 'durable' as 'Word clusters that point out that the brand is durable. Stable, powerful, strong, hearty, tough, and enduring. Examples: 'Across the ages.. .', 'No crisis over the .. years', 'No loss of profit...' . In the end changing the classification system of Pollay (1983) and Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) and adapting it to corporate stories has led to a final version of the classification system with two main categories and nineteen subcategories. The adapted classification system could be found in Appendix B.

The current study used the adapted classification system to read and analyze the 61

corporate stories of British and Spanish corporate websites. The classification system was used in the following manner: the text of the corporate story was read carefully. If any cluster of a key phrase pointed out for example the benefits for the stakeholders when collaborating with the brand, such as the qualities, values or performances of the organization. The cluster would be recognized as a rational appeal. However in the main category 'rational' different subcategories exist. Therefore the cluster would be analyzed even more carefully on its specific characteristics. For example if the cluster pointed out that the brand was useful, functional, efficient or helpful the cluster was classified as a rational appeal in the subcategory 'effective'. Only if both the main category and the subcategory in which the cluster belongs could be identified the cluster was included in the research sample. If two appeals were present in one cluster, the cluster was included in the research sample two times, both times consisting of a different appeal. For example the cluster 'Most Innovative Investment Bank', this cluster refers to the uniqueness of the company and could therefore be classified as emotional distinctive, but it also refers to the technological and innovative characteristics of the company and could therefore also be classified as rational technological. After the corporate story was analyzed on both the main categories of being rational and emotional and the subcategories of the rational and emotional appeals, the number of words and appeals used in the story as a whole were also counted and included in the data file. The number of words was counted with the help of the Windows Office Programme Word and the number of appeals was counted by hand.

Interrater reliability of emotional and rational appeals on corporate websites
The 61 corporate stories on the corporate websites of the Spanish and the British companies were analyzed by the researcher of the current study. Approximately 10% of the websites were analyzed by a second coder as well. The second coder looked at four websites from British companies and four websites from Spanish companies. The researcher and the second coder are both Master students in the field of International Business Communication with a high level of English proficiency. A second coder was appointed to raise the opportunity to compare the results of the researcher with the result of an outsider and investigate if the instrument used was reliable.

The coder was trained in what emotional and rational appeals are. Before the current study a pilot study was conducted. Based on this pilot study unclear points of the classification system were discussed. This discussion led to some slight changes in the final classification system. For example in the subcategories 'status' and 'distinctive', where some extra examples were included and some keywords were deleted to make the difference between the two

subcategories more clear. The revised and final version of the classification system could be found in Appendix B.

The results of both the researcher and the coder were compared based on a Cohen's Kappa to see if the agreement about the presence of emotional and rational appeals between the two raters was reliable. Based on Rietveld and Van Hout (1993) the interrater reliability of the variable 'appeal' could be classified as high; $\kappa = .91$, $p < .001$. The agreement about the presence of the emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories between the two raters is thus reliable (Rietveld & Van Hout, 1993).

Statistical analysis

The difference between the number of words and the number of appeals used in the corporate stories of the British and Spanish companies were analyzed with an independent samples t-test. The difference between the use of emotional or rational appeals in the corporate stories of the British and Spanish companies were analyzed with the help of a Chi Square test. The difference between the use of the nineteen subcategories of the emotional and rational appeals in the corporate stories of the British and Spanish companies were also analyzed with the help of a Chi Square test. Due to the fact that more than 20% of the frequencies of this second Chi Square test was lower than five and the minimum expected account was lower than one the second Chi Square test did not take into account the Pearson Chi Square, but the Likelihood ratio.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

To investigate the presence of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories on corporate websites from British and Spanish companies, 61 corporate stories were investigated. The 61 corporate stories could be divided in 30 corporate stories of Spanish companies and 31 corporate stories of British companies. The corporate stories on the corporate websites of the Spanish companies consisted of 3408.5 ($SD = 2169.53$) words on average, with a minimum of 660 words and a maximum of 8719 words. Taking the number of emotional and rational appeals into account, the Spanish corporate stories included 117.7 ($SD = 65.50$) appeals on average, with a minimum of 17 appeals and a maximum of 318 appeals. The corporate stories on the corporate websites of the companies in the United Kingdom consisted of 4436.5 ($SD = 3492.87$) words on average, with a minimum of 97 words and a maximum of 14781 words. The number of rational and emotional appeals present in the corporate stories on the British corporate websites was 132.3 ($SD = 95.00$), with a minimum of 4 appeals and a maximum of 351 appeals.

