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Impact of Culture on User Interfaces

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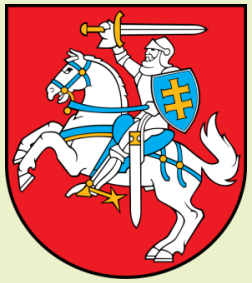
Kaunas University of Technology
LITHUANIA

Lithuania, Kaunas, KTU & Me

LITHUANIA



ktu 1922

KAUNAS

Kaunas Contemporary Capital 2022

European Capital of Culture

- The second largest city in Lithuania, often called its‘ intelligentsia and cultural capital.
- 11 universities and colleges in Kaunas create vibrant and diverse city’s student community and thus makes it an academic and youth city

KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

This Is Not **Science** Fiction

STRUCTURE

9 faculties

10 science institutes

49 interdisciplinary study programmes

62 study programmes delivered in English

GENERAL

Founded in 1922
Public university
Among top 4 percent of world universities (QS Rankings)

STUDENTS

10856 undergraduate and postgraduate students
332 PhD students
771 international student

ACADEMIC STAFF

1130 academic and research staff
127 professors
74% of teaching staff hold an academic degree

ME – LECTURER, RESEARCHER, STUDENT

Lecturer at Department of Marketing of KTU

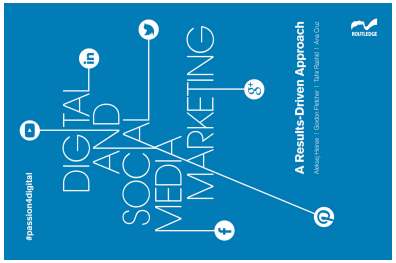
Researcher at digitisation research group at KTU

PhD ***student*** in Management and Administration at KTU

E-Business, Social Media Marketing, Digital Marketing, Marketing in Virtual Environments

National and international research projects related to use of ICT in organisations

Dissertation topic “Localisation of Marketing Decisions in Social Network Sites”



Google AdWords
CERTIFIED INDIVIDUAL

Content of Websites: Standardise or Localise?

CULTURE

The **culture** is man-made part of the human environment (Herskovits, 1955)

STANDARDISE OR LOCALISE?

- **Standardisation** strategy uses promotional messages internationally, translating but not otherwise modifying headings, illustrations or copy
- **Localisation** (or **adaptation**) strategy posits that consumer difference may have been widening and that messages should be tailored according to culture, media availability, product life-cycle stages and industry structures
- Third school of thought offers a compromise approach – appropriateness of standardisation depends on the product, consumer characteristics and environmental factors

STANDARDISE OR LOCALISE?

Web site cultural customization leads to (Singh, 2015):

Higher web site usability, accessibility, and interactivity.

A more favorable attitude toward the site.

A state of “flow” and browsing comfort.

Increased purchase intentions which *eventually impact ROI*.

Studies have repeatedly proven the need for localisation (Smart Insights, 2015):

55% of global customers said they only buy products from website that provide them with information in their own language

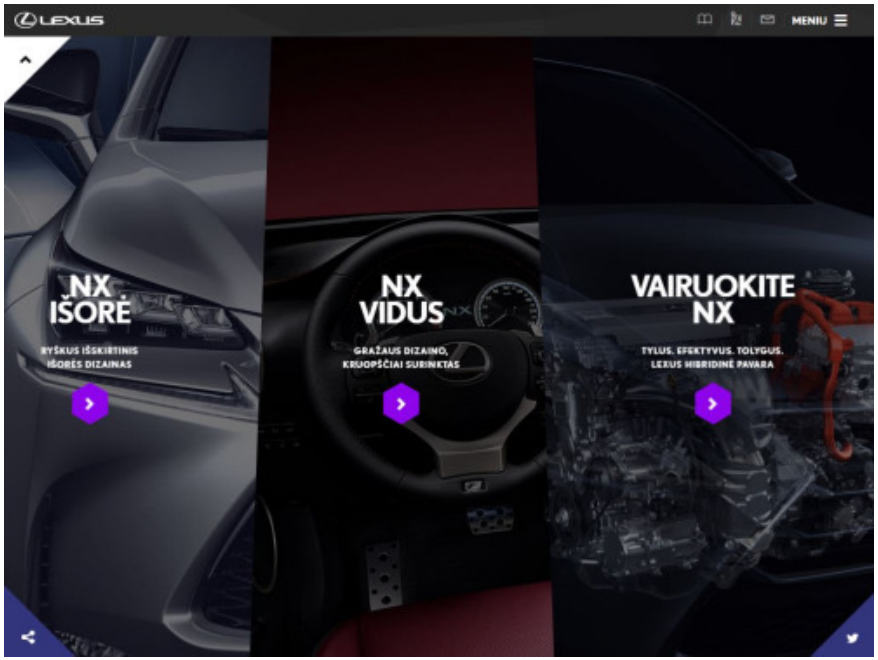
51% of businesses buyers would rather buy a product from a site with poor-quality localisation than from a site that only has content in English.

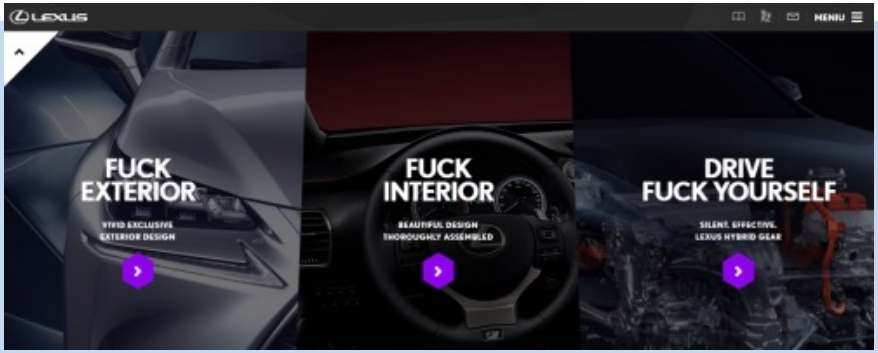
56% of consumers said the ability to obtain information in their own language is even more important that price.

WHY LOCALISATION EFFORTS FAIL?

