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A cross-cultural comparison of U.S. and Taiwanese print advertising strategy

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A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF
U.S. AND TAIWANESE PRINT ADVERTISING STRATEGY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Chun-Lin Wu

May 2009

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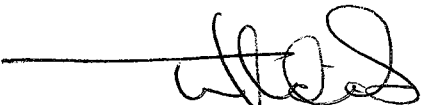
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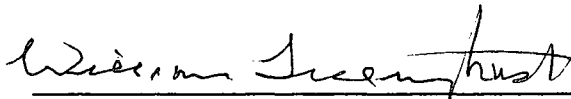
SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY


The Undersigned Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled
**A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF
U.S. AND TAIWANESE PRINT ADVERTISING STRATEGY**

by
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ABSTRACT

A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF U.S. AND TAIWANESE PRINT ADVERTISING STRATEGY

by ChunLin Wu

This thesis addresses the topic of advertising strategy in the United States and Taiwan in 2008. The context of this study was based on the cross-cultural perspective between the United States and Taiwan. Content analysis of magazine food advertisements from both countries in 2008 was employed as the research method and the source of data. In terms of comparisons between multiple factors, this study examines the portrayals of multiethnic groups and the presentation of creative campaign strategies in magazine advertisements in both countries.

The result of this research revealed that although Taiwanese advertisements used models more often in content of a food advertisement when compared to U.S. ones, the U.S. advertisements showed a more diverse range of models than the Taiwanese advertisements. In addition, Taiwanese advertising has moved toward the tendency to utilize the concept of individualism and low-context culture in advertisements while U.S. advertising still follows the same concept of individualism and low-context culture. Concerning comparative advertising, the results showed that most companies were still more likely to not directly mention a rival company or products. Contrary to expectations, it was surprising to find that there were more indirect comparative advertisements in Taiwan than in the United States.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

People receive a lot of information from stores and retailers, not only from television, surfing on the Internet, or checking the mail, but also while simply walking down the street. They are inundated by advertisements every day. These advertisements provide people information about the latest products and discounts, and for advertisers, the multi-media approach to advertising is the fastest way to promote products. Because of ongoing progress in technology, most companies are willing to spend their budgets on promotion through different media. As a result, consumers can be bombarded from all angles by dazzling advertising campaigns.

Advertisers may launch many different advertising campaigns in an effort to attract potential consumers' attention. The contents of advertisements targeting a distinct culture or ethnicity often differ greatly from one group to another. Therefore, advertising can usually reflect different cultural values (Hsiung, 1997; Kao, 2000; Lowrey, 2006). However, each ethnic group may have favorable preference for advertisements with a similar cultural context. Past research supports this perspective of in-group partiality (Nagao, 2002). Still, there are some obstacles in developing a standardized advertising strategy. Today, most international brands adopt the "thinking globally but acting locally" strategy. Consequently, a thorough understanding of cultural context becomes important and can help international communications practitioners and advertising agencies to effectively create an appropriate overseas strategy (Jun & Lee, 2007; Nelson & Paek, 2007). A global market has developed due to the tendency toward globalization.

Companies not only sell their products nationally, but also choose to expand their market by exporting to other countries. Due to the convenience of infrastructure and the similarity of promotions, many products and brands can be obtained around the world. With the development of technology, locality becomes less crucial for global marketing competition.

Statement of Problem

Each advertisement is designed to appeal to a specific target market. For example, cosmetic commercials are designed to gain women's attention. In planning an advertising campaign, strategies for various ethnic groups are taken into consideration and often evolve into different approaches before advertisers launch each advertisement within a multiethnic area or a culturally dissimilar nation. An advertisement will be perceived differently by groups with different cultural values as well as from different ethnic backgrounds and that often determines the effectiveness of the campaign (Nagao, 2002). An advertising campaign that is effective in one country might not work in another, and how to launch a culturally appropriate advertising strategy becomes crucial for international practitioners. Moreover, because of the function of recall and recognition, advertising might influence audiences by repetitive exposure. For example, print advertising, unlike other forms of mass media advertising, lacks the compulsive force in captivating an audience. Although audiences have a remote control to switch channels, broadcast advertising takes the lead in grabbing a viewer's attention by interrupting them while watching television programming. That is, audiences can more strongly relate and pay attention to print media, making the decision to read or not to read

the content when comparing it with the captiveness of broadcast advertising. For this reason, advertising agencies and copywriters might confront more challenges during the process of creating appealing and captivating print advertising copy.

During the 1960s and the 1970s, the Republic of China, more commonly known as Taiwan, shifted its emphasis of economic development from light industry to heavy industry, and was subsequently known as one of the Four Asian Tigers (the others are Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea). Because it survived the Asian financial meltdown in 1997, Taiwan, like many other nations, has embraced the trend toward globalization. Globalization has homogenized Taiwanese society into the overall global system that values both political and market liberation (Chen, 2005). Increasingly, countries have joined or have established cooperative trade networks, with products made from one country exported for sale to members of the network. Due to the flow of products between countries, the manner in which people within the global network perceive the role of products in their daily life has become increasingly similar. At the same time, some advertising and communications practitioners might have started adopting parallel strategies within a regional market, or even in the world marketplace.

Purpose of the Study

The context of this study is based on a cross-cultural comparative perspective between Taiwan and the United States, and it investigates the similarities and differences in the advertising content between the two countries. However, although Taiwan and the United States are obviously different, not only because of the composition of racial

groups but also the distinct Oriental and Occidental cultural background, this study examines the similarities and differences of print advertising strategy.