Difference between the number of words and the number of appeals used

An independent-samples t-test showed no significant difference between the number of words used in the corporate stories on British and Spanish corporate websites (t (59) = -1.37, p = .174). The corporate stories on British corporate websites did not use a significantly higher number of words (M = 4436.5, SD = 3492.89) than the corporate stories on Spanish corporate websites (M = 3408.5, SD = 2168.53). A second independent-samples t-test showed no significant difference between the number of appeals used in corporate stories on British and Spanish websites (t (53.4) = -.700, p = .487). The corporate stories on British corporate websites (M = 132.3, SD = 95.00) did not use a significantly higher number of appeals than the corporate stories on the Spanish corporate websites (M = 117.7, SD = 65.50).

Difference between the use of emotional and rational appeals

A Chi-square test did show a significant difference between the use of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories when considered by country ($\chi2$ (1) = 28.46, p < .001, Phi = -.061). It was found that the Spanish companies used significantly more emotional appeals in their corporate stories than the British companies (Table 1). Whereas the British companies used the rational appeals significantly more than the Spanish companies (Table 1). Within the different cultures a significant difference between the use of emotional and rational appeals was also present ($\chi2$ (1) = 28.46, p < .001, Phi = -.061). Overall the British companies used rational appeals more in their corporate stories than emotional appeals (Table 1). Spanish companies also used rational appeals significantly more than emotional appeals in their corporate stories (Table 1).

Table 1: The use of emotional and rational appeals in Spanish and British corporate stories

	Spain	UK

Rational

% Within Rational and Emotional Appeals	44	56
% Within Country	60	66

Emotional

% Within Rational and Emotional Appeals	50	50
% Within Country	40	34

Difference between the use of the emotional and rational subcategories

The emotional and rational appeals were divided into nineteen subcategories. The category of emotional appeals consisted of ten subcategories and the category of rational appeals consisted of nine subcategories. A Chi square test showed a significant difference between the use of the different subcategories of the rational and emotional appeals when considered by country (Lχ2 = 150. 91, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .139).

The subcategory 'effective' was used more often in the corporate stories of the British companies than in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies (Table 2). Frequently the subcategory 'effective' was used to refer to something that was helpful, as for example in the British word cluster 'Improving how we pool our resources has enabled us to take advantage of synergies through the sharing of ideas and collaboration from cross-functional working groups'. Efficiency was also quoted literally in some word clusters as for example in the British word cluster 'To expand the historical focus on operations to encompass efforts to drive enhanced efficiency and productivity across all business areas'.

The British companies also used the rational subcategory 'productive' more often than the Spanish companies in their corporate stories (Table 2). The subcategory 'productive' was often used to refer to accomplishments, for example when an agreement with another company has been reached, the company has acquired something or have received a certain amount of money. An example is the word cluster used in the corporate story of the British company Centrica 'has reached agreement with Hess Limited to acquire a 67 per cent interest in the

undeveloped York gas fields in the Southern North Sea for £22 million' which refers to an agreement with another company. Moreover, the subcategory 'productive' referred to the future plans of the company as for example in the word cluster 'British Gas will be rolling out smart meters to homes across Britain following today's announcement', which is also used in the corporate story of Centrica and in which the words 'will be rolling out' refers to future plans.

The subcategory 'nurtures' was also used more often in the corporate stories of the British companies than in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies (Table 2). The subcategory 'nurtures' refers to word clusters that show how the company helps their stakeholders as for example in the word clusters 'to support our customers with working capital, term loans and acquisition or project finance, and the expertise to help them raise money from the stock and bond markets' and 'helping people to fulfil their hopes and realize their ambitions.' used in the corporate story of the British company HSBC.

