

A COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INDIAN
AND AMERICAN MAGAZINE ADVERTISING

By

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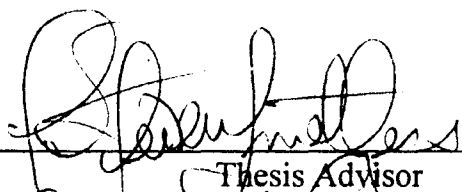
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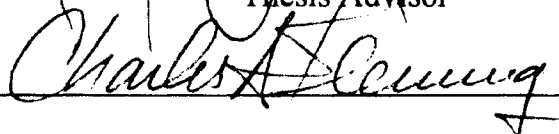
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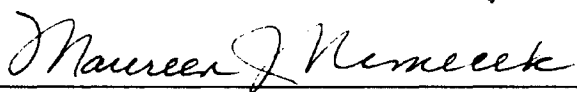
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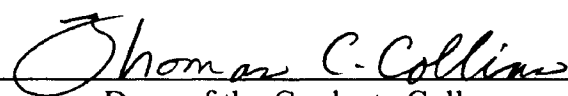
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Consider the following anecdotes: The Marlboro cowboy, famous in many parts of the world, was perceived as uncouth in Hong Kong. Pepsodent tried to use its teeth-whitening toothpaste appeal in certain parts of Asia where dark-stained teeth are considered prestigious.

Such stories loom large in the minds of international marketing and advertising executives when contemplating the transfer of advertising messages from one market to another. Even though the sales pitch in one market may follow a particular track, it is not necessary that the same approach will succeed in another part of the global market. The targeted audience in different countries belong to diverse cultures having differing societal values, economic conditions, and psychographics. Such diversity makes it essential for the multinational marketer to be aware that there are often situation-specific factors that make adaptations necessary even to the most utilitarian of promotions.

One of the major problems in an international marketing plan for an already established domestic product is whether to go with a standardized advertising campaign or whether it has to be localized. For example, in the United States, the bicycle is a recreational tool and hence the advertising theme revolves around "fun" activities. However, in India, a bicycle is a common means of transport and therefore the same theme will not be appropriate in that market. Although there is evidence in the literature to

support both sides of this argument, it is generally accepted that international advertising strategy ought to be predicated on the firm's understanding of its customers. In order to make such a decision, reliable facts and figures are required but these figures are normally scarce in foreign markets.¹ Even in developed nations, human nature makes filtering unbiased information among respondents difficult; in developing nations, the difficulty is compounded by illiteracy, communication obstacles, social structure, lack of competent staff, traditional behavior, and financial limitations. What many international advertising managers lack are some guidelines about the sorts of situations where message adaptations are likely and situations where they may be able to standardize. This problem is particularly acute in the consumer non-durable industry such as personal hygiene products, which has a reputation for being culturally sensitive.

The primary aim of most multinational corporations is to standardize their advertising in all countries in order to minimize costs.² Proponents of standardization say that people from different cultures are basically the same and that international advertising with a truly universal appeal can be effective in any market. The standardized approach is based on the following assumptions: one basic advertising theme is desirable; differences between countries are of degree, not of direction; basic human needs are similar everywhere. Therefore, the same products can be sold with similar promotional appeals.³

In a study of 27 multinational firms - including General Foods, Nestle, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, and Revlon - operating in the United States and abroad, Sorensen and Wiechmann found 63 percent of the total marketing programs were viewed as "highly standardized."⁴ The results of this study show that, as one would expect, the greater the similarity

between countries, the higher the percentage of the marketing that can be standardized.

Some corporations have tried using a localized approach whereby a local agency and the local branch office handle all the advertising decisions. Kaynak⁵ favors a localized approach to marketing communications. He proposes that the design of effective consumer information campaigns, advertising strategies, and marketing programs require consideration of the culture of the target group. The localized approach assumes that different cultures usually create different needs, although some basic needs may prevail across cultures. Therefore, people may not be satisfied with similar products and communication appeals.⁶

The marketing director of Schweppes International said, "Once the local people start adding their own creative input to the central core, they become the most effective marketing managers." Schweppes rejected a standardized approach in advertising its tonic because uniformity in packaging and label designs would not work. It rejected localization because of the necessity to maintain a consistent image across national boundaries. The solution was to follow a policy of flexible standardization by selecting a common positioning around which local operations could build in 54 countries.⁷

In a study of international advertising message adaptation and standardization, it was found that in transfers between two markets, the likelihood of maintaining both sales platforms and creative contexts is about one in three - 51 instances out of 175, or 29.1 percent.⁸ This, of course, does not mean that one in three promotions can be run as multinational campaigns. Rather, it suggests that a minimum of two in three campaigns have to be adapted for the international market.

It has been noticed that the most effective marketing results are achieved by firms employing a high degree of sensitivity to global cultures by home office executives and executive flexibility at the local level of management.⁹ However, the decentralized system of advertising is not flawless. It removes control from the parent organization and the advertising may not reflect the company's marketing goals and objectives. Also, it reduces the effect of advertising economies of scale that the corporation has accumulated over the years and it is usually not the most economical way of getting the message across to the consumer.¹⁰

There are at least three cross-cultural factors that influence marketing strategies abroad: differences in consumer customs and values, language, and the economic environment.¹¹

The traditional American values placed on achievement and materialism is not nearly as strong in many Asian countries, where an acceptance of one's place in society may dominate day-to-day behavior. Similarly, the strong individual bent of most Americans is not understood by the Indians, who are raised to value the family as a whole and to submerge their individuality. Differences in cultural values among countries are likely to result in differences in product needs, product preferences, and product usage.

Language provides the means of communicating the customs and beliefs of a culture. Advertisers must be aware of the meanings and subtleties of languages and dialects when selling in foreign markets. Many marketing blunders have resulted because of a lack of awareness of language. For example, Pepsi-Cola in India, had to change its slogan "Come alive with Pepsi" because the theme translated into "Bring your ancestors back from the dead."

The economic environment of a country influences advertising campaigns. The high standard of living in the United States allows for widespread ownership of electronic goods, appliances and automobiles. The level of ownership of TVs and telephones in the US is about 95 percent which is way above the figures in developing nations. The opportunities for introducing American goods and businesses are present but the limited purchasing power of the general masses of these countries has to be taken into account before formulating an advertising strategy.

Singh and Huang¹² found that some of the differences between Indian and American advertising were due to many economic and cultural factors. India being a seller's market for most consumer goods, the producers could sell their commodities easily and had little interest in perfecting advertising methods. Besides, the complex nature of population, differences in caste, religious sensitivity and other such factors were also responsible for making the task of advertising in India more difficult.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After the opening up of the Indian economy to foreign investment in 1990, many of the multinational corporations have begun investing heavily in India. Hence, there is a need for a study of the Indian advertising and marketing scenario in which these corporations must compete. Cultural values of the dominant middle class are changing rapidly, and consumer habits are also undergoing change.

The research problem in this thesis seeks to examine the differences in advertising content and expression between Indian and American magazine advertising.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The research problem for this thesis suggests that there are differences in advertising content between Indian and US advertising; we are not in a position to tell the exact nature of these differences.

This thesis will use a comparative content analysis of magazine advertising in these two countries to examine levels of information content in each of these countries' magazine advertisements.