Globalization and the development of media and the Internet have connected two countries in several ways. The United States has dominated the world's global media for some time, and has been one of the primary exporters of media products, not only the cable/satellite channels but also of fashion, literature and style genres, and media management (Straubhaar, Fuentes, Giraud, & Campbell, 2002). Because of this, many Asian countries have started adopting norms of Westernized cultures and have assimilated the Western products and behaviors into their original native culture.

According to Hofstede's (1980) and Hall's (1976) cultural dimensions, the Western cultures is a group consisting of the United States, Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia, characterized by individualism and low information context culture, whereas the Eastern cultures group—consisting of Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, and to a certain extent, France—is characterized by collectivism and high information context culture (Hofstede, 1997; Hall, 1976, p.91; Hall & Hall, 1990, p.6). In visualizing the broad picture of differences in creative strategies that have been adopted in Western and Eastern advertising, both Hofstede's cultural dimension and Hall's information context dimension can serve as conceptual frameworks.

Because of the well-documented differences of diet habits between Western and Eastern cultures, this study investigates food advertisements to more accurately observe the similarities and differences between the two countries' approaches to food advertising. In terms of comparisons between multiple factors, this study examines the

portrayals of multiethnic groups and the creative campaign strategies in magazine advertisements in the United States and Taiwan. The literature review examines both the anthropic and creative strategies, and divides subjects into subsections such as cultural proximity, standardized strategy, ethnic variety, recall and complexity, context of American and Chinese cultures, high-context and low-context cultures, and comparative advertising, in order to best provide an understanding of the findings of past research and theoretical frameworks. Through the content analysis, issues to be examined include to what extent are people portrayed differently in food advertising, and the presentation of creative components in both countries.

Advertising often reflects cultural values. This study is important because few studies deal with a two-nation, cross-cultural comparison of ethnic roles and creative strategies in advertising campaigns. This study explores both the portrayals of people of different nationalities and ethnicities, and the presentation of verbal and symbolic components in Western and Eastern countries. By utilizing a cross-cultural investigative technique, the results may provide suggestions for advertisers that could help global brands domestically propose and improve strategies that cater to specific market.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Cultural Proximity

Audiences often tend to choose media products that are produced in their own language, or that are close to their own culture. This concept was first termed “cultural proximity” by Straubhaar (1991). The notion of proximity has divided the globe into several proximate regions by geography and cultural and linguistic commonality and they are variable along with the cultural changes (La Pastina and Straubhaar, 2005; Cheng, 2006). For example, some successful Mexican telenovelas go on to become a broadcast hit in other Latin American countries after export from Mexico. Oftentimes audiences regard those programs produced in accordance with their cultural context as their first viewing choice. Another example is Ksiazek and Webster’s (2008) study about the role of language in an audience’s media preference; when sorting by the ethnic and linguistic background, cultural polarization among audiences is obvious. That study’s result indicated that language is the primary factor for non-Hispanics or Spanish-speaking Hispanics in making a media choice. Meanwhile, English-speaking Hispanics who can speak more languages possess more “cultural capital,” so they have more freedom of media consumption (p. 498).

Language is one of the powerful components in explaining an audience’s formation across media, especially for monolingual audiences. However, Iwabuchi’s (2002) study about the popularity of Japanese television and music among Taiwanese young audiences indicated that cultural proximity goes beyond the linguistic boundary. That study found

that many Taiwanese young people watch Japanese TV shows and soap operas, and listen to Japanese music, even though they do not speak Japanese in their everyday lives.

Standardized Strategy

The issue of developing a standardized advertising approach has been questioned for years. Because of the ambiguous outcome in developing that advertising approach, an increasing number of international brands instead start adopting a win-win strategy that emphasizes thinking globally but acting locally. Those who advocate developing a standardized approach indicated the benefits in business economy, consistency of image, and improved advertising quality that standardization can render. Yet those who oppose standardization are concerned about the effectiveness of standardized strategies in culturally divergent countries (Cutler & Javalgi, 1992). The difficulties in practicing a global standardization of advertising strategy are mostly attributed to cultural differences and language barriers between Western and Eastern countries (Nelson & Paek, 2007), and different socio-economic markets (Karande, Almurshidee, & Al-Olayan, 2006). However, these studies cannot thoroughly deny the practicability of global standardized strategies. Nelson and Paek indicated that these obstacles can be overcome with the ready acceptance of international media. Likewise, an earlier study implied that the increase of consumer segments of demographically and psychographically similar characteristics can boost the execution of international standardization (Duncan & Ramaprasad, 1995). Although an increasing number of Asian nations have been adapting Westernized culture, and many advertising agencies in those countries have been practicing Westernized policies (Lin, 2001; Shao, Raymond, & Taylor, 1999), frequently

the Westernized strategies have to yield to the ingrained cultural values and conventional norms.

Ethnic Variety

Ethnic variety within a country is clearly visible around the world. This phenomenon might contribute toward the tendency of globalization. Each individual ethnic community is one of the main factors that diversify the cultural values fostered around the world. Therefore, cultural differences are often considered the obstacle in developing an international brand, and often offer companies a challenge in communicating with global consumers (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000; Jun & Lee, 2007).