1 Designers do not necessarily know about other cultures

2 Cosmetic changes are not enough





Source: Bortoli, de M., Gillham, R., & Maroto, J. (2003). Cross-cultural Interactive Marketing & Website Usability

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Localisation of Websites in Respect to Levels of Culture

LEVELS OF CULTURE

- **Perceptual level**
  emphasises on language use and colour categories
- **Behavioural level**
  emphasises on cultural values
- **Symbolic level**
  emphasises on emic understanding of signs and symbols of the society

Source: Singh, N. (2002). Analyzing Cultural Sensitivity of Websites: A Normative Framework. *Journal of Practical Global Business*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 32–53

PERCEPTUAL LEVEL

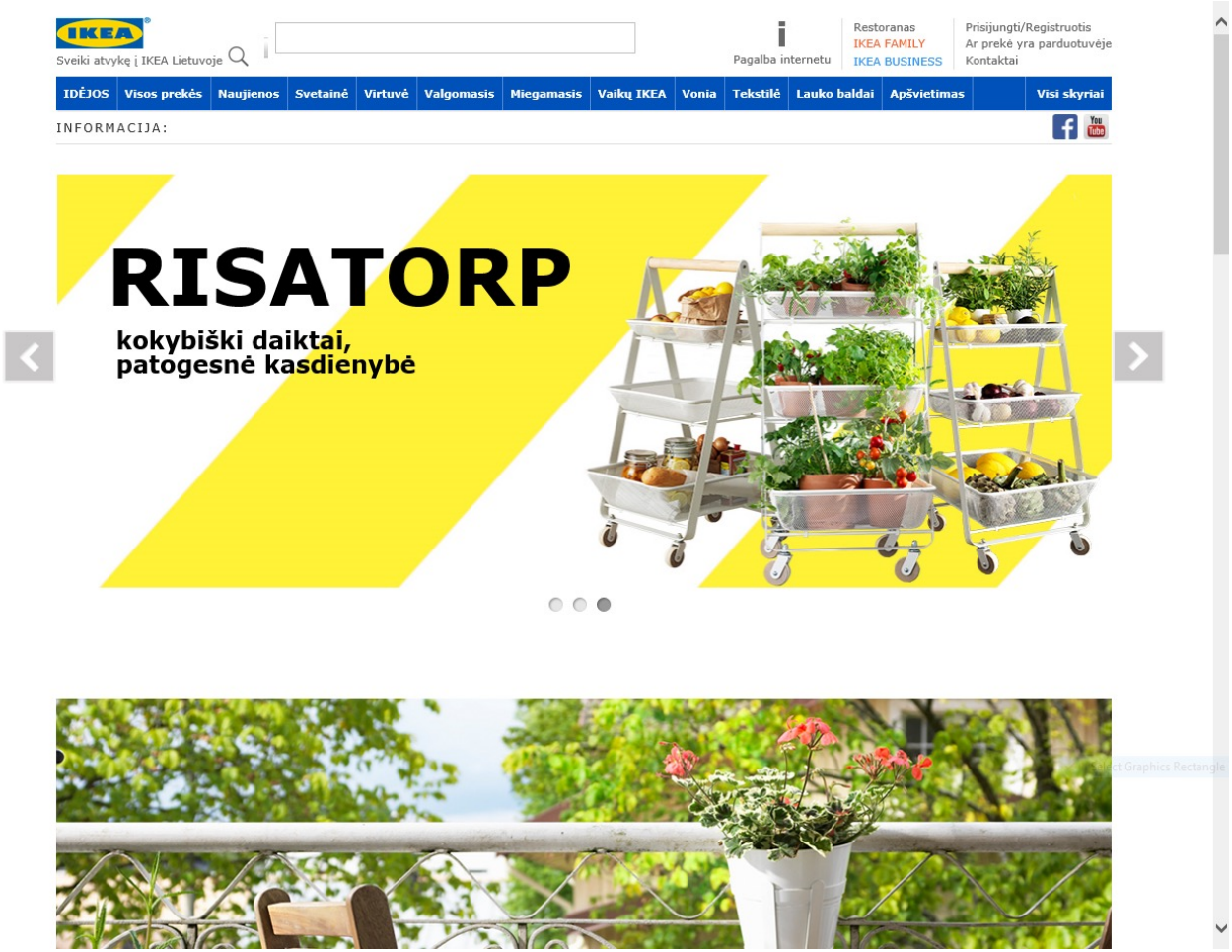
User Interface Issues Related to Perceptual Level

- Spatial orientation
- Web page layout
- Text length
- Navigation modes
- Translation equivalence
- Dialects
- Colour categories

Source: Singh, N. (2002). Analyzing Cultural Sensitivity of Websites: A Normative Framework. *Journal of Practical Global Business*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 32–53