The types of advertising appeals - emotional and rational - that are used for different products will be compared to draw attention to the exact nature of differences in advertising strategy that need to be employed when advertising in India or vice versa.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Today's multinational companies operate in a market that has very little resemblance with that of twenty years ago. At that time, international advertising and marketing were conducted as a separate activity- often a stepchild in the marketing organization. Today, advertising and marketing is in the mainstream, and foreign markets have become as important as the home market in the context of a global economy.

Cultural differences often function as boundaries in international advertising. This study aims to identify the cultural influence on advertising in India in terms of emotional appeal and levels of information. Thus, this research could provide valuable information for the development of advertisements that will most effectively convey information of the product being advertised in the Indian setting and will be a valuable reference for multinational corporations and their advertising agencies when formulating their advertising and marketing strategy for the Indian market.

This study will also assist in the identification of the reasons for past advertising failures in the Indian market so that others can avoid making similar mistakes. It will provide the researcher a better understanding of the similarities and differences between Indian and American advertising.

Finally, this study will enable the international marketer to be sensitive to forces such as culture, that shape both human and consumption behavior and to the complexities of inter cultural communication that facilitate the flow of meaning among people of different cultural backgrounds.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This study does have its limitations. In order to arrive at more definite findings, a much larger number of advertisements need to be studied. Also, advertisements over a longer time period need to be studied.

The scope of this study is limited to a small number of variables (advertising appeals and information levels), while there are a number of other variables that could have also been considered.

Only magazine advertising is examined; in order that the study be more detailed, an exhaustive study of all the different advertising media should be done.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 will review literature relating to cross cultural advertising. Chapter 3 deals with the research design and methodology that are used in this thesis. In Chapter 4, the data obtained from this study is analyzed and presented. And finally, Chapter 5 will present the conclusions of this thesis and provide recommendations for further study.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will first examine cultural differences and their influence on advertising. We will then review examples of international advertising failures due to a lack of cross-cultural sensitivity and awareness. Finally, it will focus on selected research studies that have been conducted on advertising content.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ADVERTISING

Anthropology, the study of humans, is a discipline that focuses on the understanding of human behavior. Cultural anthropology examines all human behaviors that have been learned, including social, linguistic, and family behaviors. Culture includes the entire heritage of a society transmitted by word, literature or any other form. It includes all traditions, habits, religion, art and language. Children born anywhere in the world have the same essential needs for food, shelter, and clothing. The development and priority of these wants are based on messages from families and peers and, thus, are said to be a result of the culture. It therefore reflects the human aspect of a person's environment; it consists of beliefs, morals, customs, and habits learned from others.¹

When international advertisers fail due to misinterpretation of the local culture, tradition, and language, they usually do so because they

advocated an action that was inconsistent with the local customs or because the appeal chosen was inconsistent with the motivational pattern of the target audience. Advocating the purchase of a product in which its use is inconsistent with the local customs will result in failure, even if the appeal chosen did not violate that culture per se. However, companies can also fail if only the appeal, or message employed, is inconsistent with the local customs and traditions, even if the action promoted is not. Consequently, a foreign company entering a new market has to be aware of both aspects: the product's use and the message employed.

One of the most difficult tasks in international marketing is the assessment of the cultural influences that affect a company's operations. In the actual marketplace, there are always several factors working simultaneously, and it is extremely difficult to isolate any one factor. Frequently, cultural differences generally have been held accountable for any noticeable differences between countries. However, when environmental factors differ, what is thought to be cultural may in fact be attributable to other factors. Quite often, when countries with both economic and cultural differences are compared, the differences are credited solely to the varying cultural systems. The analyst should be aware that while many of the differences are culturally based, other environmental factors such as the level of economic development, political system, or legal system, may be responsible for these differences.²

American and Indian lifestyles can be contrasted because of the basic differences in the respective cultures but there are aspects in the two that have their commonalties. Because of this, it is not possible to separate them entirely.

One of the basic differences is the family structure.³ American families are nuclear families whereas most Indian families are joint families where three generations of the family may live under the same roof. Age is respected and therefore, the head of the family is the eldest living male and the head of household chores is the eldest female. Under these circumstances, an advertiser has to identify the decision-maker and target the advertising at that person. Advertising appeals for household goods and appliances would need a relatively older spokesperson and the advertising content would focus on the reliability of the product rather than on the modern design or aesthetic appeal of the product.

Religion is another consideration that the advertiser must consider.⁴ The majority (90%) of the Indian population is Hindu; the cow is revered in this faith and the consumption of beef is taboo. Hence, it would not make much sense for McDonald's to advertise hamburgers in the Indian market.

Public display of affection between members of opposite sexes is not common, it is considered improper to hug and kiss in public.⁵ Given this attitude; it would be sensible for advertising to tone down its sexual content and sexual connotations. However, it is not uncommon for members of the same sex to be seen with their arms over each other's shoulder in a gesture of pure friendship. Such a gesture is entirely acceptable and carries no unfavorable connotations as it would in the United States.

Indian society is demarcated into social classes according to their birth. Members of each class are generally associated with a particular profession and lifestyle and it is hard to break out of the system. The economic standing of each of these classes varies from the very wealthy to those living below the poverty line. From an advertiser's point of view, it is essential to understand these classes and determine which class of society is

more likely to buy the product and then tailor the advertising to reflect the lifestyle and attributes of the target audience. In essence, we are dealing with the existence of subcultures within the framework of the main culture.

INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING FAILURES

International advertisers have been affected by two cross-currents in advertising abroad. First, there are differences in customs and values between countries and a need to adapt advertising strategies to these differences. Second, there is greater commonality between countries in cultural values as the result of global communications through TV and more frequent travel. Cross-cultural differences require the development of localized strategies on a country-by-country basis to better portray local lifestyles and cultures. Also, language provides the means of communicating the customs and beliefs of a culture. Advertisers must be aware of the meaning and subtleties of languages and dialects when selling in foreign markets. Many advertising blunders have resulted because of a lack of awareness of language differences and cultural mores.

Advertisers and marketers need to be aware of all these factors when they enter foreign markets and should also know about the mistakes of other advertisers. The inability of an advertiser to recognize these factors that affect advertising across cultures results in major advertising gaffes such as the ones that follow:

When Coca-Cola was introduced in China, shopkeepers made their own signs in calligraphy with the words *ko kor ko la*, which translated into "bite the wax tadpole," an association that would not be likely to encourage sales. Upon discovery of this blunder, the company came up with *ko kou ke*

la, which not only sounds more like the real thing, but also means "may the mouth rejoice."⁶

General Motors discovered it could not use the name Nova on its models worldwide because in Spanish-speaking markets the name translated into "won't go."⁷

Colgate-Palmolive introduced its Cue toothpaste in France, only to find out later that "cue" in French was a pornographic word.⁸

Mothers in Brazil feel that only they can prepare food for their babies. Their reluctance to buy processed food spelled difficulty for Gerber Products in Brazil, despite the fact that the company's products were selling well in other Latin American countries.⁹

American companies are not the only ones guilty of such advertising blunders. For example, Tokyo-based Shiseido Company, the third largest cosmetic company in the world, failed to adapt its advertising strategies to local conditions when it first entered the U.S. market. The company used Japanese models only and featured makeup colors unsuitable to American taste.¹⁰