However, the subcategory 'modern' was used more often in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies than in the stories of the British companies (Table 2). A word cluster that was marked 'modern' is for example 'updating its organisational structure and adopting' found in the corporate story of the Spanish company Abengoa. This word cluster together with the other word clusters that were marked as 'modern' often referred to the new and contemporary characteristics of the company.

The rational subcategory 'technological' was also used more often in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies than in the ones of the British companies (Table 2). Examples of word clusters in the 'technological' subcategory used by the Spanish company Acciona are 'ACCIONA's commitment to innovation' and 'Our projects centre primarily on using technology'.

Furthermore, the emotional subcategory 'affiliation' was used more often in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies than in the British corporate stories (Table 2). An example of a word cluster marked as 'affiliation' is 'At Amadeus Ireland we take after-sales customer service and support seriously. We know that without the confidence and trust of our loyal customers,' used in the corporate story of the Spanish company Amadeus, which shows the fellowship and companionship between the company and its stakeholders and is therefore marked as 'affiliation'.

The Spanish companies also used the emotional subcategory 'community' more in comparison to the British companies. Examples of word clusters marked as 'community' are 'Taxation of our business activities contributes to the economic sustainability of the

communities where we operate' and 'Purchasing from local suppliers boosts economic development', used in the corporate story of the Spanish company Indra. These clusters show that the company contribute to the development of the community and society at large.

Moreover, the emotional subcategory 'distinctive' was used more often in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies than in the corporate stories of the British companies (Table 2). The 'distinctive' subcategory often points out that the company was the best or the first, which made the company unique. An example of such a word cluster is 'Best European utility, first Spanish Company and second of Europe', used in the corporate story of the Spanish company Iberdrola.

Finally, the Spanish companies used the emotional subcategory 'moral' more often in their corporate stories than the British companies (Table 2). The subcategory 'moral' focuses on being ethical and fair as for example in the word cluster used by the Spanish company BBVA 'Ethical behavior and personal and professional integrity as a way of understanding and developing our business'.

The use of the subcategories 'cheap', 'durable', 'independent', 'safe', 'wisdom', 'dear', 'enjoyment', 'popular', 'status' and 'traditional' did not differ significantly between the corporate stories of the Spanish and the British companies (Table 2).

Table 2: The amount of appeals used in the corporate stories of Spanish and British companies, divided in the different subcategories of the rational and emotional appeals.

Subcategory	Appeals used in the Spanish corporate stories		Appeals used in the British corporate stories	
	N	%	N	%
Rational- Cheap	1	0	0	0
Rational- Durable	182	5	246	6
Rational- Effective	130	4*	206	5*
Rational- Independent	3	0	0	0
Rational- Modern	135	4*	67	2*

Rational- Productive	1370	39*	1935	47*
Rational- Safe	119	3	146	4
Rational- Technological	129	4*	79	2*
Rational- Wisdom	44	1	33	1
Emotional- Affiliation	199	6*	163	4*
Emotional- Community	46	1	33	1
Emotional- Dear	2	0	2	0
Emotional- Distinctive	469	13*	457	11*
Emotional- Enjoyment	2	0	0	0
Emotional- Moral	242	7*	201	5*
Emotional- Nurtures	100	3*	152	4*
Emotional- Popular	1	0	0	0
Emotional- Status	327	9	379	9
Emotional- Traditional	40	1	43	1
Total	3541	100	4142	100

$* = p <.05$, percentages differ significantly from each other

Discussion

The use of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories

The results show that the Spanish companies used significantly more emotional appeals in their corporate stories than the British companies and the British companies used significantly more rational appeals in their corporate stories than the Spanish companies. This result is in line with the results of Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999), Mortimer and Grierson (2010), Zandpour et al. (1994) and Hall (1976). Spain is a country with a high level of power distance, a low level of individualism and a high level of uncertainty avoidance. Furthermore the Spanish culture

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uses high context communication. These four cultural characteristics might have led to a preference for the use of emotional appeals in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies. The United Kingdom is a country with a low level of power distance, a high level of individualism and a low level of uncertainty avoidance. Furthermore the United Kingdom uses a lower level of context in their communication. These four cultural characteristics have led to a greater preference for the use of rational appeals in the corporate stories of the British companies.