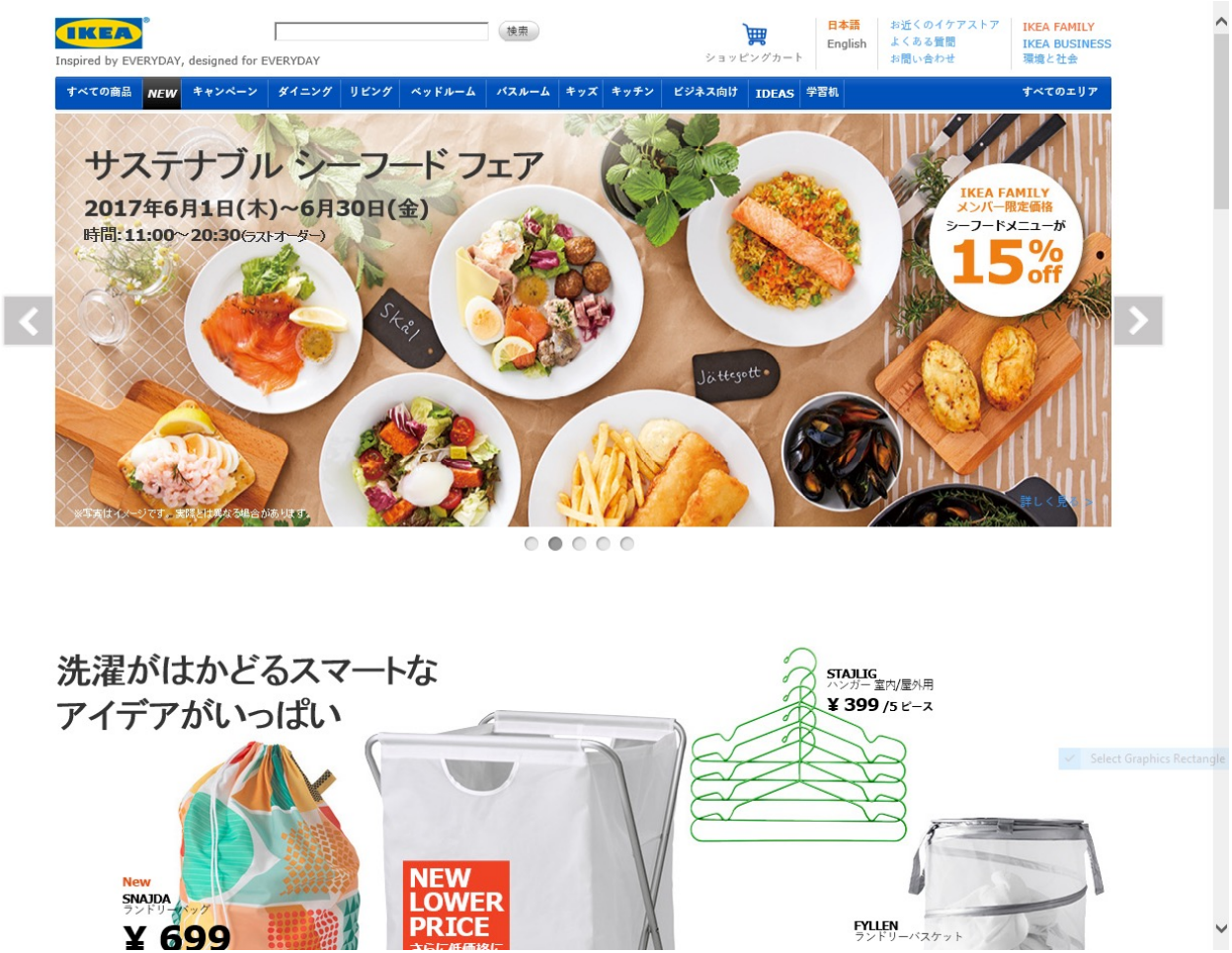
PERCEPTUAL LEVEL

Ikea Website for Lithuania



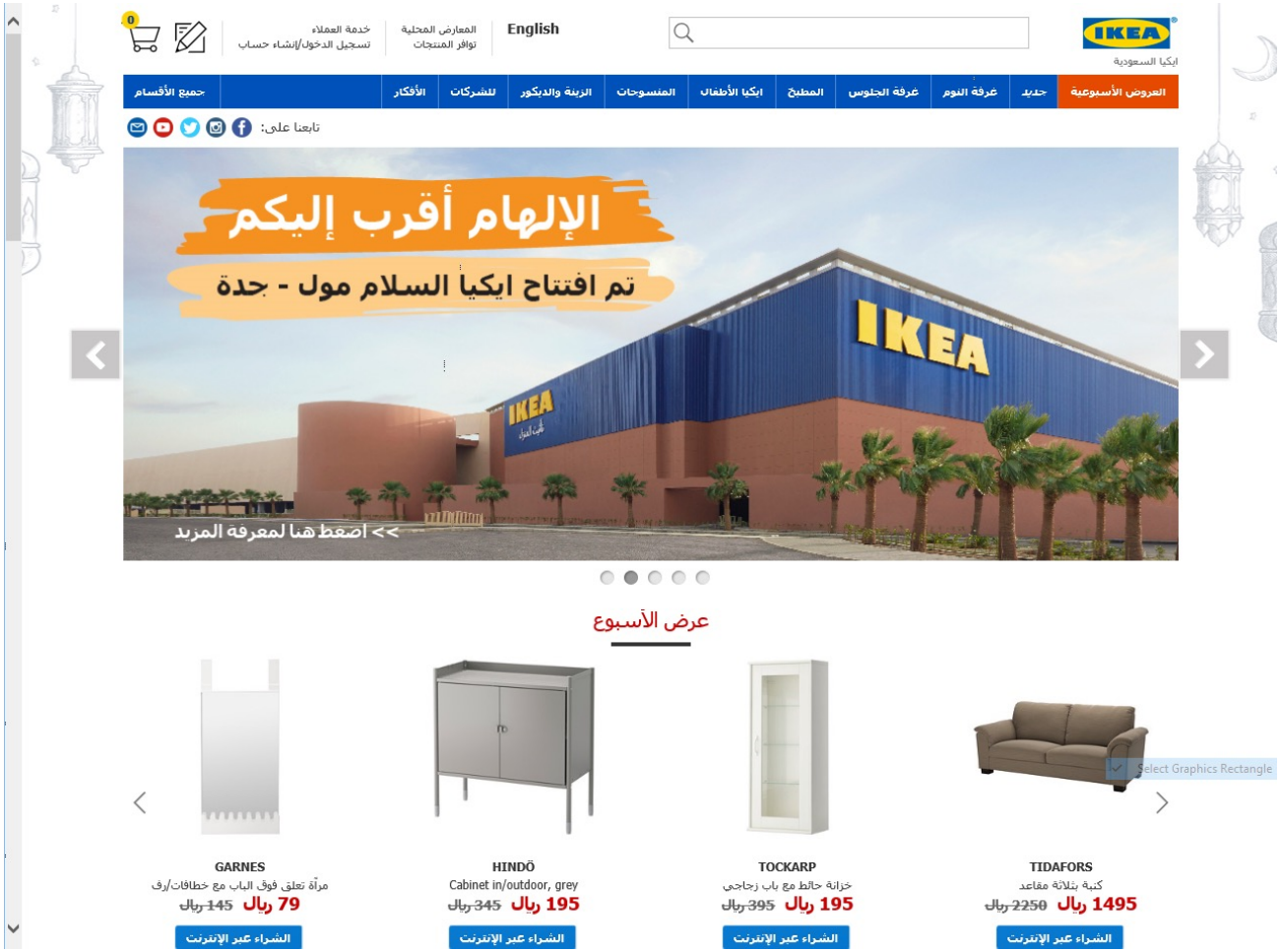
PERCEPTUAL LEVEL

Ikea Website for Japan



PERCEPTUAL LEVEL

Ikea Website for Saudi Arabia



BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

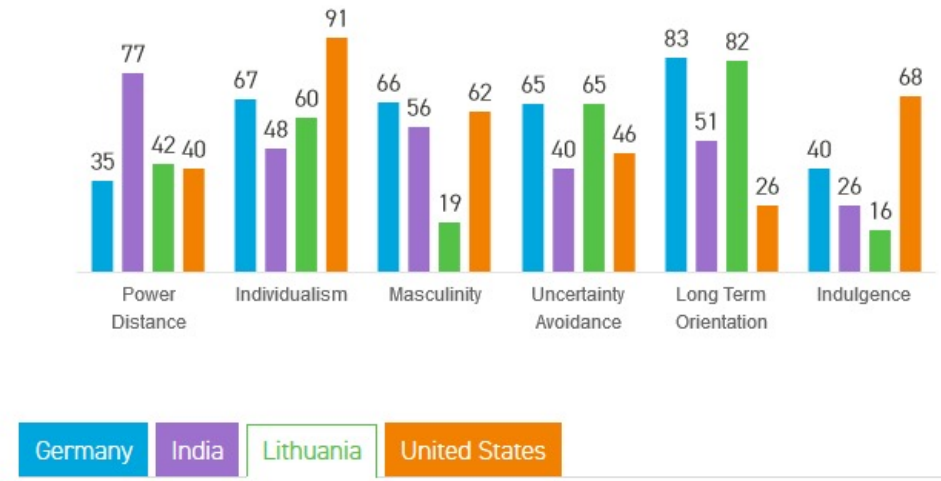
There are several *models of cultural dimensions* so far:

- Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961)
- Hofstede (1980, 2001, 2010)
- Hall (1976)
- Trompenaars (1993)
- Schwartz (1992)
- GLOBE (House et al., 2004)

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Cultural values proposed by G. **Hofstede** (1980):

- Individualism vs collectivism
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Power distance
- Masculinity vs femininity
- Confusian dynamism
- Indulgence vs restraint



Source: https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison

and E. T. **Hall** (1976):

- High / low context cultures
- Polychronic / monochronic cultures

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Website Elements Related To Collectivism

- Community relations
- Clubs or chat rooms
- Newsletter
- Family theme
- Symbols and pictures of national identity
- Loyalty programs
- Links to local web sites

Source: Singh, N., Zhao, H., & Hu, X. (2005). Analyzing the cultural content of web sites: A cross-national comparison of China, India, Japan, and US. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 129-146.