Benetton, the Italian clothing manufacturer has also been guilty of neglecting the cultural attitudes of consumers in foreign countries. The company launched a new campaign in the Fall of 1989 under the theme of "United Colors of Benetton" which had won awards in France. One of its ads featured a black woman breast feeding a white baby and another ad had a black and a white man locked together in handcuffs. The ads came under fire from U.S. civil rights groups and had to be withdrawn. Benetton also ended up firing its advertising agency, Eldorado of France.¹¹

In Italy, the product name "Schweppes Tonic Water" had to be reduced to "Schweppes Tonica" because "il water" turned out to be an idiom for a bathroom.¹²

When Procter & Gamble, the U.S. consumer goods manufacturer, promoted its Camay soap in Japan in 1983, it ran into unexpected trouble. In the TV commercial, a Japanese woman was bathing when her husband walked into the bathroom. She began telling him about her new beauty soap but the husband, stroking her shoulder, hinted that suds were not on his mind. This very popular ad from Europe flopped because it was bad manners for a Japanese man to intrude on his wife.¹³

In Nigeria, Gulda beer ads showed a large, rough-hewn man in a blue-jean jacket based on the American movie character Shaft. The person is shown holding a mug, and the brown bottle of Gulda beer was on the table. The slogan "Gulda man, Gulda man, sure of his taste, proud to be different," was used. However, this ad did not appear to promote the brand. Research showed that Nigerian beer consumers felt that good beer came only in green bottles. They noted that the person in the Gulda ad was always drinking alone, although drinking beer was a social activity for the Nigerians. The ad was finally changed and Gulda beer was presented in a green bottle, the theme was changed to "Gulda makes you feel real fine," and the setting was changed to show elegant people drinking together.

Advertising in India poses a challenge for international advertisers. Unilever produced an ad comparing its detergent "Surf" to a local brand of detergent, with a man as the person doing the comparison between the two detergents. This was not accepted by the Indian consumer because Indian society has clearly demarcated male chores and female chores, and doing the

laundry is a female chore. The ad was withdrawn and a new one was run in its place with a woman as the spokesperson.¹⁴

BiNoca offended the Indian public with an advertisement showing a nude woman applying BiNoca's talcum powder. The caption was placed on the layout, casually covering strategic parts of her body: "Don't go wild-- just enough is all you need of BiNoca talc." The public, accustomed to conservative traditional standards of morality, found the advertisement indecent, publicly distasteful, and offensive.¹⁴

The above cited cases exemplify how international advertising and marketing strategies come up against barriers due to a lack of understanding of the market that is being ventured into.

REVIEW OF ADVERTISING CONTENT ANALYSES

A review of advertisement content analyses shows that international marketers attempting to compare two cultures have had to deal with the fact that marketing functions in one culture are absent or unnecessary in the other. Cross-cultural analyses have centered on the identification and analysis of common factors and differences in marketing systems, cultures, and other-cultural-enduring attributes among various cultural settings.¹⁵

An ongoing issue in advertising is defining whether an advertisement is informative or persuasive. However, making such a determination is highly subjective because what one person views as informative may be viewed as persuasive by another.

Resnick and Stern's¹⁶ work on the information content in television advertising established an operational definition of an informative commercial. They define a set of 14 evaluative criteria or "cues" that reflect

a "morphology of factors identified as information cues which could potentially be used in intelligent decision-making." Each of these cues represented potential categories of information that would be useful as a source of information about the product to the targeted audience. The results of the Resnick and Stern study held that only 49 percent of the advertisements were deemed informative when the study required only one of the cues to be considered informative. When the standard was raised to two and three cues, only 16 percent and 1 percent qualified as informative.

Applying the Resnick and Stern information cues to print advertising, Resnick, Stern and Krugman¹⁷, conducted a content analysis study on a sample of 1500 advertisements from 100 consumer magazines. They found that 86 percent of the advertisements were deemed informative when the presence of only one informational cue qualified the advertisement as informative.

Another study by Laczniak¹⁸, evaluated 380 advertisements in four consumer magazines using the Resnick-Stern information cues. It was found that based on the presence of only one informational cue, 92 percent of the advertisements were deemed informative. Using two and three cues as the cut-off, 59 and 49 percent of the advertisements were found to be informative.

Marquez¹⁹ analyzed the content of 600 magazine advertisements but used a different method. In this study, the dictionary definitions of information and persuasion were used; it was found that only 22.8 percent could be classified as informative while 43.3 percent were found to be persuasive.

Kaynak and Mitchell²⁰ compared the advertising in Canada, Great Britain and Turkey. The study showed that there are cultural differences

between countries that advertising practitioners should recognize. The authors suggested that differences in number and types of media in conjunction with cultural differences require themes, messages, presentations and illustrations tailored to the receivers of the advertisements. In addition, cultural differences are often confused with other factors since the cultural standards and norms in the two countries being compared are different enough to make the cross-cultural studies of little value.

Madden, Caballero, and Matsukubo²¹, did a partial replication of the content analysis of U.S. magazine advertising conducted by Resnick, Stern and Krugman using the established Resnick-Stern classification of informational cues. They found that more than 85 percent of Japanese advertisements analyzed satisfied at least one criterion for informative content, compared to 75 percent of the American advertisements. When the number of cues was increased to two, Japanese advertisements registered a moderate decline (to 61%), while U.S. magazine ads showed a sharp drop (to 39%). Consequently, the more information cues taken into account, the smaller was the percentage of U.S. advertisements compared to Japanese advertisements that proved to be informative. Japanese advertising tended to use specific information such as price (59.2%), while American advertising tended to make far more use of special offers in a more hard-sell approach to advertising. These findings were consistent with the Japanese custom of soft-sell.

Aifadatzis²² conducted a comparative content analysis of American, British and Greek print advertising. The findings of this study suggest that despite differences, there does exist a similarity in consumer behavior across the three cultures. The main conclusion drawn from this study was that the three cultures, however diverse, have some basic similarities in terms of

consumer behavior, which is the result of an internationalized "consumer culture."

Advertising across cultures requires careful presentation of the visual component of the advertisement. A comparative study by Cutler and Javalgi,²³ of the visual component of print advertising in America and the countries of the European Economic Community, revealed significant differences. For instance, children universally appeared in advertising more often in the United States. This difference could mean that U.S. advertisers are directly targeting children to an extent which may not be acceptable in Europe. The greater use of children in American ads also has further implication for U.S. advertisers in the European community in that the portrayal of children in advertising appears to vary between the U.S. and France. U.S. ads portray children as "clean and smiling" while the French are more apt to portray children in a more realistic setting. Also, the visual is physically larger in France than in America. This held true even when allowance was made for the larger page size in the French sample. Photographs (versus illustrations) were universally used less in France which appears to be related to the greater use of the symbolic appeal -- illustrations are more helpful in creative approaches like metaphors and aesthetics, as opposed to the realism of photos. The product size in the advertisement was larger in France. However, the larger size of product in the ad appears to be due to the larger absolute page sizes of the French magazines. When product size was calculated as a percentage of page size, the difference across countries was not significant. France showed the price more often, while the United Kingdom and the United States showed price less frequently. One implication for advertisers is that there appear to be no cultural barriers in the European Community to communicating price in the ad, and therefore

price information should be included as appropriate. One example of when it would be appropriate is in the use of high product price as a cue for establishing a high-status appeal.