Furthermore, it was found that within both the Spanish companies and the British companies rational appeals were used more than emotional appeals. This could be explained by Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999), who found that in the advertisement of goods, rational appeals were used more by all cultures. The difference is situated in the advertisement of services, where the use of emotional or rational appeals is dependent on culture. Based on Reference for Business (2015) the companies used in the current study could be divided into 12 British companies that sell services, 12 Spanish companies that sell services, 19 British companies that sell goods and 18 Spanish companies that sell goods. The overrepresentation of companies that sell goods could be a factor that have led to a greater use of rational appeals within both the Spanish and British companies. In addition, the greater use of rational appeals in corporate stories in general may also be explained by one of the function of a corporate story. Corporate stories are important when a company wants to shape its reputation. Corporate stories reveal the elements that are essential to an organization and show the elements that make an organization unique, strong and distinctive in comparison to its competitors. The unique, strong and distinctive character of the organization will be addressed with rational appeals, since rational appeals, amongst others, include the benefits of buying the product of the brand in comparison to buying the product of the competitors of the brand. Thus rational appeals may be used more in general in corporate stories, due to the function of this medium.

The use of the different subcategories of emotional and rational appeals
The current study found some differences between the use of certain subcategories of the emotional and rational appeals in the corporate stories of British and Spanish companies. It was for example found that the subcategories 'effective' and 'productive' were used more in the British corporate stories than in the Spanish corporate stories. Based on the British and Spanish cultural characteristics this result is not surprising. The 'effective' subcategory refers to how helpful the company is on an individual level for every stakeholders. This information is important when the stakeholders need to make a decision on their own, based on information,

reasoning and evidence. The 'effective' subcategory is thus a rational subcategory that fits the individualistic and low context culture of the British companies and therefore is used more often in their corporate stories than in the stories of the Spanish companies. The subcategory 'productive' focuses on the accomplishments and the goals of the company. Focusing on achieving individual goals is a characteristic of an individualistic culture. Since the United Kingdom is an individualistic culture it is not surprising that the rational subcategory 'productive' is used more in the British corporate stories.

Another subcategory that is used more often in British corporate stories than in Spanish corporate stories is the emotional subcategory 'nurtures'. This is an unexpected results, since it was assumed that the emotional subcategories will be used more often by the Spanish companies based on their cultural characteristics. A possible explanation for this result is the excessive increase of the use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the UK (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001). CSR is a business activity related to business practices that benefit the society (Fallon, 2015). Supporting minorities in society, which is one of the characteristics of the subcategory 'nurtures', is one of these activities that benefit the society. The use of the subcategory 'nurtures' in marketing messages could be related to the corporate social responsibility activities of the company. In Spain the use of CSR has also increased, but the degree of implementation is still moderate (Mullerat, 2013). It could be that the excessive increase of the use of CSR in the UK in comparison to Spain has indirectly led to the increase of the subcategory 'nurtures' in corporate stories since these two concepts are related. This could have created the difference between the use of this subcategory in the British corporate stories and the Spanish corporate stories.

Some subcategories were used more often by the Spanish companies than by the British companies, as for example the emotional subcategory 'affiliation'. This result was expected based on the cultural characteristics of the Spanish companies. 'Affiliation' relates to conformity, feelings and the social status of the company within the society, which are important aspects of a collectivistic culture, such as Spain. Furthermore, the communication in the 'affiliation' subcategory is focused on indirect, intuitive and relational communication, which are important aspects for a high context culture, such as Spain. Since the 'affiliation' subcategory matches the cultural characteristics of Spain more than the ones of the UK, the greater preference for the subcategory 'affiliation' by the Spanish companies was expected.

Another subcategory that was used more by the Spanish companies in their corporate stories than by the British companies is the emotional subcategory 'community'. This finding was also not striking. The subcategory 'community' is focused on the well-being of the society

as a whole. This fits the collectivistic characteristics of the Spanish society. Furthermore the communication in the subcategory 'community' is focused on intuitive, relational and indirect aspects. This fits the high context culture and the high level of uncertainty avoidance in Spain. The matches between the characteristics of the Spanish culture and the subcategory 'community' has led to a greater preference for this subcategory in Spain than in the UK.