However, how an ethnic image is presented in the media can enable members of that ethnic group to establish self-identification, and help others shape their attitude toward that ethnic group. Advertising often simultaneously reflects, and somehow can affect, the cultural values. Kao (2000) asserted that “advertisements often signify cultural norms in society and sometimes reflect and/or lead popular culture as it is engrained as a social institution” (p.1). At the same time, different cultural values have impacts on advertisements depicting each ethnic group, and impacts on corporate visual identity. For example, in the study investigating multi-ethnic images in the U.S. and Taiwanese television commercials, Nagao (2002) found that black African models are usually presented in food and electric products categories in the United States, while in Taiwan they are usually presented in the entertainment category.

Moreover, it is not too difficult to be aware that international brands are more likely to use ethnic multiplicity presented in advertising content when compared to domestic

brands. Nelson and Paek (2007) indicated some points to explain global advertising strategies. First, use of the English language can often better establish a global brand image than other domestic languages. Therefore, global brands prefer using English to convey their brand image. Second, Eastern Asian countries are more willing to utilize English as a global language and employ Western models. For example, Chinese consumers consider advertising with Western advertising elements more fashionable. Third, although consumers in less developed countries believe that products from Western countries are of higher quality, standardization might be more effective in those countries (p. 77).

American and Chinese Cultures

Unlike the ethnic formation in the United States, Taiwan, like China, Japan, Korea, and other South-Asian countries, has highly homogeneous ethnic groups. Some ethnic peoples in the United States might still maintain their original cultural heritage, and some might assimilate into the U.S. culture (Kao, 2000).

Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimensions have been widely employed to analyze the similarities and differences between various cultural values: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, and uncertainty avoidance (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Individualism, one of the four dimensions, emphasizes independence, self-determination, freedom, and self-identity. People from individualist cultures tend to be self-confident, resolute, and more independent. In contrast, collectivism emphasizes keeping close relationships with family, friends, and social groups. People from collectivist cultures tend to be group-oriented and more

interdependent. American culture is often characterized as individualistic. However, Chinese culture, which values attachment to family, is classified to collectivistic culture (Choi, Lee, & Kim, 2005; Leach & Liu, 1998; Zhou, Zhou, & Xue, 2005). Also, Choi et al. (2005) and Zhou et al. (2005) asserted that research has shown the connection between this cultural dimension and advertisement content. Advertisements of individualist cultures are mostly based on an individualistic context, whereas advertisements of collectivist cultures are more likely to use family-oriented contexts.

Creative Strategy

High-context and low-context cultures

Many researchers have independently selected a subject from Eastern and Western countries to investigate cross-cultural mores. The probable reason might be the diacritical homogeneities within Eastern or Western countries. Hall (1976) classified cultures of the world based on the scale of information context:

A high context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low context (LC) communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code. Twins who have grown up together can and do communicate more economically (HC) than two lawyers in a courtroom during a trial (LC), a mathematician programming a computer, two politicians drafting legislation. (p. 91)

High-context people often have closer personal relationships among family, friends, colleagues, and clients when compared to low-context people. In Eastern countries, the attributes of a high-context culture are as conspicuous as those of a low-context culture in the United States and some northern European countries (Hall & Hall, 1990). Asians belong to high-context cultures that emphasize communicating with others through

implicit and indirect ways, whereas Americans prefer through forthright and outspoken communication styles. Both lifestyles and cultural values are reflected in advertising and other forms of mass media. Advertising content of high-context cultures abundantly employ symbolic, nonverbal, and indirect verbal messages. In contrast, literal information and messages are explicitly and directly embedded in media content of low-context cultures (An, 2007; Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000; Hall & Hall, 1990; Zhou et al., 2005).

Recall and complexity

Most of the time, the purpose of advertising is to enhance brand recognition, to reinforce desirable features of products, and to stimulate an audience's desire to buy in the most effective manner. Recall is considered one of the significant measures to test advertising effectiveness, and an advertisement with higher recall can often result in increased profitability. When people are first exposed to an advertisement, the function of memory is to provide the viewer an impression of the message. At this time, most viewers or readers haven't yet made the decision to buy the product. Through repetitive exposure and strong recall, the process of attention interprets the conscious learning (Mehta & Purvis, 2006). To advertisers, how advertising messages build and strengthen an audience's awareness straightaway is one of their crucial tasks. Therefore, the majority of advertisements are oriented toward memorable scripts to reinforce people's impression by using compelling visual components. On the other hand, copy writers and art directors work toward avoiding script complexity that might hinder memory. Excessive complex text and content might result in lower readability and restrain recall of

the commercial, further obstructing brand recognition. The persuasive effects of advertising vanish due to insufficient motivation because of low readability (Bradley & Meed, 2002; Chebat, Gelinias-Chebat, Hombourger, & Woodside, 2003; Lowrey, 2006). Lowrey (2006) confirmed that high involvement can moderate the effects of complexity upon memory. That is, complexity might have a negative impact only on those individuals with low brand involvement. This argument is contradictory to earlier research. Chebat et al. (2003) demonstrated that “if the ads are substantially more complex, the working memory may become insufficient even under high motivation” (p. 617). The conclusion shows that readability significantly affects argument strength under both low and high involvement. However, Bradley and Meed’s (2002) findings suggest that, although higher complexity can have negative influence, moderately syntactic complexity can unexpectedly have positive result when compared to a simple ad copy.