In a study by Hong, et al,²⁴ American and Japanese print advertising was content analyzed to examine how advertising expression and content differed in the two cultures. They analyzed the content of 16 issues of both American and Japanese women's magazines which were published between 1983 and 1984. The study examined the degree of emotional appeals, informativeness, and comparativeness of advertising. Emotional appeals in an advertisement are the extent to which advertising relies on building affective or subjective appeal, which logically presents product-related information. This method of appeal contrasts with the rational appeal, which logically presents product-related information. The results of this study showed that, as hypothesized, Japanese ads were evaluated as more emotional and less comparative than American ads. In contrast to *a priori* notions, Japanese ads were found to contain at least as many information cues as American advertisements.

Japanese and American advertising were studied for the frequency of use of informational cues by Ramaprasad and Hasegawa.²⁵ Among the similarities were the high use of informational cues by both countries' commercials and the similar emphasis given to certain cues over others. For example, packaging information was used often in commercials of both countries. The visual display of the package enhances recognition at the point of purchase, which is an important advertising objective for such products as household goods and food, and a large number of the sample commercials were for such products. There was a relative lack of use of product safety and guarantee cues in Japanese ads. An explanation for this

could lie in Japanese consumer behavior which assumes the presence of these features in products and therefore does not expect commercials to point them out. The other information cues that were used in descending order of frequency were performance and components of the product. Altogether, 91.2 percent of the commercials had at least one type of informational cue while no commercial had more than seven cues. By Resnick and Stern's criterion of one cue per ad to qualify as an informative advertisement, Japanese commercials are highly informative. The study of information cues may be particularly relevant in a comparison of advertising in the United States and Japan because the latter's approach to advertising, based on consumer reception processes, is generally considered to be more "emotional." The findings of cross-cultural comparative studies of advertising strategies have been mixed.

In a content analysis of American and Japanese television commercials alone, Ramaprasad and Hasegawa²⁶ found some similarities and some differences in American and Japanese commercials. Overall, America and Japan differ in the products they advertise on prime-time television. These differences may be an indication of differences in media audiences and/or consumer behavior in terms of purchase decision-makers. The countries also differ in the commercial lengths they favor; Japan's larger use of 15-second commercials could be yet another manifestation of the Japanese emphasis on the compact yet efficient product. The study also confirmed the smaller use of comparison appeals by Japanese advertisers. This reflects the Japanese cultural characteristic of avoiding confrontation; the Japanese do not want competitors to lose face. The Japanese make less use of the hyperbole strategy, but instead use preemptive commercials more often in an attempt to present less extreme alternatives to present information

to the consumer. While acknowledging that similarities exist between American and Japanese commercials which might facilitate the use of some standardization in advertising, the differences and their span suggest the need for adaptation, particularly in the case of informational strategies giving pause to advertising practitioners who advocate complete standardization in global advertising.

Since World War II, the volume of world trade has expanded to approximately \$2 trillion a year, giving an indication of the increasing amount of contact that corporations have with other countries and cultures.²⁷ Hyte and Fraser found that the majority of firms (66%) that advertise internationally utilize the following strategy: a combination of localized and standardized advertising (56%), all localized advertising (36%), and all standardized advertising (8%). Two key benefits of standardization are cost savings and the maintenance of a consistent image, while a major risk is a lack of communication (or miscommunication) due to cultural differences. The majority of firms reported using a blend or combination of the two strategies, thereby realizing the advantages of each to some extent while minimizing the disadvantages. The respondent firms reported that trademark/brand name acceptance, transferability of slogans, levels of consumer education, competence of personnel in foreign offices, and rate of economic growth are very important in determining the transferability of advertising campaigns. A corporation with a well-known and accepted brand name is more likely to be successful using greater levels of standardization than a firm without such acceptance and name recognition. Firms which utilize a totally standardized advertising strategy are more likely to be involved in capital goods industries, while those that use localized advertising are generally involved in consumer goods. In general,

the study concludes that adjustments in advertising strategy should be made regularly, as the various cultural, legal, and economic environments are changing and product offerings interact differently with external variables as they move through the product life cycle.

In a comparative evaluation of international versus national advertising strategies, Hornik²⁸ found significant differences in the way ads are perceived. With the existing differences in perceptions, a communicator may be completely bilingual in discussing the ordinary matters of consumption motives yet wholly unreliable in discussing perceptual matters unless he is quite familiar with the attitudes and perceptions of both cultures. Product need universality cannot imply global message appeal. American models are frequently used in international advertising to give a sophisticated, cosmopolitan flavor to certain products such as cosmetics and watches. Israeli women certainly share the American passion for beauty and might manifest the same need for cosmetics, but this does not mean that the Israeli woman perceives the American cosmetic ad the same way it is perceived by the American. Therefore, understanding consumer wants, needs, motives, and behavior, is a necessary but not sufficient condition to the development of an effective promotional campaign. The creative efforts have to be adapted to the cultural and marketing characteristics of each foreign market, preferably on the basis of field research and experiments conducted in the target market.

Indian print advertising was compared with American print advertising in a content analysis by Singh and Huang.²⁹ They compared the advertisements in 36 issues of The Illustrated Weekly of India (a leading Indian family magazine) with the advertisements in 36 issues of Life. It was found that larger size advertisements were found in American magazines.

They also found that American advertisers used more illustrations, color, isolation, food, prestige, sex, and "other appeals" than Indian advertisers. These differences were due to the complex nature of population, differences in caste and belief, religious sensitivities, and economic factors prevalent in India at the time of Singh and Huang's study of Indian and American print advertising. Conditions in India today are not the same as they were at the time of the aforementioned study. There has been an increase in the literacy level and economic conditions, a gradual break-down of caste and social barriers and emergence of a significant middle-class consumer population.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The overall framework on which this study is built is the necessity to tailor advertising to the taste of its targeted audience. The literature reviewed would suggest that, in general, standardized advertising is not very effective. If similarity in strategy defines advertising standardization, then the tactical changes required would not be considered localization of advertising. If, on the other hand, both strategy and tactics define standardization, then tactical changes indicate localization. Hence, just as the discussion of marketing standardization needs to differentiate among the "Four P's" (product, place, price and promotion), the discussion of advertising standardization needs to differentiate between strategy and tactics.

The question, then, is twofold: can the strategy (benefit) be used universally and can the tactics (execution) be used universally? For the latter, the evidence in the literature reviewed suggests, in most cases, it can

not. Strategy is an even more fundamental question in advertising and this issue has been addressed in a number of cross-cultural studies.

Several analyses have been done on the comparative content of international advertising but few address the question of appeals. Indian advertising has been compared to American advertising with regard to layout and headline types. This study, like the studies reviewed, is also a content analysis. It is hoped that such a cross-cultural comparative study of Indian and American magazine advertising would provide insight, not only into the potential for advertising standardization but also into some of the reasons for the need for localization of advertising. Specifically, it will attempt to find out the differences in levels of information and types of appeal, used in Indian and American print advertising.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The content analysis is a method of study that has been used very successfully by a number of research studies, some examples of which were quoted in Chapter II of this study. The purpose of the content analysis method was explained by Lasswell:¹

The operations of content analysis consist of classifying the signs occurring in a communication into a set of appropriate categories. The results state the frequency of occurrence of signs for each category in the classification scheme.