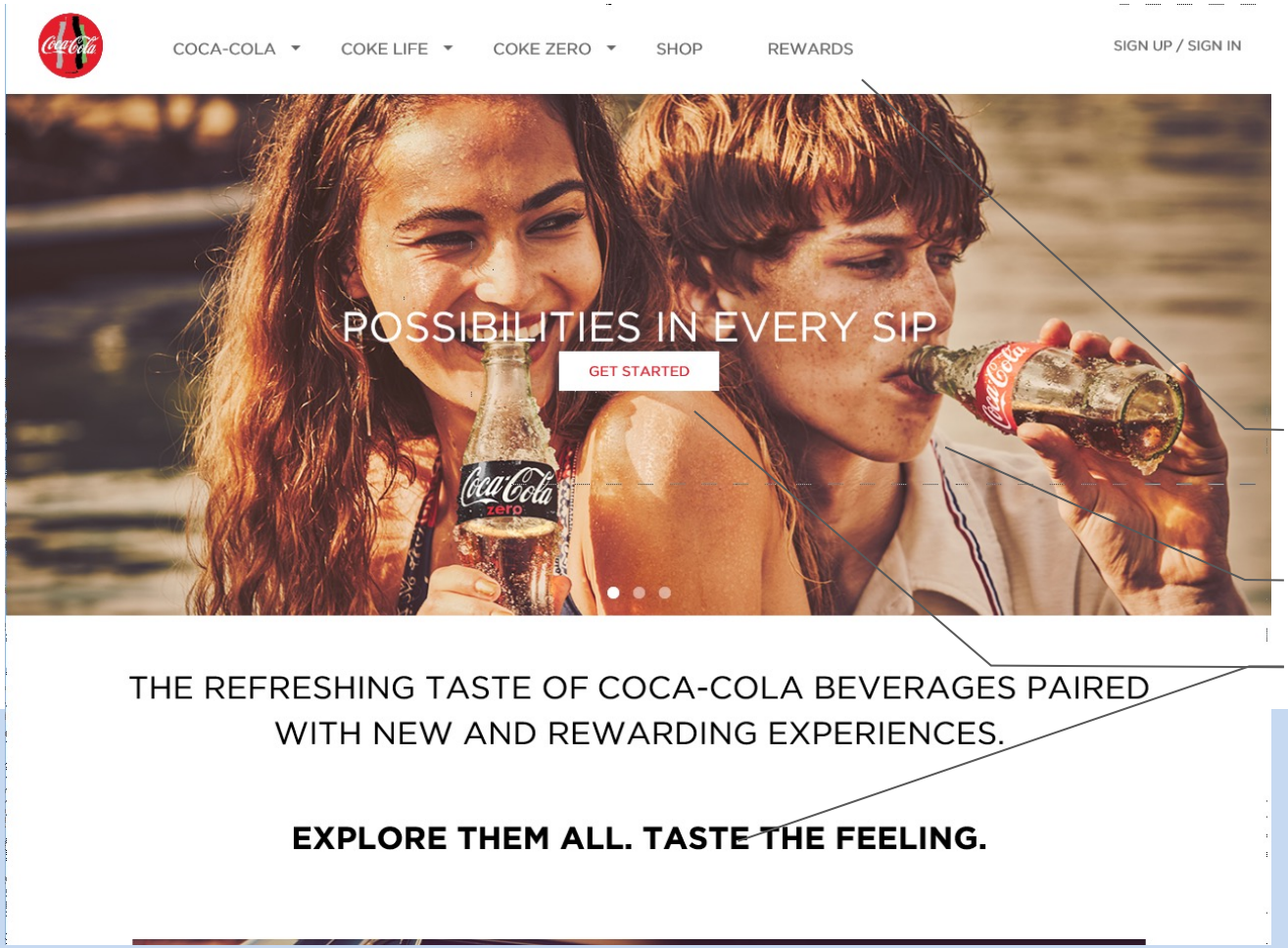
BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Graphical Elements Related To Individualism

High (individualism)	Low (collectivism)
images of individuals	images of groups
images of young	images of aged and experienced
emphasis on action	emphasis on state of being

Source: Callahan, E. (2006). Cultural Similarities and Differences in the Design of University Web sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 239-273.