The emotional subcategory 'distinctive' was also used more often in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies than in the corporate stories of the British companies. This could be due to the fact that the subcategory 'distinctive' focuses on intuitive communication with the stakeholders, taking the feelings of the stakeholders into account. These are important aspects of communication in a high context culture, such as Spain. Therefore Spanish companies use this subcategory more than the British companies in their corporate stories.

Spanish companies also had a greater preference for the emotional subcategory 'moral' in their corporate stories than the British companies. This was an expected outcome based on the Spanish cultural characteristics. The subcategory 'moral' reflects the wellbeing of the society as a whole, which is important for Spain as a collectivistic culture. Moreover it increases the context of the story, since it reflects relational, intuitive and indirect communication, which is important for a high context culture ,such as Spain. The resemblance between the cultural characteristics of the Spanish companies and the subcategory 'moral' has led to the greater preference for the 'moral' subcategory in Spanish corporate stories than in British corporate stories.

Finally, it was striking that two rational subcategories, 'modern' and 'technological', were used more in Spanish corporate stories than in British corporate stories. Since it was expected that rational subcategories were used more in British corporate stories. An explanation for the greater use of the 'modern' subcategory could be that Spain is the fastest growing economy of this time in Europe (Mount, 2015). The economic growth forecasts have raised to respectively approximately 3% (Mount, 2015). Due to the growth of the economy it is possible to invest more and improve companies. Presenting these improvements and new products and services in the corporate stories could have led to an increase of the use of the subcategory 'modern' in the corporate stories, since this subcategory is focused on the new and improved characteristics of the company. The economy of the UK does not show the same growing pattern as the Spanish economy, since this country is more stable. Therefore it may be that the subcategory 'modern' is less relevant in the British corporate stories. The greater preference for the subcategory 'technological' in Spanish corporate stories in comparison to British corporate stories may also be explained on the basis of a development within Spanish society. Spanish

technology has made big advances in the recent decades (Kennedy, n.d.). In the recent years Spanish companies have acquired a lot of experiences in for example the areas of personalized medicines, electronic health records and renewable energy. The Spanish companies have transported these experiences to their export markets with great success (Kennedy, n.d.). These big advances in technology may have led to technology becoming more relevant in the Spanish society, which may be a reason of the greater preference for the subcategory 'technological' in the Spanish corporate stories than the British corporate stories.

The number of words used in corporate stories

The current study also found that the number of words used in the corporate stories of the British companies is comparable to the number of words used in the corporate stories of the Spanish companies. Based on Hall (1976), this finding is surprising. Hall (1976) stated that low context cultures use the minimum number of words when communicating. In these low context cultures every word used has a specific meaning. However, in high context cultures a large number of words are used when communicating (Chung, 2011). These words do not always have a specific meaning, they are used to provide the receiver of the message with some background information (Chung, 2011). Since Spain was classified as a high context culture and the United Kingdom as a low context culture it was expected that Spain would use significantly more words in their corporate stories than the United Kingdom. However, this was not the case.

The comparability of the number of words used in the corporate stories of the British companies and the Spanish companies could be explained with the help of a classification provided by Hall and Hall (1990). Hall and Hall (1990) placed ten different cultures into a low context versus high context continuum (Nishimura, Nevgi & Tella, 2009). Both the United Kingdom and Spain were placed somewhere in the middle of the continuum. The United Kingdom leaning towards the characteristics of a low context culture and Spain leaning towards the characteristics of a high context culture (Nishimura et al., 2009). Spain and the United Kingdom are thus classified as two cultures that are slightly distinctive based on the level of context present in their communication. However they do not differ as much as Japan and Germany for example, two cultures that are at both ends of the low versus high context continuum of Hall and Hall (1990). The smaller difference between the level of context in the communication of the British and Spanish culture could have contributed to the comparability of the number of words used in the corporate stories of both cultures, since both cultures do not comply entirely to the cultural characteristics of the level of context in the communication their culture is classified in. It could be that the British companies will use more words than expected

in their corporate stories and the Spanish companies will use less words than expected in their corporate stories. The differences between the number of words used by the cultural distinctive companies will therefore become smaller and more comparable.