Lasswell goes on to say that content analysis aims at a classification of content in more precise, numerical terms than is provided by the "impressionistic" methods. This would suggest that a content analysis seeks to examine and explain differences in a more quantitative manner rather than rely on qualitative judgment methods.

This study employs the content analysis method in order to compare print advertising between the United States and India. The sample magazines chosen for this study are the leading news magazine in the U.S., Time, and the leading news magazine in India, India Today. These magazines were chosen because of their large circulation across all parts of the respective countries.

The India Today is owned and published as a biweekly news magazine by Living Media Ltd. headquartered in New Delhi. It is the most popular

news magazine in India and is published in English and 6 other Indian languages making it the most widely circulated news magazine in India. The advertising that appears in different language issues is essentially the same, with the difference being that the advertising copy is in that particular language. This magazine has an international edition as well, which is widely circulated among the Indian American population. However, the sample for this study consists of only the domestic English issues of the magazine in order to simplify the task for the coders.

Time magazine is owned by Time Incorporated and has its headquarters in New York City and is one of the most widely read weekly news magazines in America.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research study consists of identifying, measuring and comparing the differences between American and Indian magazine advertisements. The differences identified and measured are based on two variables: type of appeal used and the level of information.

The types of appeal used were classified as either rational appeals or emotional appeals. When an advertisement uses information and arguments that present a logical and reasonable case for buying a product, it is said to carry a rational appeal. On the other hand, when an advertising message appeals to psychological rather than utility needs, it is considered to have an emotional appeal. For example, if an advertisement for a car focuses on its low price, its appeal is rational whereas if the ad tells the potential customer about how his/her image will be enhanced by driving such a car, the advertising message is emotional.

The levels of information of the advertisements were measured using the tried and tested Resnick and Stern² information classification system. This system identifies 14 informational categories or "cues" that are considered informative and which allow the consumer to make intelligent choices among alternatives after reading the advertisement. This is a highly objective scheme for evaluating overt information content and is a useful tool for content analysis.³ Although no method is entirely free of all evaluator bias, this system uses terms that are easily understandable and uniformly recognizable, as is evidenced by a high level of intercoder agreement.

Going by the Resnick-Stern information classification system, for an advertisement to qualify as an informative one, it has to have at least one of the informational cues. The advertisements were judged at face value, and issues of truth, credibility, deception, or soundness of evidence were not examined, in order to reduce the risk of evaluator bias. Also, statutory information required to be provided by government regulation were not considered as information in order to focus on the information voluntarily provided by the advertisers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addressed the following research questions:

- (1) Do Indian print advertisements contain a greater proportion of emotional appeals than American print advertisements?
- (2) Do Indian print advertisements contain a greater proportion of informational cues than American print advertisements?

- (3) Does the overall proportion of informative and non-informative advertisements vary between Indian and American print advertisements?
- (4) Are there differences between Indian and American print advertising in the frequency of use of the two appeal types among product categories?
- (5) What type of informational cue is present most often in Indian print advertisements?
- (6) What type of informational cue is present least often in Indian print advertisements?
- (7) What type of informational cue is present most often in American print advertisements?
- (8) What type of informational cue is present least often in American print advertisements?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the research questions, this study seeks to verify the following hypotheses:

- (1) There is no difference in the proportion of use of emotional appeals between Indian and American print advertising.
- (2) There is no difference in the proportion of informational cues in Indian and American advertising.
- (3) There is no difference in the proportion of informative and non-informative advertisements between Indian and American advertisements.
- (4) There are no differences between Indian and American print advertising in the frequency of use of the two appeal types among product categories.

Besides verifying these hypotheses, this study will also find which of the informational cues are present most often and least often in Indian and American print advertising, separately.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

For this content analysis, 12 issues of India Today and 12 issues of Time were chosen to be the sample by using the simple random sampling method. These issues were randomly selected from those that were published between June 1, 1992 and May 31, 1993. From each of these magazines, full-page advertisements were studied. All categories of products advertised in the sample magazines were included in this study.

TABLE I
RANDOM SAMPLE OF INDIA TODAY AND TIME

INDIA TODAY	TIME
June 15, 1992	June 29, 1992
July 31, 1992	July 13, 1992
August 31, 1992	August 10, 1992
September 15, 1992	September 14, 1992
October 15, 1992	October 19, 1992
November 30, 1992	November 16, 1992
December 31, 1992	December 28, 1992
January 15, 1993	January 25, 1993
February 15, 1993	February 15, 1993
March 15, 1993	March 29, 1993
April 30, 1993	April 19, 1993
May 15, 1993	May 10, 1993

DATA RECORDING FORM

Advertising information content was examined using Resnik and Stern's information classification system of 14 informational cues. An advertisement was considered informative if it contained at least one of the 14 informational cues.

The two kinds of appeals considered were emotional appeals and rational appeals. The product types were classified into 10 different categories.

Information Content Variable

Resnik and Stern⁴ devised a method whereby the presence of any one of the 14 informational cues, decided whether the advertisement was informative. Each coder was asked: "Does the advertisement communicate any of the following cues about the product, service, or organization?"

Resnik and Stern's 14 informational cues or criteria for classification of advertisements as informative or non-informative are as follows:

- (1) Price-Value. What does the product cost? What is its value-retention capability?
- (2) Quality. What are the product's characteristics that distinguish it from competing products based on an objective evaluation of workmanship, engineering, durability, excellence of materials, structural superiority, superiority of personnel, attention to detail or special services?
- (3) Performance. What does the product do? How well does it perform relative to other products?

- (4) Components/Contents. What is the product composed of? What ingredients does it contain? What ancillary items are included with the product?
- (5) Availability. Where can the product be purchased? When will the product be available for purchase?
- (6) Special Offers. What limited-time non-price deals are available with a particular purchase?
- (7) Taste. Is evidence presented that the taste of a particular product is perceived as superior in taste by a sample of potential customers? (The opinion of the advertiser is inadequate).
- (8) Nutrition. Are specific data given concerning the nutritional content of a particular product, or is a direct specific comparison made with other products?
- (9) Packaging or Shape. What package is the product available in which makes it more desirable than alternatives? What special shapes is the product available in?
- (10) Guarantee/Warranties. What post-purchase assurances accompany the product?
- (11) Safety. What safety features are available on a particular product compared to alternative choices?
- (12) Independent Research. Are results of research gathered by an "independent" research firm presented?
- (13) Company Research. Are data gathered by a company to compare its product with a competitor's presented?
- (14) New Ideas. Is a totally new concept introduced during the commercial? Are its advantages presented?

Appeal Variable

An advertising appeal is defined as the creative attempt to motivate consumers toward some form of activity or to influence attitudes toward a product or service.⁵ The categories applied to types of appeal used in advertising are rational and emotional.

The criteria for classification of an advertisement as emotional or rational are as follows:

Rational Appeals. An advertising message that consists of information and arguments that present a logical, reasonable case based on the consumer's practical need for buying a product, is said to have a rational appeal.

Emotional Appeals An advertising message that appeals to psychological rather than utility needs - needs for love and to be loved, to be regarded as successful, to be considered as important by other people, and other similar motivations - is said to have an emotional appeal.