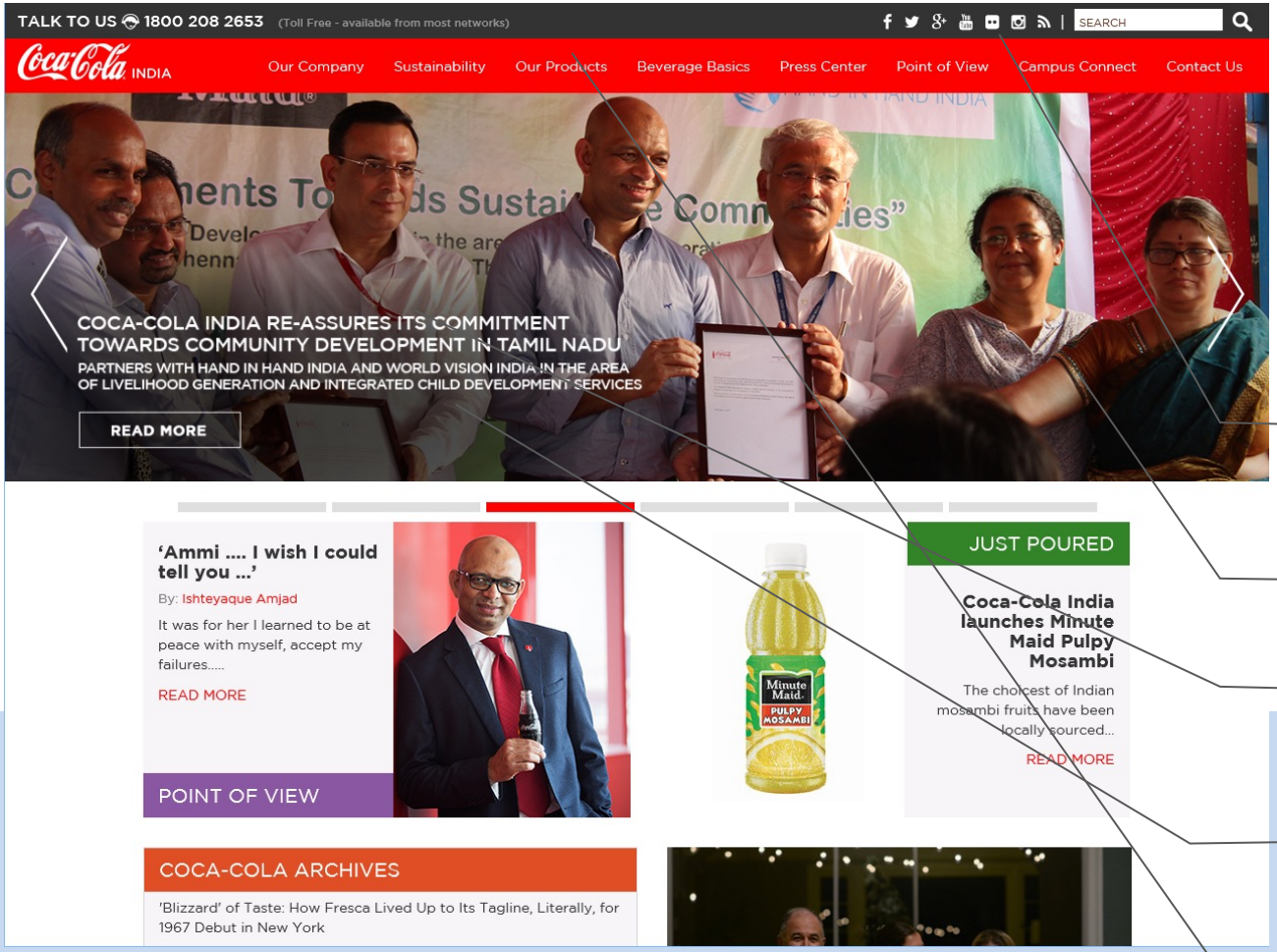
BEHAVIORAL LEVEL



Example of a Website for an Individualistic Country

- Theme of materialism
- Image of young
- Emphasis on action

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL



Example of a Website for a Collectivistic Country

- Clubs or chat rooms
- Images of Groups
- Community relations
- Images of aged and experienced
- Focus on “us” vs “I”

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Website Elements Related To Uncertainty Avoidance

- Customer service
- Guided navigation
- Tradition theme
- Local stores
- Local terminology
- Free trials or downloads
- Toll-free numbers

Source: Singh, N., Zhao, H., & Hu, X. (2005). Analyzing the cultural content of web sites: A cross-national comparison of China, India, Japan, and US. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 129-146.

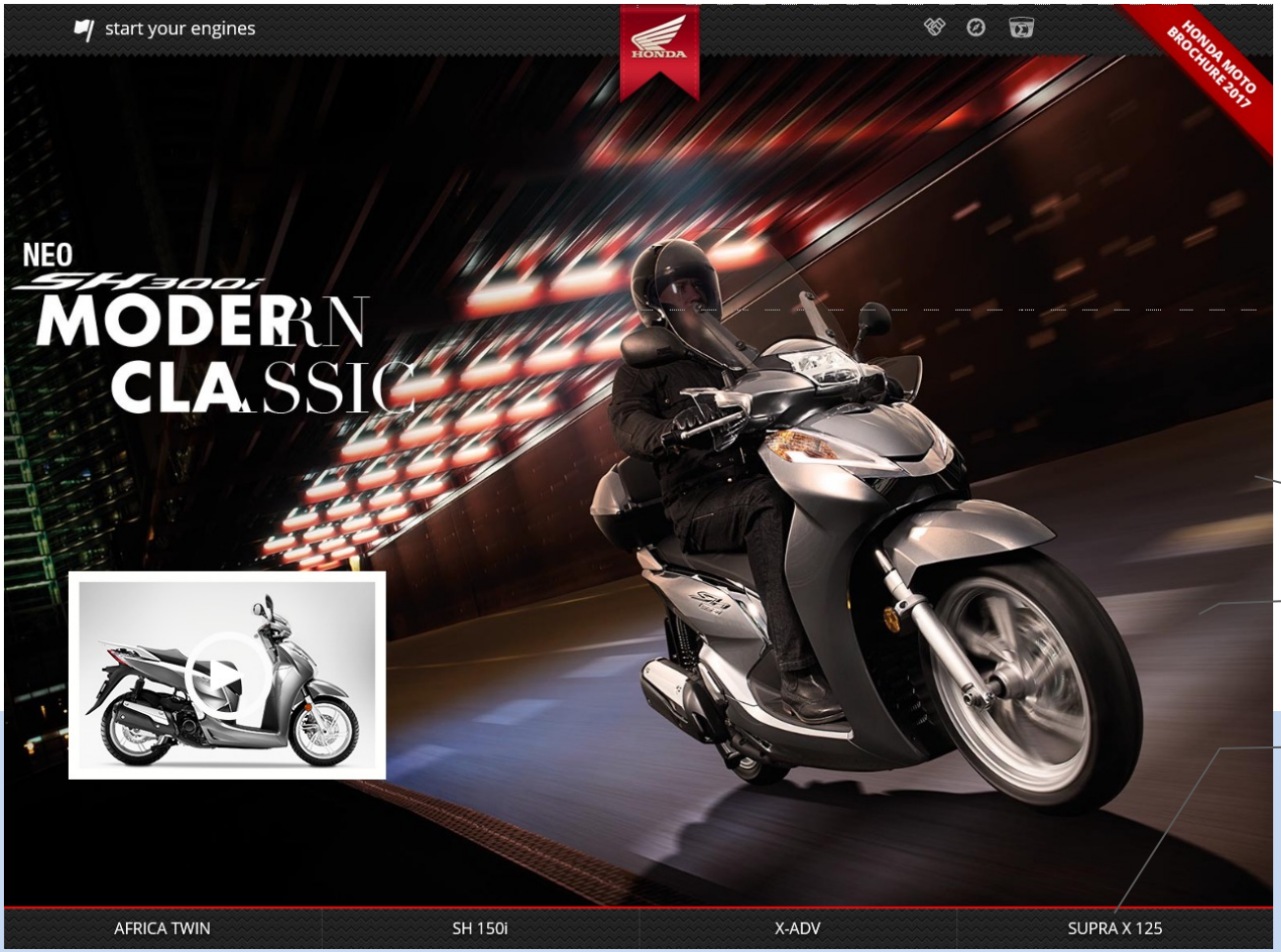
BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Graphical Elements Related to Uncertainty Avoidance

High uncertainty avoidance	**Low** uncertainty avoidance
limited choices	variety of choices
restricted amounts of data	long pages with scrolling
limited scrolling	
references to daily life	abstract images
redundancy	

Source: Callahan, E. (2006). Cultural Similarities and Differences in the Design of University Web sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 239-273.