Limitations and Future Research

Not controlling for the fact that the companies, included in the current study, provide services or goods could be seen as a limitation of the study. In Albers- Miller and Stafford (1999) it was shown that there was no difference in the use of rational appeals and emotional appeals in the advertising of the goods-providing sector between two distinctive cultures. In general rational appeals were used more than emotional appeals in the marketing messages of goods-providing companies in both cultures. However, Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) did found a significant difference in the use of rational and emotional appeals in the advertising of the service-providing sector between two distinctive cultures. These results may also be applicable to the use of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories. To control this the companies included in future research may be divided into service- providing companies and goods-providing companies besides the industries they are already clustered in in the current study. Based on this classification it could be investigated if goods-providing companies differ in their use of emotional and rational appeals in advertising in comparison to service- providing companies.

Moreover, the results of the current study were related to websites only. Although websites are an upcoming communication channel, which is indicated as a credible resource by customers (Waller & Graves, 2004), it could be that focusing on this medium alone have influenced the results found in the current study. To investigate if other mediums, such as annual reports and intranets, use the same style of message as the corporate websites further research needs to be conducted.

Additionally, the current study only focused on the British and Spanish culture. However, it could be that other cultures, such as cultures outside Europe, use corporate stories and the style of the message provided in a corporate story, in a different manner. Moreover, further research needs to be conducted to investigate if the results found in the current study could be generalized to other cultures outside Europe. Specifically, cultures which also differ significantly on the level of individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and the level of context in communication.

Finally, the current study only took the content of the corporate stories into account. It could also be interesting to investigate the response of the stakeholders towards the different

appeals used, to see if the appeals used by the company also attract customers besides the fact that they match the cultural characteristics of a company. Maybe the customer do not prefer every subcategory as much as another subcategory. Obtaining insights into the preference of customers for the different subcategories could lead to more effective corporate storytelling.

Conclusion

The current study has investigated if there is a difference between the use of emotional and rational appeals in corporate storytelling on the corporate websites of British and Spanish companies. To investigate this difference 61 corporate stories on corporate websites were analyzed based on a classification system that could be found in Appendix B. The results of this analysis have shown that there is a difference between the use of emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories on the corporate websites of British and Spanish companies. It was found that the Spanish companies used significantly more emotional appeals in their corporate stories than British companies, while British companies used significantly more rational appeals in their corporate stories than Spanish companies. The difference between the preference for emotional or rational appeals in the corporate stories of British and Spanish companies resulted from the differences on the cultural dimensions of individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and the level of context present in the communication. The results of the current study show that the results found in Albers-Miller & Stafford (1999), Mortimer and Grierson (2010), Zandpour et al. (1994) and Hall (1976) are not only applicable to the messages told in advertising, but could also be generalized to other marketing and communication tools, such as corporate storytelling.

The results of the current study will increase the awareness of marketing and communication managers of the different use of marketing and communication tools in culturally distinctive export markets. Based on the results of the current study British and Spanish marketing and communication managers will receive new insights in which style of message and textual appeals are used in the corporate stories of the companies present in one of their main export markets. Furthermore, due to these results the British and Spanish companies will be more aware of the manner in which the corporate stories are used in their export markets and what the differences and similarities are in the style of the message in these corporate stories in comparison to the style used in their own corporate stories.