Comparative advertising

Each company has its own way of describing its products through its advertising. Companies want to show consumers their salience or uniqueness over their competitors through that advertising. The strategy of using comparisons with competitors within the context of an advertisement is called comparative advertising. Among this comparative strategy, those that identify specific names of competing brands are categorized as direct comparative advertising. In contrast, advertisements that do not mention a specific competitor’s name and use words such as “all other brands” when referring to all competing products, are categorized as indirect comparative advertising. Studies on comparative advertising are not abundant and the majority of those studies are focused on

U.S.-based products and ad campaigns. Research on investigating the effects of comparative advertising has mixed results and discordant perspectives (Chow & Luk, 2006; Jain, Buchanan & Maheswaran, 2000). Comparative advertising is not rare in the United States and most Americans can accept comparative advertising as long as it is telling the truth. This concept corresponds to the U.S. low-context culture of direct expression, and advertisers somehow prove the effectiveness of comparative advertising (Schwaiger, Rennhak, Taylor & Cannon, 2007). However, studies illustrate that the reasons for the scarce use of comparative advertising in non-U.S. countries might attribute to cultural norms or national legislation (Shao et al., 1999). For example, Saudi Arabians consider direct comparative advertising unethical or immoral (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000). In addition to China's legislation against comparative advertising in 1995 (Schwaiger et al., 2007), the anti-materialistic spirit of Confucianism might also intrinsically affect many eastern Asian consumers' attitude toward advertisements (Choi & Miracle, 2004). However, in Choi and Miracle's study, they noted although people with independent self-construals find direct comparative advertising repellant, they may favorably perceive indirect comparative advertising. Another study indicates that indirect comparative advertising that claims its superiority over other competitors is more effective than both direct comparative and non-comparative advertising in positioning brands (Miniard, Barone, Rose, & Manning, 2006).

Overview and Hypotheses

In summary, cultural proximity explains an audience's selection of media. Cultural differences are still considered the major difficulty in implementing a globally

standardized advertising strategy. Linguistic barriers are a secondary factor, and this can be somehow remediated through by import and export of media products. Although population-wise English is not the most widely spoken language in the world, it has been widely used as an official global language. Attributing to globalization are cultural capitals and populations flowing between countries. This has worked toward narrowing the language gap and can better develop a standardized strategy.

Focusing on the two nations of the United States and Taiwan, the United States is composed of multiethnic groups, whereas Taiwan is considered a highly homogeneous country. Moreover, the two countries have different cultural contexts—the Chinese high-context culture of implicit and symbolic messages contrasts with American low-context culture of direct expression. These cultural contexts and different ethnic formations means advertisers must consider individual presentation necessary for advertising in each country. This has also resulted in different points of view toward comparative advertising.

Based on the previous literature review, the following hypotheses were developed:

- H1.* Food advertising in the United States uses multiethnic models more often than Taiwanese food advertising.
- H2.* Hofstede's (1980) cultural concept of individualism can be seen more obviously in U.S. advertising than in Taiwanese advertising.
- H3.* Hofstede's (1980) cultural concept of collectivism can be seen more obviously in Taiwanese advertising than in U.S. advertising.

H4. The presentation of U.S. advertising more accurately follows Hall's (1976) concept of low-context culture than the presentation of Taiwanese advertising does.

H5. The presentation of Taiwanese advertising more accurately follows Hall's (1976) concept of high-context culture than the presentation of U.S. advertising does.

H6. Print advertising in the United States includes more direct comparative/indirect comparative advertisements than Taiwanese print advertising does.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the status quo of print advertising campaigns in the United States and Taiwan by using a content analysis. Using examples from U.S. and Taiwan magazines, this study analyzes the portrayals of people and the presentation of creative components in magazine advertisements and sought to understand the advertising strategies in Western and Eastern cultures. Additionally, findings may provide transnational companies managerial implications for developing effective advertising strategies in culturally and ethnically divergent countries.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Research Approach

Based on the previous discussion of the specific or diffuse cultural dimension, this study developed a framework based on those dimensions, and used content analysis of print advertisements as an exploratory investigative step on each country's major magazines to examine the validity of these dimension in the themes and executions of multi-ethnicity and creative components in advertising. This cross-cultural study utilized the context analysis approach to differentiate the diversity of ethnic groups, and to understand the differences in presentation of creative strategies in magazine advertisements in the United States and Taiwan. Content analysis provided a systematic technique to observe and analyze the overt communication behavior of selected communication (Kolbe & Burnett, 1911). The procedure is a multi-step process that requires developing categories for coding thematic content, training coders, coding the categorical data, and statistically analyzing the coded data (Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, & Kropp, 1999; Kassarian, 1977; Pollay, 1983; Schneider, Wheeler, and Cox, 1992). This method has been a reputable and widely applied tool employed by researches to investigate how culture impacts advertising communication strategies. In particular, this method provides an efficient way to decompose advertisements into objective, separable, and quantitative meaning-units.

Sampling Method

Advertisements gathered from food, health, gossip, lifestyle, and women's magazines in the United States and Taiwan were analyzed for one year, January 1 through December 31, 2008. The five categories were chosen because magazines in these categories are considered popular advertising vehicles, and are available to a wider range of readership and editorial interests. In total, 667 print food advertisements from the United States and 413 print food advertisements from Taiwan were collected for the data set.

Because food print advertisements in Taiwan are less common than in the United States, except for one magazine individually choosing from gossip category which had abundant samples weekly, one U.S. magazine and two Taiwanese magazines were chosen from each of four other categories for a total of 14 magazines to ensure a balanced number of food advertisements (see Table 1).