Product Variable

The various types of products and services advertised were categorized and coded from 1 to 10 as given below:⁶

- (1) **Services** - are activities, benefits, or satisfactions that are offered for sale. Services are intangible, inseparable, variable and perishable.
- (2) **Soft consumer goods** - comprise both convenience goods and shopping goods.
- (3) **Hard consumer goods** - are durable goods that normally survive many uses.
- (4) **Household goods** - are goods or services that are intended for domestic purposes.

- (5) Automotive goods - are goods or services that are related to or concerned with passenger transportation.
- (6) Food products - non-durable goods that are tangible and are normally consumed in one or a few uses.
- (7) Personal care - goods that are meant for maintenance of personal hygiene or vanity.
- (8) Industrial goods - comprise a broad array of products and services that are used to produce other products to operate an organization.
- (9) Leisure goods - are those that are intended for voluntary pleasure seeking activities.
- (10) Public service goods - are made up of nonprofit public service announcements.

CODING PROCEDURE

This study used the services of two coders to judge the advertisements based on the criteria that were mentioned above. Each coder worked independent of the other and was asked to evaluate the advertisements on an individual basis. The advertisements were randomly selected and assigned to the coders, each of them coding one half of the advertisements in the total sample.

However, the relatively objective and accurate data gathering methods used in this study does not rule out the possibility of observer bias. To test the reliability of the data gathered, each coder was made to evaluate the same set of 40 advertisements (20 from each magazine) from those included in the study. The scores obtained from these tests were tested for relationships.

TABLE II
INTERCODER RELIABILITY

Advertisements from	Reliability
India	0.96
U.S.	0.93

It was found that there is high inter-coder reliability between the two coders: the reliability coefficients being 0.96 and 0.93 for Indian and U.S. advertisements respectively which are within reliability values as specified by Kassajian. This procedure tested the clarity of the definitions as well as the coders' ability to differentiate among categories without any bias.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data gathered from this research study were in the form of nominal or frequency data. Hence, the Chi Square test was used to find out if the differences and relationships among the variables were significant differences or whether they were by chance. If a marked difference exists between the observed frequencies falling in each category and the frequency expected to fall in each category on the basis of chance, then the Chi Square test will yield a numerical value large enough to be interpreted as statistically significant.⁵

In order to examine the predictive relationship of each of the variables, either a Contingency coefficient (C) or a Phi coefficient were computed.

Endnotes

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⁵T.G. Ng. (Master's Thesis). A Comparative Content Analysis of Asian and U.S. News Magazine Advertising. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988.

⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The content of Indian and American print advertising was analyzed to identify their similarities and differences. All full page color advertisements in the sample of 12 India Today magazines and 12 Time magazines were content analyzed. In all, the sample consisted of 891 advertisements, of which 615 were Indian and 276 were American advertisements.

The data obtained were analyzed on MYSTAT, a personal version of SYSTAT (The System for Statistics).

The findings are discussed in the form of answers to the relevant research questions that were mentioned in Chapter 3.

Research Question One

Do Indian print advertisements contain a greater proportion of emotional appeals when compared to American print advertisements?

The frequency and percentages of emotional and rational appeal in both Indian and American print advertisements are shown in Table III. A Chi-square analysis was performed in order to determine whether appeal type and country were related.

TABLE III
APPEAL TYPE BY COUNTRY

	INDIA	U.S.
Rational	249 (40.5%)	186 (67.4%)
Emotional	366 (59.5%)	90 (32.6%)
Total	615 (100%)	276 (100%)

Chi-square value = 48.23

Table Chi-square value = 3.8 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 1$)

Contingency coefficient, $C = 0.227$

The analysis found a significant relationship between the two countries and appeal types at the 0.05 level of confidence. The relationship showed that there were differences in proportion of appeal types between countries and the differences were significant and not due to chance. However, this relationship is very weak as indicated by the Contingency coefficient (C) value 0.227.

It was found that 59.5 percent of Indian print advertisements had emotional appeals while only 32.9 percent of American print advertisements carried emotional appeals. The research hypothesis stated that there is no difference in the proportion of use of appeals between Indian and American advertisements -- the hypothesis is not supported.

Conversely, only 40.5 percent of Indian advertisements had rational appeals while 67.4 percent of American advertisements carried rational appeals.

Research Question Two

Do Indian print advertisements contain a greater proportion of informational cues than American print advertisements?

An advertisement was considered to be an informative one if it contained a minimum of one informational cue; these ads allowed the consumer to make intelligent choices among alternatives after reading the advertisements. A complex Chi-square analysis was performed to examine the relationship between the number of informational cues per advertisement and the two countries. Table 4 shows the frequency of use of informational cues and also the percentages of the sample with the frequency of use.

TABLE IV
FREQUENCY OF USE OF INFORMATIONAL CUES BY NATION

# of cues	INDIA		U.S.	
	# of ads	Percent	#. of ads	Percent
No cues	183	29.8	28	10.1
One cue	136	22.1	56	20.3
Two cues	131	21.3	59	21.3
Three cues	99	16.1	44	15.9
Four cues	39	6.3	27	9.9
Five cues	20	3.3	29	10.6
Six cues	05	0.8	25	9.1
>Six cues	02	0.3	08	2.8
TOTAL	615	100	276	100

Chi-square value = 102.3

Table Chi-square value = 14.1 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 7$)

Contingency coefficient, $C = 0.321$

The analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between the number of cues per advertisement and the two countries. The Contingency coefficient (C) value is 0.321; this shows that the relationship between frequency of informational cues per ad and the two countries is weak.

The research hypothesis stated that there is no difference in the proportion of informational cues in Indian and American advertising.

However, it was found that American advertisements contained a greater proportion of informational cues - the research hypothesis is not supported.

Table IV reports the frequency and percentage of each of the 14 informational cues in Indian and American advertising. The total number of cues contained is greater than the sample size. This is because many advertisements contained more than one cue.

Research Question Three

Does the overall proportion of informative and non-informative advertisements vary between Indian and American print advertisements?

This study classified advertisements as being informative and non-informative advertisements. In order for an ad to be classified as informative, a minimum of one informational cue had to be present in the advertisement. All ads that did not contain any informational cues were classified as non-informative advertisements. Based on this, Table V presents the frequency of the two types of ads in the Indian and American samples. The table also expresses the two types of ads as percentages of the respective samples.

TABLE V
FREQUENCY OF INFORMATIVE AND NON-INFORMATIVE
ADVERTISEMENTS BY NATION

	INDIA	U.S.
Informative	432 (70.2%)	248 (89.9%)
Non-Informative	183 (29.8%)	28 (10.1%)
Total	615 (100%)	276 (100%)

Chi-square value = 40.53

Table Chi-square value = 3.8 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 1$)

Contingency coefficient, $C = 0.21$

A complex Chi-square analysis was conducted on the frequency of informative and non-informative advertisements and the two countries. It was found that there is a significant relationship between the above mentioned categories. But, the strength of this relationship is weak as indicated by the contingency coefficient (C) equal to 0.21.

The research hypothesis says that the overall proportion of informative and non-informative advertisements does not vary between Indian and American print advertising. However, this hypothesis is not supported because we found that there is a significant difference in the proportions of the two types of ads and the two countries.

It is seen that 70.2 percent of the sample of Indian ads were informative while the corresponding figure for American ads was 89.9 percent showing that American print advertisements are generally more informative than Indian advertisements.