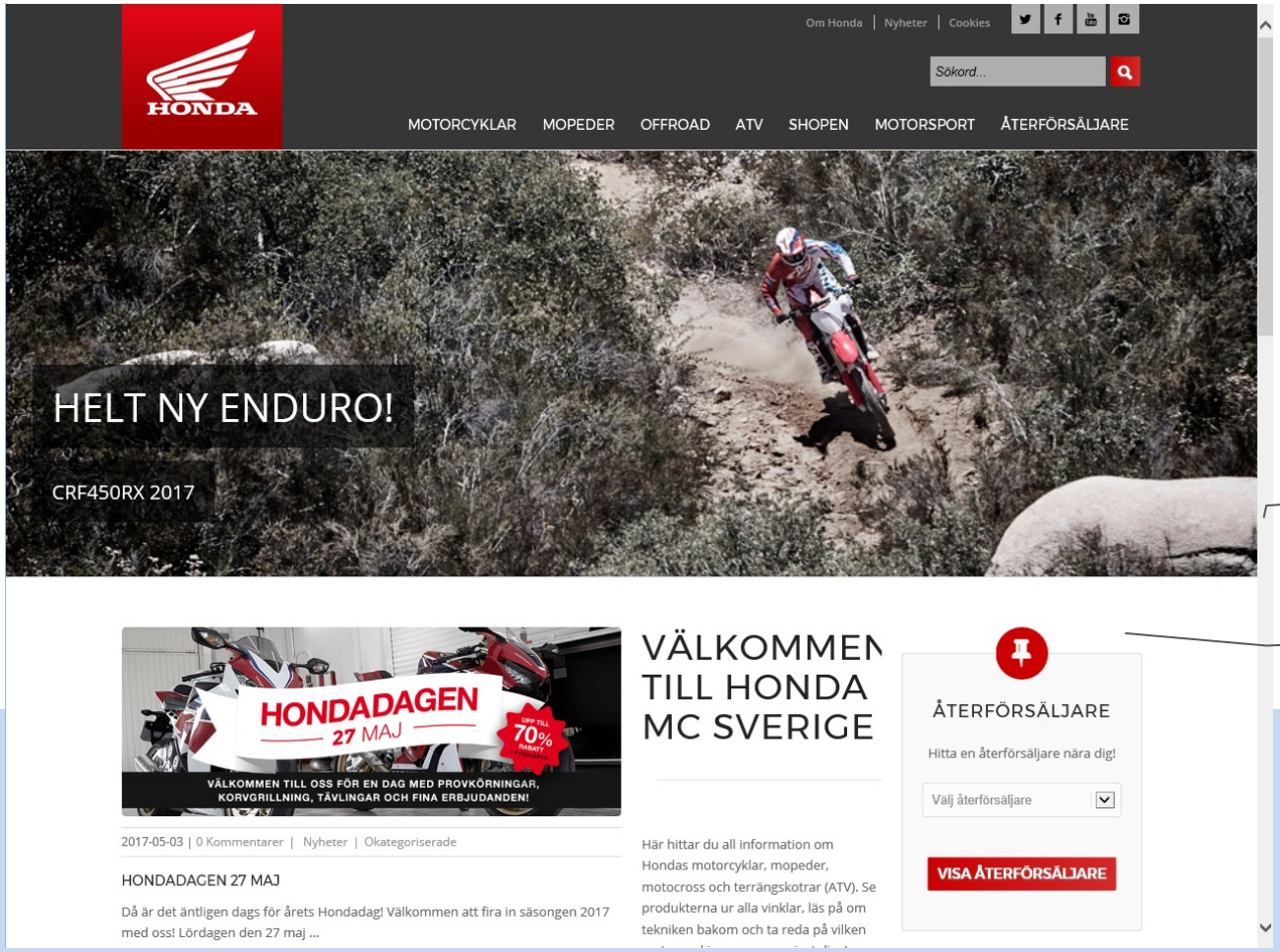
BEHAVIORAL LEVEL



Example of a Website for a High Uncertainty Avoidance Country

- Limited scrolling
- Restricted amounts of data
- Limited choices

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL



Example of a Website for a Low Uncertainty Avoidance Country

Long pages with scrolling

Variety of choices

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Website Elements Related to Power Distance

- Company hierarchy information
- Pictures of CEOs
- Quality assurance and awards
- Vision statement
- Pride of ownership appeal
- Proper titles

Source: Singh, N., Zhao, H., & Hu, X. (2005). Analyzing the cultural content of web sites: A cross-national comparison of China, India, Japan, and US. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 129-146.

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Graphical Elements Related to Power Distance

High power distance	**Low** power distance
symmetry	asymmetry
tall hierarchies	shallow hierarchies
focus on official seal, national emblems	photos of students rather than faculty
photographs of leaders	images of both genders
monumental buildings	images of public spaces
monuments	images of everyday activities

Source: Callahan, E. (2006). Cultural Similarities and Differences in the Design of University Web sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 239-273.

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Example of a Website for a High Power Distance Country

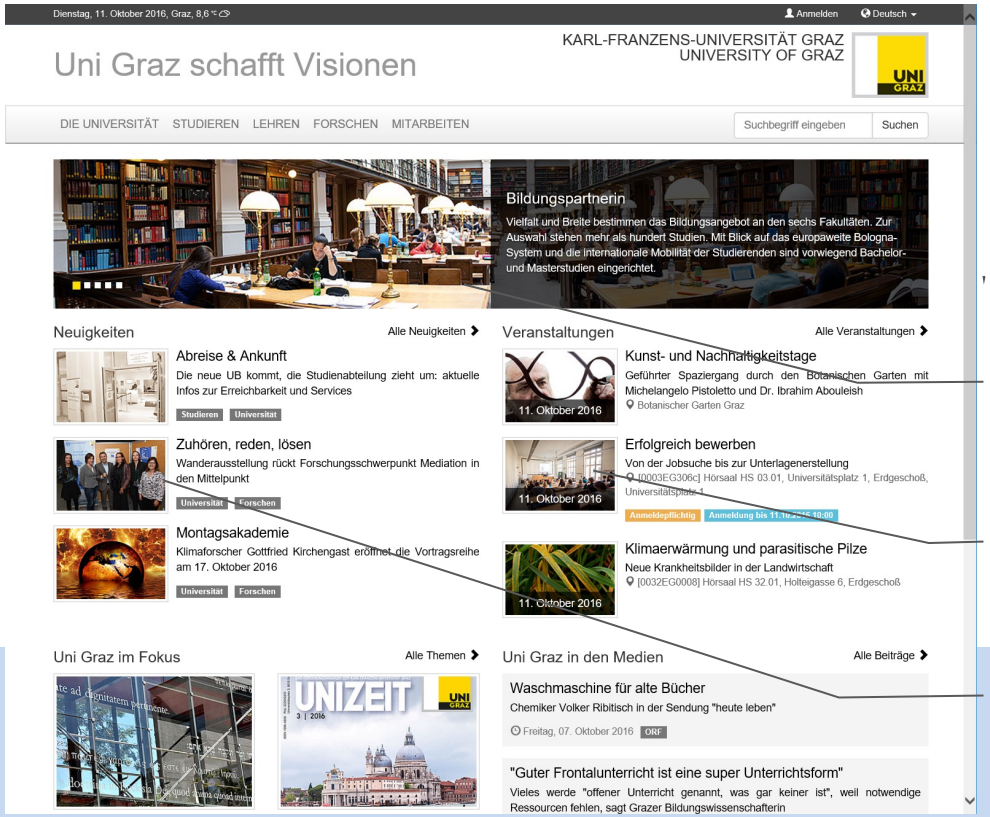
Focus on official seal, national emblem

Photographs of leaders

Proper titles

QA & Awards

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL



Example of a Website for a Low Power Distance Country

- Web site asymmetry
- Images of everyday activities
- Photos of students rather than faculty
- Images of both genders

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Website Elements Related to Masculinity

More masculine:

- Quizzes and games
- Realism theme
- Product effectiveness
- Clear gender roles
- Hard sell approach

More feminine:

- Environmental awareness
- Humane touch
- Developing cooperative relationships
- Unity with nature
- Soft sell approach

Source: Singh, N., Zhao, H., & Hu, X. (2005). Analyzing the cultural content of web sites: A cross-national comparison of China, India, Japan, and US. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 129-146.