Of the magazines studied, all except these three weekly magazines, *People*, *Next*, and *Super Taste*, are monthly magazines. *People*, *Next* and *Super Taste* are published four times every month; a total of 48 issues of each weekly magazine were available, and 12 issues of each monthly magazine were examined and coded.

Table 1

Magazines Used for Study

Category	Country of Magazine's Origin	
	United States	Taiwan
Food	<i>Gourmet</i>	<i>Super Taste (食尚玩家)</i> <i>Taipei Walker</i>
Health	<i>SHAPE</i>	<i>Common Health (康健)</i> <i>Health for All (大家健康)</i>
Family & Life	<i>Better Homes and Gardens</i>	<i>Evergreen (常春)</i> <i>Travel Com (行遍天下)</i>
Gossip	<i>People</i>	<i>Next (壹週刊)</i>
Women	<i>Redbook</i>	<i>Vi-Vi (薇薇)</i> <i>CittaBella (儂儂)</i>

Ad Selection

To conform with past research, only full-page advertisements in each selected issue were analyzed, excepting classified advertising. An analysis of the advertisements indicated that small ads form a relatively small percentage (less than 10%) of the total number of ads in both U.S. and Taiwanese magazines. In several instances, duplicate ads were encountered in the same publication (for example, identical ads appearing in the January and February issues). The second appearance of the advertisement was not included in the data set. Also, when duplicate ads were identified in two magazines, the second ad was also excluded and not counted. All magazine issues selected were from 2008, and the same weekly/monthly issue was chosen when comparable issues were available. To create a monthly issue, a single random sample of a weekly magazine was used: January's first issue was coded, February's second, March's third, and so on. This pattern for the monthly issues continued through December, ensuring a random selection.

Coding Scheme

The coding scheme included model ethnicity, magazine origin, and cultural categorization. Separate coding schemes were developed with respect to theme and execution. In developing coding schemes, a list of items was selected from both theoretical cross-cultural work and from previous empirical work (Cho et al, 1999).

All advertisements containing more than one model were first coded by three ethnic categories, Asian/ Pacific Islander, Caucasian, and all others. The study used Kao's (2000) classification to categorize the image of people appearing in advertisements. Detailed operational definitions of these categories are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Kao's Operational Definitions of Ethnic Images

Ethnicity	Description
Asian/ Pacific Islander	Origin in any of the original peoples of East Asia (Taiwan, China, Japan, Philippines, and Korea), Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos), and the Pacific Islands (Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Hawaii).
Caucasian	Origin in any of the white peoples of western Eurasia (England, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Western Russian) and North America.
Others	<p>All the other ethnicities other than Asian/Pacific Islander and Caucasian, such as African, Latino, Middle Eastern/ South Asian, or Native American.</p> <p>African: Origin in the original peoples of the African continent (Egypt, Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria), the Caribbean, West Indians, and Haitians. Origins in any black racial group, not of Latino heritage.</p> <p>Latino: Origin in any of the Spanish peoples who live in South America (including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Costa Rica).</p>

Ethnicity	Description
Middle Eastern/ South Asian :	<p>Origin in any of the peoples of the Middle East (where Asia, Africa, and Europe meet) including Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Kuwait; and South Asia (Bangladesh, Burma, India, Pakistan). The researcher put them in the same category because they can't be distinguished by skin color.</p>
Native American:	<p>Origin in peoples originally inhabiting the continental United States and Alaska who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.</p>
Can't Tell	<p>An ad with model's body part, such as hands or body shape, without showing model's exact facial structure.</p>

All the advertisements were coded by the above cultural categories. The coding design in the analysis was developed and largely based on An's (2007) finding and Cheng and Schweitzer's (1996), Cho et al.'s (1999), and Choi and Miracle's (2004) framework, which were originally built on Pollay's (1983) typology of the cultural value

manifest in advertising. Most of these values can be regarded as stereotypes of either Eastern or Western culture. Detailed operational definitions of these seven categories were shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Operational Definitions of Cultural Values

Cultural Value	Description of Cultural Value
Collectivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="555 799 1318 901">(a) Appeals about the integrity of or belonging to family or social group <li data-bbox="555 942 1075 972">(b) Emphasis on conformity or harmony <li data-bbox="555 1013 1294 1044">(c) Reflection of interdependent relationships with others <li data-bbox="555 1085 1374 1116">(d) Emphasis on the achievements of the family or social group <li data-bbox="555 1156 1310 1187">(e) Emphasis on the benefits to families or group members <li data-bbox="555 1228 1193 1259">(f) Featuring people in harmony with one another <li data-bbox="555 1299 1046 1330">(g) Featuring people working together <li data-bbox="555 1371 1286 1402">(h) Individuals are depicted as integral parts of the group
Individualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="555 1524 1305 1627">(a) Appeals about the individuality or independence of the audience <li data-bbox="555 1667 1094 1698">(b) Emphasis on uniqueness or originality <li data-bbox="555 1739 1289 1770">(c) Reflections of self reliance, hedonism, or competition

Cultural Value	Description of Cultural Value
Individualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (d) Emphasis on self fulfillment, self development, or self realization (e) Emphasis on the benefits to an individual consumer (f) Featuring a person enjoying being unique (g) Addressing benefits to oneself (h) Featuring a person doing something by oneself (i) Emphasis on the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of an individual or on the individual as being distinct and unlike others.
Low-context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Emphasis on product features and characteristics (b) Explicit mention of competitive products (c) Addressing the consumer's practical, functional, or utilitarian need for the product (d) Use of numbers or graphics (e) Emphasis on product features (f) Use of numbers (g) Literal function: identification and description (h) Overriding use of photographs for literal functions