Research Question Four

Are there differences between Indian and American print advertising in the frequency of use of the two appeal types among product categories?

Table VI shows us the frequency of use of appeal type by nation and product type. The table also gives us the percentages of use of each appeal type by product type and nation.

TABLE VI
FREQUENCY OF APPEAL BY NATION AND PRODUCT TYPE

Product Type	INDIA		U.S.	
	Rational	Emotional	Rational	Emotional
Services	41	68 (62%)	25	22 (47%)
Soft consumer goods	16	88 (85%)	08	05 (38%)
Hard consumer goods	43	19 (31%)	21	11 (34%)
Household items	28	25 (47%)	18	12 (40%)
Automobile goods	33	45 (58%)	16	19 (54%)
Food products	9	25 (74%)	22	18 (45%)
Personal care	5	19 (79%)	24	20 (45%)
Industrial goods	73	10 (12%)	03	00 (00%)
Leisure goods	02	64 (94%)	10	14 (58%)
Public service items	00	02 (100%)	01	05 (83%)
Total	250	365	148	126

Chi-square value = 106.8

Table Chi-square value = 14.9 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 7$)

Contingency coefficient, $C = 0.338$

The Chi-square analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between the appeal type and product category. The C value being 0.338, the relationship between appeal type and product category by nation is weak.

The research hypothesis stated that there are no differences between Indian and American print advertising in the frequency of use of the two appeal types among product categories but it was found that there were differences between the two categories. Hence, the hypothesis is not supported.

Significant differences between the two categories were found for soft consumer goods, services, food products, personal care items, industrial goods and leisure goods. It was found that for all except one product categories, Indian advertisements used more emotional appeals than rational appeals. The only American product category that used more emotional ads than Indian ads for the same category was hard consumer goods but without a significant difference.

Research Questions Five & Six

What type of informational cue is present most often and least often in Indian print advertisements?

Table VII gives us the frequency of use of each of the 14 informational cues individually in Indian and American print advertising. The table also reveals the percentages of use of each cue in the two countries' advertising. The total number of informational cues used for each country's advertising is larger than the total sample for each country because a number of advertisements contained more than one informational cue. A Chi-square

analysis was done to determine the relationship between the two countries and the proportions of each informational cue.

TABLE VII
FREQUENCY OF USE OF THE 14 INFORMATIONAL CUES BY
NATION

Informational cue	INDIA	U.S.
Price-Value	40 (6.5%)	53 (19%)
Quality	279 (45.4%)	154 (55.7%)
Performance	136 (22%)	153 (55.4%)
Components	144 (23.4%)	85 (30.7%)
Availability	77 (12.5%)	118 (42.7%)
Special offers	21 (3.4%)	26 (9.4%)
Taste	5 (0.8%)	13 (4.7%)
Nutrition	8 (1.3%)	11 (3.9%)
Packaging / Shape	10 (1.6%)	08 (2.8%)
Guarantee	25 (4%)	14 (5%)
Safety	23 (3.7%)	50 (18%)
Independent Research	7 (1.1%)	23 (8.3%)
Company Research	24 (3.9%)	5 (1.8%)
New Ideas	26 (4.2%)	24 (8.7%)
Total	825	737

Chi-square value = 95.0

Table Chi-square value = 22.4 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 13$)

Contingency coefficient, $C = 0.24$

The Chi-square analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between the 14 informational cues and Indian and American print advertising. This relationship is weak since the contingency coefficient C is 0.24.

The research question asks which informational cue is used most often and least often in Indian print advertisements. From Table VII, we find that quality (45.4%) was the informational cue that was used most often in Indian print advertisements. This was followed by components (23.4%), performance (22%), and availability (12.5%).

The information cue that was least often used in Indian print advertising was found to be taste (0.8%), followed by independent research (7%).

Research Questions Seven & Eight

What type of informational cue is present most often and least often in American print advertisements?

This research question is addressed with the help of Table VII which lists the frequency of use of the 14 informational cues by Indian and American print advertising.

From the table, it was found that quality (55.7%) and performance (55.4%) are the most often used information cue in U.S. print advertisements. These were followed by availability (42.7%), components (30.7%), and price-value (19%).

Company research (1.8%) was the cue that is used least often in American print advertisements. This is followed by nutrition, and taste informational cues at 3.9 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this content analysis provide some insight into the differences in the content of magazine advertisements in India and the United States.

However, there are a number of limitations to the scope of this study. First of all, the study was limited by sample selection, although care was taken to choose the magazine that best reflects the content of each country's advertising (India Today and Time) and a random sample of issues was chosen from a set time period. The study is also limited to only print advertisements while studies of other media such as radio and television could have broadened the horizons of this research.

This study is also limited by the number of variables examined, advertising appeals and information level, while there are many other variables to consider such as layout, ethical standards, and type of symbols used in the advertisements.

Finally, there is a vast difference in economic levels in India and the U.S. Another area that needs to be examined is media exposure of the general masses in India, since there are low literacy levels (37%) and the fact that nearly 25 percent of the population live in regions that do not receive television broadcasts. These are the areas which were beyond the scope of this research.

As a result of all these limitations, discretion must be used in generalizing differences and similarities beyond the period studied or in applying the findings of this research to other media of communication.

SUMMARY

The object of this thesis was to examine the content of Indian and American print advertising and identify the differences in advertising content. The study was successful in identifying differences in content with regard to the informational cues and the appeal types that are used. In addition, the study also identified the different kinds of appeals that are used for categories of products in India and the U.S.

For informational content, this study used the tested Resnik-Stern information classification system which determines the information content depending on the presence or absence of 14 informational cues. For an advertisement to be considered informative, a minimum of one of the 14 informational cues needed to be present. Advertising appeals were classified as either rational or emotional.

Twelve issues each of India Today and Time, published between June 1, 1992 and May 31, 1993, were randomly selected for the sample. Only full page, color advertisements were studied in order to ensure comparability of advertising content by controlling for advertising size. A total of 891 advertisements were examined for advertising content, of which 615 were Indian and 276 were American advertisements.

The first research question asked whether Indian print advertisements contained a greater proportion of emotional appeals than rational appeals when compared to American advertisements. This research study found that Indian advertisements used a greater proportion (59.5%) of emotional

appeals when compared to American advertisements (32.6%). It follows then that American advertisements have a greater proportion (67.4%) of rational appeals than Indian advertisements (40.5%).

The frequency of appeal type by nation and product type was examined to compare the kinds of appeals used for the same product in India and the U.S.

Informational content was examined in this study. One of the research hypotheses forecast that the overall proportion of informative and non-informative advertisements does not vary between Indian and American print advertising. It was found that 70.2 percent of the sample of Indian ads were informative while the corresponding figure for American ads was 89.9 percent showing that American print advertisements in this study are generally more informative than Indian advertisements, thus negating the hypothesis.

Another research hypotheses on informational content predicted that there is no difference in the proportion of informational cues in Indian and American advertising. However, it was found that Indian advertisements contained an average of 1.34 informational cues per advertisement while American advertisements contained 2.67 informational cues per advertisement. Therefore, this research hypothesis is not supported.