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Graphical Elements Related to Masculinity

High (masculine)	**Low** (feminine)
limited choices	multiple choices
orientation toward goals	orientation toward relationships
emphasis on tradition and authority	frequent images of people, especially showing them laughing, talking or studying together
frequent images of buildings	
graphics used for utilitarian purposes	attention gained by visual aesthetics

Source: Callahan, E. (2006). Cultural Similarities and Differences in the Design of University Web sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 239-273.

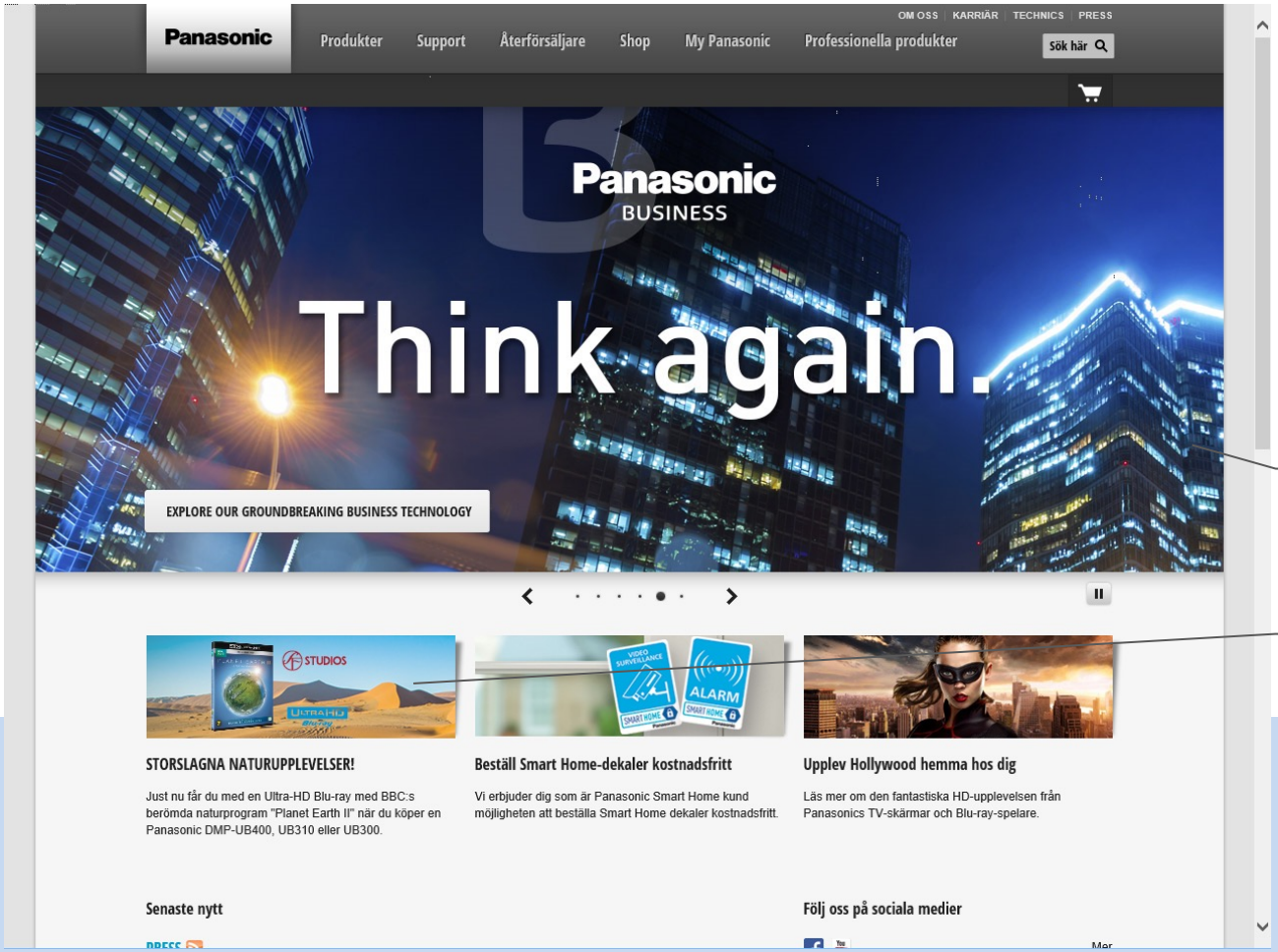
BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Example of a Website for a Masculine Country

Graphics used for utilitarian purposes

To-the-point information

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL



Example of a Website for a Feminine Country

Attention gained by visual aesthetics

Environmental awareness

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Example of a Website for a Masculine Country

BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Website Elements Related to High / Low Context Cultures

High context culture

- Politeness and indirectness
- Soft-sell approach
- Aesthetics

Low context culture

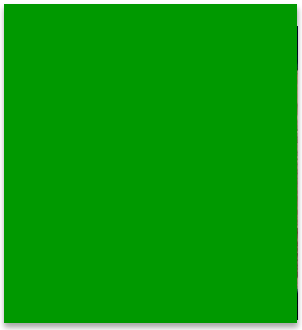
- Hard-sell approach
- Use of superlatives
- Rank of prestige of the company
- Terms and conditions of purchase

Source: Singh, N., Zhao, H., & Hu, X. (2005). Analyzing the cultural content of web sites: A cross-national comparison of China, India, Japan, and US. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 129-146.

SYMBOLIC LEVEL

Website Issues Related To Symbolic Level

- Country-specific symbols
- Icons
- Color symbolism



Source: Singh, N. (2002). Analyzing Cultural Sensitivity of Websites: A Normative Framework. *Journal of Practical Global Business*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 32–53

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Are Cross-Cultural issues important on Social Media?