Cultural Value	Description of Cultural Value
High-context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="557 359 1018 390">(a) Emphasis on emotion and mood <li data-bbox="557 431 1134 461">(b) Use of metaphors or aesthetic expression <li data-bbox="557 502 1358 609">(c) Associating a product with a particular situation or type of person or lifestyle <li data-bbox="557 649 1378 756">(d) Addressing affective or subjective impressions of intangible aspects of a product <li data-bbox="557 797 954 827">(e) Use of aesthetic expression <li data-bbox="557 868 1246 974">(f) Symbolic functions: association with characters or celebrities <li data-bbox="557 1015 1153 1044">(g) Mixed use of photographs and illustrations
Direct comparative	Portrayal and/or naming competitive information, explicitly by mentioning one or more competing brands by name
Indirect comparative	Implicitly using words such as “number one,” “best,” or “leader” without mentioning a specific competing brand
Non-comparative	Advertising that makes no comparison with a competing Brand

Data Analysis

A bilingual coder in the United States and one native coder in both countries coded the food advertisements; the bilingual individual coded both the U.S. and Taiwanese advertisements, and the natives coded each country's advertisements. Following Alden, Hoyer, and Lee (1993), the use of a bilingual coder was expected to enhance the judgment validity based upon his/her extensive understanding of the two different cultures. All coders used the standard coding sheet written in English, although there was concern that the translation process could compromise the equivalency of the coding task. To test for inter-coder reliability, reliabilities of all variables should exceed the 0.85 standard recommended by Kassirjian (1977).

To prevent ambiguous coding categories, a pretest of about 10% of the usable print advertisements was conducted with the coders individually prior to the main study. In the pretest, a percentage of agreement was calculated. The percentages ranged between 91% and 100%, were acceptable ranges for the different research variables.

A test of reliability by two independent coders was applied to the coding scheme. A total of 100 out of 1080 advertisements were individually analyzed to determine the inter-coder reliability. A percentage of agreement between coders was then calculated. The result suggested a minimum of observer error and was within the acceptable range, between 85% and 99% for the different research variables.

Basically, cross-tabulation tables for all data included in the study were analyzed for between-country differences by a chi-square test. Whether there were any significant

differences between the United States and Taiwan was then determined. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The number of samples from the U.S. magazines was 667 and the number of samples from the Taiwan magazines was 413. Chi-square analysis was performed on the distributions of multi-ethnic images and on the presentation of cultural values in different categories.

Approximately one-third of the American population is non-Caucasian but Taiwan is composed of less than two percent non-Asian. In the United States, African, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, and Native American descents account for 34% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). However, in Taiwan, people other than Asian account for around 2% of Taiwanese population (Department of Statistics, Ministry of Interior, Taiwan, 2004). To answer the first research question—whether multiethnic models are shown more often in the U.S. print advertising than in Taiwanese print advertising—the result supported this hypothesis. Although Taiwanese print advertisements used models shown in ad copy (51%) more often than the U.S. print advertisements did (34%), models other than white descent shown in the U.S. advertisements accounted for 28% among all ethnic images in the U.S. advertisements, and models other than Asian descent shown in the Taiwanese advertisements accounted for 18% in Taiwanese advertisement (see Table 4 & Table 5). A chi-square test revealed the differences between the two countries were statistically significant in these two researches of model use in advertisements ($p < .001$) and ethnic images shown in those with models ($p < .001$).

Table 4

The Distribution of Model Use in Advertisements in Taiwan and the United States

	Taiwan	United States
Model Use	n = 413	n = 667
No (No Human in The Ad)	49%	66%
Yes	51	34

$X^2(1) = 32.212, p < .001$

Table 5

The Distribution of Different Ethnic Images Shown in Magazine Food Advertisements among those Ads with Models in Taiwan and the United States

	Taiwan	United States
Ethnic Group	n = 212	n = 226
Asian/ Pacific Islander	82%	2%
Caucasian	14	72
Others	1	16
Can't Tell	3	10

$X^2(3) = 2.944E2, p < .001$

Overview and Theoretical Framework

Second, one of Hofstede's (1980) cultural concepts classified Western and Eastern cultures as individualist and collectivist cultures respectively according to people's characteristics. People from individualist cultures often tend to be self-centered and are more independent. Conversely, people from collectivistic cultures often adhere to harmony of family and are more interdependent. Comparing Hofstede's cultural concept in print advertisements in the United States and Taiwan to answer the second and the third research questions, the research found that Hofstede's cultural concept of individualism can obviously be observed in U.S. print advertising. However, Taiwanese print advertising is moving toward the tendency to follow this concept of individualism rather than collectivism. As displayed in Table 6, individualism accounted for 82% of content presented in the U.S. advertisements, with collectivism appearing in 18% of the ads. Moreover, individualism (66%) was roughly two times the number of collectivism-style ads in Taiwanese advertisements (34%). However, although more collectivist advertisements than individualist advertisements were found in both the U.S. and Taiwanese samples, a chi-square test revealed a statistically significant relationship between the two Hofstede's cultural concept (collectivism/individualism) and the two countries in which advertisements appeared ($p < .001$). Proportionally, more collectivist content appeared in Taiwanese advertisements (34%) than the U.S. advertisements (18%), and more individualist content appeared in the U.S. advertisements (82%) than Taiwanese advertisements (66%).