Besides, it was also found that there were no significant differences in proportion between Indian and American advertisements that contained one, two and three cues. There were differences in the proportion of ads that contained four, five, six, and more than six cues; in general, American ads contained a greater proportion of cues in these categories. This difference was especially noticeable in ads that contained five and six informational cues, only 3.3 percent and 0.8 percent of Indian ads contained five and six

cues respectively, while 10.6 percent and 9.1 percent of American ads contained five and six cues.

This study was successful in identifying the informational cues that are most commonly and least commonly used for both Indian and American advertisements.

Product quality (45.4%) was the informational cue that was used most often in Indian print advertisements. This was followed by components (23.4%), performance (22%), and availability (12.5%). The information cue that was least often used in Indian print advertising was found to be taste (0.8%), followed by independent research (7%).

The study found that quality (55.7%) and performance (55.4%) are the most often used information cues in U.S. print advertisements. These were followed by availability (42.7%), components (30.7%), and price-value (19%).

Company research (1.8%) was the cue that is used least often in American print advertisements. This is followed by nutrition, and taste informational cues at 3.9 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively.

CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to find out how and which advertising elements are different in two dissimilar cultures, the U.S. and India. A casual look at both Indian and American advertising might have us believe that they are much the same but a closer look based on variables like appeal type and information content suggests otherwise.

The appeal type that is used in an advertisement is a good reflector of the market competition. It was found that Indian print advertising used significantly more emotional appeals than American print advertising.

Intense competition in the U.S. market prompts the advertiser to play on the rational reason for buying their product in preference to a competitor's product. This is not to say that there is no competition in the Indian market but that there are a lot fewer competitors in the market. Another reason could be lower literacy levels in India and the fact that many of the products are being introduced for the first time. The fact that Indian literacy levels are much lower than American literacy levels suggests that the American consumer cannot be easily convinced about the worth of a product only by using an emotional appeal. Higher education levels of the American consumers make them think rationally before arriving at a decision about purchasing the product. Also, brand images are very important to the Indian consumer because it is associated with class and taste, qualities which are much sought after by the emerging middle classes in particular. Hence, Indian advertisements use emotional appeals to reinforce brand value as a means to attain social standing and in image building.

The other difference that was identified was the difference in the use of informational cues. It was found that Indian advertisements were more likely to be non-informative than American advertisements. In explaining this difference, we need to consider once more, the low number of competitors for the same market. The U.S. market is intensely competitive for most products while the Indian market is sometimes a seller's market. Due to a lack of competitors, the main objective of an advertising plan is to make the consumer aware of the existence of the product. The advertiser's thrust is more toward creating a need for the product rather than providing information about the quality or performance. For example, washing machines were unheard of in India until about six years ago. The first few companies to market the product in India developed advertising campaigns

based on the prestige associated with owning a washing machine and did not contain any informational cues in their advertisements. This was at a time when there were less than a handful of washing machine manufacturers. The emergence of a sizable middle-class with good spending power has created a society where social standing depends upon material possessions. In a market such as this, it is easy to see the reason for the small number of informational cues present in the advertising.

Also, on an average, Indian advertisements contained fewer informational cues than American print advertisements. Quality, was the cue that was most frequently used by both Indian and American advertising but there was a significant increase in the frequency of use of this cue in American ads when compared to Indian ads. American advertising also contained information about performance unlike Indian ads. American ads contained information about availability of the product. These differences can be traced to the fact that American advertising and marketing strategies are aggressive and prompt the consumer to get the product right away. On the other hand, Indian advertising prefers the "soft sell" approach with less emphasis on the qualities of the product per se. The advertising messages are more subtle and appeal to emotions; the American "hard sell" approach will be deemed annoying and pushy in the Indian setup.

The findings generally supported the belief that these two cultures produce advertising that differs in content and expression. This study was successful in identifying some of the elements or variables that distinguish one country's advertising from the other's. The findings of this thesis could be a possible source of reference for a U.S. corporation attempting to do business in India. This study would be of particular use to a corporation that is marketing a product successfully in the U.S., and is considering

introducing the product in India. The examples of international marketing blunders that have been listed in this thesis are too many in number to be ignored. Most of these errors happened due to a lack of realization that cultures differ enormously and that the advertising approach employed in one market need not necessarily be the right strategy for another country. The cost of planning and implementing an advertising and marketing plan is increasing, and it is all the more important for corporations to thoroughly research the new market before attempting to do business there.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The scope of this content analysis is limited by time constraints and consequently an inability to examine a larger sample along with other forms of print advertising. It is recommended that future research be conducted to analyze the advertising content of newspapers because newspapers tend to contain advertisements for products that satisfy immediate needs. This is in contrast to magazines which generally contain advertisements for durable goods, and items that are "high involvement" decision products.

This study used the Resnik-Stern system of information classification in which the presence of even one of fourteen cues, qualifies the ad as an informative one. Such a system does have its drawbacks and it is recommended that more than just one cue needs to be used as the cut-off mark to qualify the ad as informative.

The appeal types were categorized as being either emotional or rational while it might be possible for an ad to have both an emotional as well as a rational appeal. However, in this study, the presence of a high intercoder reliability negates the risk of ads being wrongly classified by appeal type.

The cost of planning and implementing an advertising strategy is rising by the day and corporations are constantly looking for ways to prune these costs. Multinational corporations, operating in diverse markets, have been trying to develop a standardized advertising campaign to be used across cultures. The other option that is being used is to simply transfer advertising from one country to another, the only difference being that models from that country are used, while the copy remains the same. The findings of this study suggest that each culture expects different attributes from a particular product, and also different emotions are involved with different product categories. It is important that advertisers refrain from standardizing advertising for different markets and instead develop advertising plans for each market.

Even though quality, performance and components were the specific informational cues used most often in Indian magazines, the other informational cues cannot be ignored entirely. Corporations should conduct in-depth studies of their particular product before using any information cues in their advertising.

The appeal types used in Indian advertisements are predominantly emotional. This means that the Indian consumer attaches importance to brand images and the lifestyle associated with a particular brand. The lifestyle factor may be attributed to the low income level of the common population and the constant desire to move ahead in standard of living. The use of images of grand lifestyles leads the consumer into a make-believe world which he/she has always aspired to enter. Even though the lifestyle portrayed in the advertisement may never be attained by the vast majority of the targeted audience, acquiring a product that is associated with such a

lifestyle satisfies the immediate need of the consumers to keep improving their lifestyles.

The portrayal of lifestyles can be analyzed as a part of non-verbal communication content of advertisements. These may also include illustrations, symbols, aesthetics, and gestures. Aesthetics includes the art, the drama, the music, the folkways, and the architecture endemic in a society. These aspects of a society convey the concept of beauty and expression revered in a culture. The aesthetic values of a society show in the design, styles, colors, expressions, symbols, movements, emotions, and posture valued and preferred in a particular culture. The attributes have an impact on the design and marketing of different products as well as advertising expression.¹ The non-verbal communication content of an advertisement conveys as much, if not more than the actual words, in many situations. This is an aspect that an advertiser needs to consider while formulating an advertising strategy across cultures.

Another area for research is to look for differences in some other advertising elements such as the layout and the placement variable. This will help in finding what kinds of layouts and headlines are favored by the Indian consumer.

While there is a definite need to expand the scope of this study, it is hoped that the findings of this study will be of use to American corporations venturing into the Indian market to enable them to understand the factors that go into making successful advertising and marketing decisions in a different culture.

Endnotes

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