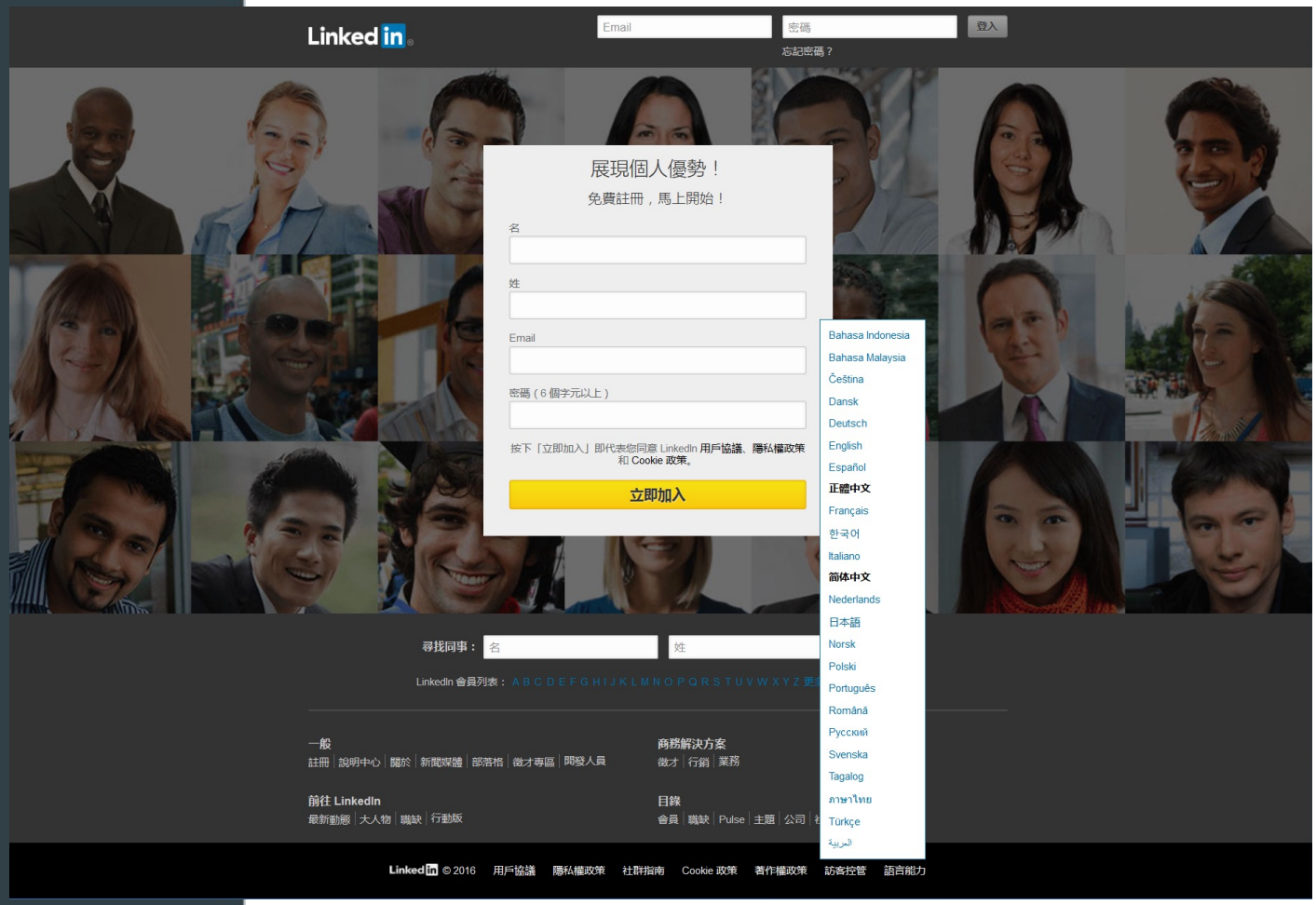
LINKEDIN

語言能力

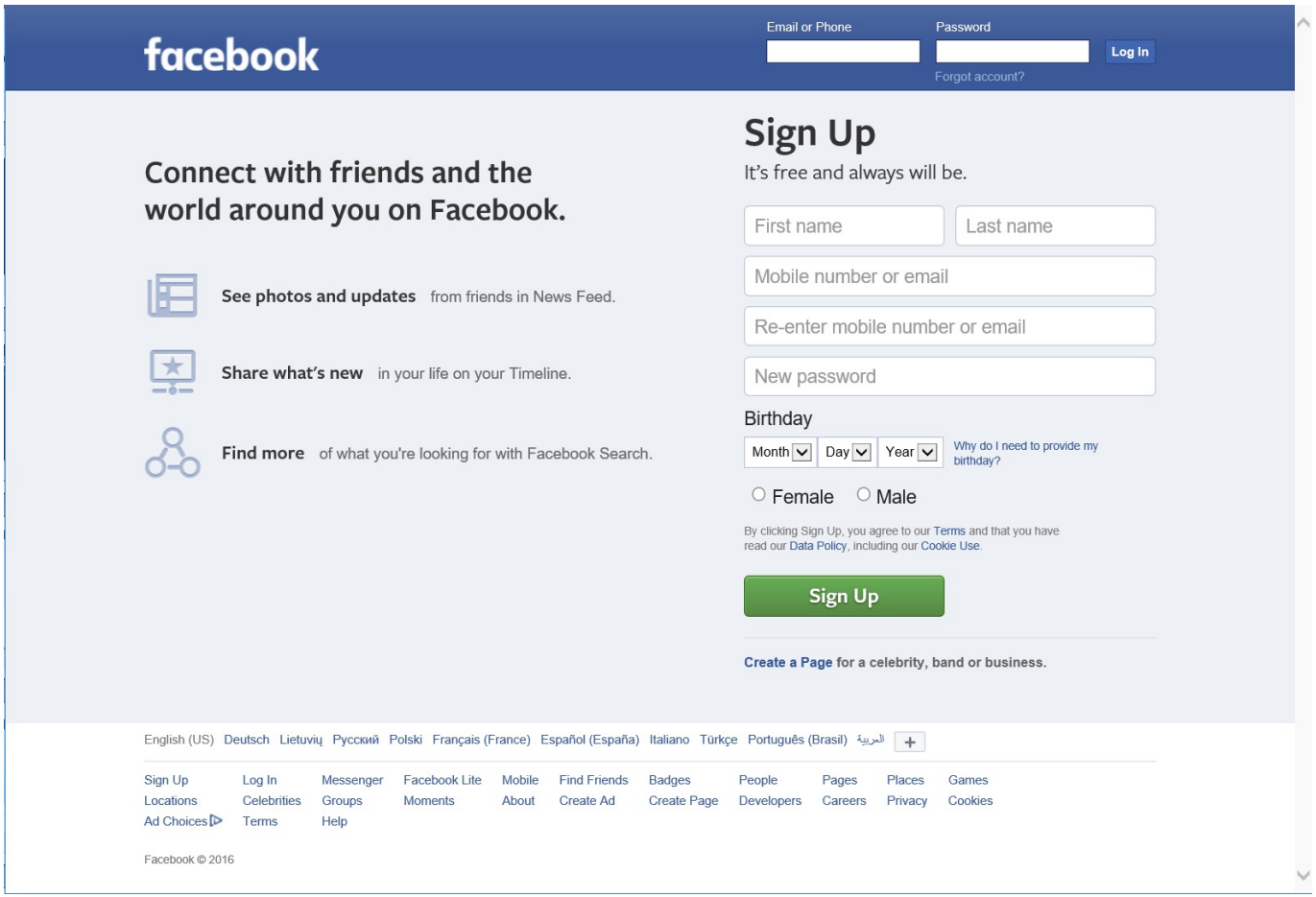
(means

language

in Chinese)



FACEBOOK



English - US

FACEBOOK

English - UK

FACEBOOK

Arabic

DIFFERENCES OF USAGE

Self-presentation Differences In

USA, UK

Japan, Korea

DIFFERENCES OF USAGE

Dating Services

Usual understanding for us…

and in India

Questions? Thank You!

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