Table 6

The Distribution of Hofstede's (1980) Cultural Concept Employed in Magazine Food Advertisements in Taiwan and the United States

Type of Hofstede's Cultural Concept	Taiwan n = 413	United States n = 667
Collectivism	34%	18%
Individualism	66	82

$X^2(1) = 33.815, p < .001$

Third, similar to Hofstede's cultural categorization, Hall sorted cultures according to the scale of information context. In a higher context culture, communications are made through metaphors or to be implicitly presented, while communications are directly explained by verbalization in a lower context culture. People in a high-context culture often have a higher tendency toward communicating with in-groups who have similar understanding and experience than people in a low-context culture do. Comparing Hall's (1976) high-/low- context culture concept in print advertising in the United States and Taiwan to answer the fourth and the fifth research hypothesis questions, the results found that Hall's low-context cultural concept can be seen more often than Hall's high-context cultural concept in both the U.S. and Taiwanese print advertisements. As displayed in Table 7, a chi-square test indicated that there were no significant differences between the

two countries in the type of high-/low- context culture presented in ad copy ($p < .799$). It was found that 60% of all the Taiwanese advertisements were presented as low-context culture and 59% of all the U.S. advertisements were presented as low-context culture.

Table 7

The Distribution of Hall's (1976) Cultural Concept Employed in Magazine Food Advertisements in Taiwan and the United States

	Taiwan	United States
Type of Hall's Cultural Concept	n = 413	N = 667
High-Context	40%	41%
Low-Context	60	59

$X^2(1) = 0.094, p < .799$

The last research question examined comparative advertising presented in the U.S. and Taiwanese advertisements. Comparing non-comparative advertisements in the U.S. advertisements with those in Taiwanese advertisements, the research found that the type of non-comparative advertisements accounted for 84% among all the U.S. advertisements and that accounted for 79% among all Taiwanese advertisement. However, among those comparative advertisements in the United States, 92% are the indirect comparative advertisements. In Taiwan, none of these comparative advertisements are direct comparative advertisements (see Table 8). A chi-square test revealed a statistically

significant relationship between comparative advertising and the two countries in which advertisements appeared ($p < .002$). Proportionally, Table 8 reveals more comparative advertising appeared in Taiwanese advertisements (21%) than the U.S. advertisements (16%), and more non-comparative advertising appeared in the U.S. advertisements (84%) than Taiwanese advertisements (79%).

Table 8

The Distribution of Type of Comparative Advertising Employed in Magazine Food Advertisements in Taiwan and the United States

	Taiwan	United States
Type of Comparative Advertising	n = 413	n = 667
Non-Comparative	79%	84%
Indirect Comparative	21 / 100%	15 / 92%
Direct Comparative	0 / 0	1 / 8
$X^2(2) = 12.325, p < .002$		

Moreover, the research also investigated the ratio of product category and sorted these advertisements by categories. The two most categories in Taiwanese food advertising are Health-care product (36.1%) and Health Drink (17.2%). On the other

hand, the most two categories in the U.S. food advertising are grain product (31.5%) and food for meals (22.0%). The detail of the distribution in Taiwan and in the United States are listed in Table 9.

Table 9

The Distribution of Type of Food Category Shown in Magazine Food Advertisements in Taiwan and the United States

Type of Food Category	Taiwan n =413	United States n = 667
Diet/Weight-Loss Products	2 %	11%
Crackers/Snacks/Cereals	12	32
Health Drink	17	5
Health Care Products	36	3
Restaurants/Hotels/Resorts	7	4
Food for Meals	7	22
Cook Condiments(oil/sauce/spice)	6	6
Fast Food	1	2
Dairy/egg Products	9	12
Other	3	3

$X^2(9) = 3.369E2, p < .001$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Advertising can reflect the background of a culture so oftentimes people can understand a country by watching or reading advertising of that country. People also tend to choose media products that are similar to their own culture. Cultural proximity explained audiences' selection of media. Meanwhile, the issue regarding whether a standardized strategy can be adopted for executing global market targets has been raised for many years. All along, cultural difference has been one of the major barriers to develop a standardized strategy for practitioners. However, communicating information through the evolution of new media technologies has expedited the homogenization between cultures. At the same time, the outcome of globalization seems to narrow down the differences during this decade.

The United States and Taiwan were the subjects of this study. In light of the past theories and research, Taiwan, like most of the other Oriental countries, is regarded as a nation which is composed of highly homogeneous ethnic groups and values harmony within family. People who grow up under this culture generally communicate with others through implicit and indirect ways. The context of this study was based on the cross-cultural perspective between Taiwan and the United States. The study investigated the status quo in the advertising content between the two countries. Although hypotheses of the study were based on the past theories and research, the researcher sought to find out whether there are any changes in the early 21st century. Content analysis of magazine

food advertisements from both countries in 2008 was employed as the research method and the source of data.