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Appendix A

List of companies which were included in the current research sample

Spanish Companies:

1. Abengoa

    http://www.abengoa.com/web/en/compania/nuestra_historia/

2. Abertis

    http://www.abertis.com/historical-background/var/lang/en/idm/331

3. Acciona

    http://www.acciona-energia.com/about_us.asp

4. Banco Popular

    http://www.grupobancopopular.com/EN/ABOUTBANCOPOPULAR/Paginas/inicio.a
    spx

5. Banco Sabadell

    https://www.grupbancsabadell.com/en/XTD/INDEX/?url=/en/GRUPO/HISTORIA/?
    menuid=9617&language=en

6. Amadeus

    http://www.amadeus.com/web/amadeus/en_GB-GB/Amadeus-Home/About-us/Our-
    history/1319477449869-Page-AMAD_DetailPpal

7. Gamesa

    http://www.gamesacorp.com/en/gamesaen/

8. Indra

    http://www.indracompany.com/en/sobre-indra/compania-global-de-ti

9. Iberdrola

    http://www.iberdrola.es/about-us/a-great-company/

10. Santander

    http://www.santander.com/csgs/Satellite/CFWCSancomQP01/en_GB/Corporate/Abou
    t-The-Group/Corporate-culture.html?wpid=1278701177014#

11. Bankia

    http://www.bankia.com/en/who-we-are/about-us/key-figures/

12. BBVA

    http://www.bbva.com/TLBB/tlbb/ing/informacion-
    corporativa/conozcanos/historia/index.jsp

13. BME

   https://www.bolsasymercados.es/ing/home.htm

14. Caixa Bank

   http://www.caixabank.com/informacioncorporativa/quienessomos_en.html

15. DIA

   http://www.diacorporate.com/en/company/history/

16. Grifols

   http://www.grifols.com/en/web/international/about-grifols/serving-peoples-health

17. Mapfre

   http://www.mapfregrupo.com/corporativo/grupomapfre/en/cinformativo/history-spain-
   mapfre-group.shtml

18. Mediaset

   http://www.mediaset.it/corporate/chisiamo/storia_en.shtml

19. OHL

   http://www.ohl.es/en/about-us/presentation/

20. Red Electrica

   http://www.ree.es/en/about-us

21. TR Group

   http://www.tecnicasreunidas.es/en/tr-group/

22. Telefonica

   http://www.telefonica.com/en/about_telefonica/html/in_brief/quienessomos.shtml

23. Ferrovial

   http://www.ferrovial.com/en/company/

24. Sacyr

   http://www.sacyr.com/es_en/default.aspx

25. Endesa

   http://www.endesa.com/en/aboutEndesa/ourOrganisation/Home

26. Enagas

   http://www.enagas.es/enagas/en/QuienesSomos/Presentacion

27. FCC

   http://www.fcc.es/fccweb/informacion-corporativa/que-es-fcc/index.html

28. Gas Natural

   http://www.gasnaturalfenosa.com/en/the+company/1285338472733/about+us.html

29. Inditex

http://www.inditex.com/en/our_group

30. Repsol

http://www.repsol.com/es_en/corporacion/conocer-repsol/perspectiva_historica/

British companies:

1. HSBC

http://www.hsbc.com/

2. Matthey

http://www.matthey.com/about_us/products-technologies

3. National Grid

http://www2.nationalgrid.com/about-us/

4. Old Mutual

https://www.oldmutual.com/vpage.jsp?vpage_id=2834

5. Prudential

http://www.prudential.co.uk/who-we-are/about-us

6. SSE

http://sse.com/aboutus/

7. Standard Chartered

https://www.sc.com/en/about-us/

8. Weir

http://www.weir.co.uk/about-us/company-overview/what-we-do

9. Mouchel

http://www.mouchel.com/who-we-are/company-overview

10. Renewable Energy Holdings

http://www.reh-plc.com/default.asp

11. Balfour Beatty

http://www.balfourbeatty.com/index.asp?pageid=2

12. Waterman Group

http://www.watermangroup.com/about_us/overview

13. John Laing Infrastructure

http://www.jlif.com/index.php/gateway?loc=http://www.jlif.com/index.php/overview/

14. GKN

http://www.gkn.com/Pages/default.aspx

15. North Midland Construction

http://www.northmid.co.uk/company_profile.htm

16. BP

http://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/about-bp/bp-worldwide/bp-united-kingdom/at-home-in-britain.html

17. Smiths

https://www.smiths.com/who-we-are.aspx

18. Royal Bank of Scotland

http://www.rbs.com/about.html

19. London Stock Exchange Group

http://www.londonstockexchange.com/about-the-exchange/company-overview/company-overview.htm