Results of this study showed that Taiwanese advertisements used models more often in content of a food advertisement when compared to U.S. ones, even though model appearing in food advertisements was not a common occurrence in both countries. When analyzing ethnic groups among those advertisements with models, the result indicated that the U.S. advertisements showed a more diverse range of models than the Taiwanese advertisements. The great diversity of racial composition in the United States and highly homogenous condition in Taiwan supports this result. However, the result revealed that 82% of the models presented in Taiwanese advertisements were Asians/ Pacific Islanders and 72% of the models presented in the U.S. advertisements were Caucasians. Both countries still have the tendency to use models of respective majority races. The perspective of in-group partiality (Nagao, 2002) can support this finding. Moreover, comparing the result of models' ethnicity represented in the advertisements to the make-up of population in each country, the percentage of Caucasian models shown in the advertisements (72%) matched with the Caucasian group's percentage of the U.S. population pretty much (66%). However, although the percentage of Asian models shown in the advertisements (82%) was kind of far from the Asian group's percentage of Taiwanese population (98%), the Caucasian models accounted for 14% among all ethnic images in the Taiwanese advertisements. The result showed that the likelihood of employing Caucasian models in Taiwanese advertisements was relatively high. This finding supported Nelson and Paek's (2007) argument that East Asian countries are more

willing to employ Western models in an advertisement because Chinese consumers consider its products “more fashionable”, “more cosmopolitan”, and “more modern” if there are Western advertising elements in the advertisement (p.77).

According to the finding that more advertisements are created with individualistic setting than advertisements created with collectivistic setting in the United States and Taiwan, it is concluded that Hofstede’s (1980) cultural concept of individualism can be obviously seen in U.S. advertising. At the same time, Taiwanese advertising has moved toward the tendency to utilize the concept of individualism. However, although results of this study showed that advertisements from both countries were likely to be represented with individualistic layout, there was a significant difference between the two countries. It was found that more advertisements represented with collectivism in Taiwan than in the United States, while more advertisements represented with individualism in the United States than in Taiwan.

Comparing advertisements from Taiwan and the United States, the results showed that presentation of advertisements in both countries was more likely to follow low-context culture. That is, food advertisements in the United States and Taiwan were both likely to emphasis on product features, to explicitly mention competitive products, or to address the consumers’ practical, functional, or utilitarian need for the product. However, according to the chi-square test, this study concluded that Hall’s (1976) high-/low-context cultural concept, which is characteristic of Eastern/Western culture, seemed to be less significant in the advertisements between two countries than people’s understanding.

Concerning comparative advertising, the results showed that comparative advertising was not common in either the United States or Taiwan. Most companies were still more likely to not directly mention a rival company or products. Contrary to expectations, it was surprising to find that there were more indirect comparative advertisements in Taiwan than in the United States, while there were more non-comparative advertisements in the United States than in Taiwan. However, because of administrative law, direct comparative advertisements cannot be utilized in Taiwanese advertising.

Overall, the result of the study revealed that Taiwanese advertisements have started to greatly embrace the concept of individualism and to adopt the lower information context cultures, while the U.S. advertisements were still following their same tried-and-true strategies. Although the finding on the U.S. advertisements corresponded with much of the prior research on low-context and individualistic cultures, the finding on the Taiwanese advertisements contradicted those on high-context and collectivistic cultures (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000; An, 2007; Jun & Lee, 2007). The results of more comparative advertising in Taiwan than in the United States might surprise people's understanding that people in non-U.S. countries think that comparative advertising violates cultural norm. Those advertisers may have the executive experience, and think the same way as the conclusion of another study which indicated that indirect comparative advertising that claims its superiority over other competitors is more effective than both direct comparative and non-comparative advertising in positioning brands (Miniard, Barone, Rose, & Manning, 2006).

However, the results found that there are big differences in some product category presented in food advertising between two countries. For example, as displayed in table 9, advertisements about diet/weight loss products were often seen in the United State (11%) but they were not common in Taiwan (2%). Similarly, advertisements about health care products were pervasive in Taiwan (36%) but they were rare in the United States (3%). The results can be contributed to people's distinct diet habits and eating preference between the Western and Eastern countries. These results also suggested those global practitioners to think ingeniously how to perform their strategies in different countries with dissimilar and intrinsic cultural traditions.

Contribution and Limitation of This Study

This study contributed to the research on the cross-cultural study in global advertising. Because of the characteristic of reflecting cultural value advertisements often have, the results of this study can offer practitioners a rudimentary understanding of the present cultural perspective in Taiwan and the United States. The study suggested that practitioners can feel optimistic about implementing a globally standardized strategy as long as they could have a precise investigation on each distinct cultural context.

The result of this research was just an outset for cross-cultural study in global advertising strategy. The study only examined food advertisements in Taiwan and the United States. Therefore all the advertisements were from five categories: food, health, family and life, gossip, and women. However, print advertisements do not represent all type of advertising. For example, TV commercials might have different ideas and ways of presentation to display a product. Content analysis studies intrinsically assume that

what is seen is the most effective, but they cannot measure consumers' responses. An assessment of the effectiveness of the advertisement using a survey or experiment may provide a better explanation of whether the observed differences in visual strategies are directly attributable to the differences in the information contextuality of the target countries.

Variables other than cultural factors, which may affect the content of an advertisement, need to be considered. These factors might include advertising category, type of company. For example, different advertising strategies employed by multinational and domestic companies can be explored. Such factor needs to be examined more thoroughly to attain a more comprehensive understanding of differences in advertising content between countries

Direction for Future Research

This study examined presentation of ethnic groups and verbal and symbolic components in Taiwanese and the U.S. print advertisements. However, it is possible to examine how these ethnic images and creative components are presented in other type of media. Moreover, future study can investigate the scale of change through choosing data from two or three different years and comparing its results with each other. Furthermore, researchers can investigate advertisements from different countries to see the status quo of homogenization between cultures and estimate the feasibility of standardized strategy.

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