20. Lloyds Banking Group

http://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/our-group/our-heritage/our-history/

21. Cairn Energy

http://www.cairnenergy.com/

22. ABF

http://www.abf.co.uk/about_us

23. AstraZeneca

http://www.astrazeneca.com/About-Us

24. Aviva

http://www.aviva.com/about-us/

25. Ashtead Group

http://www.ashtead-group.com/aboutus/default.aspx

26. Barclays

http://www.barclays.com/about-barclays.html

27. BG Group

http://www.bg-group.com/21/about-us/bg-group-at-a-glance/

28. BT Group

http://www.btplc.com/Thegroup/Ourcompany/

29. ITV

http://www.itvplc.com/about

30. Burberry

http://www.burberryplc.com/about_burberry

31. Centrica

http://www.centrica.com/index.asp?pageid=2

http://www.centrica.com/index.asp?pageid=2

Appendix B

Classification system for detecting emotional and rational appeals in corporate stories

Rational appeals:	Describing concepts such as:	Example(s):
1. Word clusters that point out that the brand is cheap	Bargain, cut-rate, discounted, ,inexpensive, economical and of good value	'…the greatest value for the lowest price'
2. Word clusters that point out that the brand is durable	Stable, powerful, strong, hearty, tough, and enduring	'Across the ages..', 'No crisis over the .. years', 'No loss of profit…'
3. Word clusters that point out that the brand is effective	Useful, functional, efficient, and helpful.	'The benefits…'
4. Word clusters that point out that the brand is independent	Original, singular, non-conformist and self-reliant.	'No mainstream..', 'Break the rules..'
5. Word clusters that point out that the brand is modern	New, improved, contemporary, introducing and progressive.	'Slightly ahead of our time'
6. Word clusters that point out that the brand is productive	Achievements, accomplishments, ambitions, being successful, have certain contributes.	'Develop your potential', 'Get ahead'
7. Word clusters that display that the brand is safe	Guarantees, warranties, absence of hazards, and carefulness	'Be sure with…'
8. Word clusters that point out that the brand is technological	Engineering, discovering, innovative, resulting from science, invention and research.	'Research has shown..', 'This approach is innovative, because..'
9. Word clusters that display that the brand has wisdom	Knowledge, education, skilled, awareness, intelligence, expertise.	'Experts agree…'
Emotional appeals:	Describing concepts such as:	Example(s):
10. Word clusters that show the affiliation of the brand	Accepted and liked by peers, colleagues and community at large, friendship, fellowship, companionship, cooperation and reciprocity	'Join over 100,000 of your peers'

11. Word clusters that show the relation of the brand with the community	Community, state, national publics, national identity, society, public spiritedness and group unity	'Responsible…', 'Protecting..', 'Strengthening..'
12. Word clusters relating to the dear characteristics of the brand	Expensive, rich, valuable, costly, extravagant, highly regarded and luxurious.	'Luxury..', 'Glamour..', 'Quality..'
13. Word clusters that point out that the brand is distinctive	Rare, unique, unusual, and exclusive.	'The only…', 'The best…', 'Only available at…'
14. Word clusters that point out that the brand could lead to enjoyment	Fun, laugh, be happy, participate and celebration	'happiest..', 'together..', 'surprises…', 'fun..'
15. Word clusters that show that the brand is moral	Humane, fair, honest and ethical.	'Fair trade..', 'Sustainability..', 'A brand with a soul'
16. Word clusters that point out that the brand nurtures	Help, sympathy, love, charity, support, protection, care for the weak, disabled, inexperienced etc.	'Donate..', 'Give back..', 'Empower…', 'Provide..'
17. Word clusters pointing out that the brand is popular	Commonplace, customary, usual, ordinary, normal, standard, and general.	'One of the most well known brands in…', 'The largest seller in…', 'A large number of customers buy this brand',
18. Word clusters pointing out that the brand has status	Social status, competitiveness, prestige, power, and dominance.	'Keep up with the…'
19. Word clusters that point out that the brand is traditional	Classic, historical, antique, time-honored, and nostalgic	'… years of experience', 'Based on previous activities…', 'The foundation of the brand…'