

## **Consumer Evaluation of Country Image and Brand Personality under Export Marketing**

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### **I . Introduction**

Nowadays consumers are making every effort to satisfy their interests in product purchases. This means that consumers purchase products at their desired level of quality and price. However, consumers have difficulty in choosing products because the information available does not allow them to adequately evaluate the quality of product. Because of this, consumers may use proxy indicators of product quality to evaluate the real product quality or the value for money of a product. Proxy indicators such as country of origin, brand and price information and extrinsic informational cues frequently used by consumers.

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There have been many studies which investigate the relationship between products quality and such proxy indicators. Researchers have found that consumers evaluate product quality according to the country of origin information and the brand name of a product. However, existing studies on country image mainly emphasize the functional factor of a product and brand related to country image in consumer purchasing decisions. They have given relatively little weight to the symbolic and emotional aspects of brand and product.

In this context, this thesis researches directly and indirectly how country image and functional attribute as well as brand personality influence consumers' brand selection - preference and purchase intention - and reports the strategic implication of its findings.

This study aims to verify that although the country image and the functional attributes of a product exercise meaningful influence, both direct and indirect, to the consumers' selection of brands, the brand personality, or a symbolic attribute of the product will also exercise a positive influence to the consumers' selection. With this understanding in mind, this study looks into how the brand personality affect the mind set of the consumers in their choosing the product, and thereby to present a theoretical frame rendering a favorable influence for the product brand. Concerning the brand personality, the measuring device recently developed by Aaker [1997]<sup>1)</sup> has been applied for this study. The key subjects of the study are as follows.

First, how are the roles of the country image, the functional attribute and the brand personality of the commercial product looked upon by the consumers of the United States, Japan and Korea respectively? Second, how are the differences of the strategic meanings compared between the consumers of the countries?

Thus the study executes an analysis on the brand personality in conjunction with its related country image and functional attribute, away

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1) Jennifer L. Aaker, "Dimensions of Brand Personality", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol 34, 1997, pp.347-356.

from independent treatment, in order to see how such multi-cue effects of a brand affect the consumers in the course of their brand selection.

## II. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

### 1. Country Image

The country image has hitherto been defined as 'a general recognition of the product quality of a specific country.' Based on this definition, a number of researches have been conducted with emphasis on the analysis of the country image related to the effect of the country of origin. In other words, the analysis on how the country image affects the factors for the purchasing determination in the international marketing constitutes the main stream of these researches.

However, apprehensions have been recently arisen on if the country image can exist in relation with the quality of product only. Such apprehensions have generated a general tendency toward embracing the image related not only to the product quality but also to the ingenious image of a country engendered by the advantage of the environmental aspect as well as characteristics of the country.

Nowadays in this world of internationalized society where the commercial product is so frequently transported between the countries that product image plays an important role on the consumers in the course of their product appraisal. The image of a country made by her products interests the consumers, who tend to appraise the quality of the product under the influence of the country image. As a result, their interest in the effectiveness of the country of origin is increasing.

Earlier literatures concerning the country image indicate that the consumers tend to have a fixed country image per a specific product and

are susceptible to it in their purchasing the product. It can be safely said that many researches have been conducted on the effectiveness of the place of product origin because of the general agreement that the country image plays important role for the consumers in making appraisal of the product. Following illustration may indicate the importance of the effectiveness of the place of product origin.

First, the effectiveness of the place of product origin is a kind of bias constantly kept up on the consumers' mind set. It is particularly noteworthy that the customers who are short of experience with or information of the product are susceptible to such a halo effect of the image of product origin as would lead them to a hasty conclusion in advance of inquiring into enough product information.<sup>2)</sup>

Second, since it is all but impossible for the consumers to have a thorough grasp of the information related to a product at the time of their purchasing, the information of the product origin would play a important role of a surrogate indicator, serving as a key parameter in explaining and predicting the consumers' purchasing action.

Third, under the current international trade environment where the consumers are led to so many opportunities to face with the international products in parallel with the increase in international trade volume and with the expansion of the global enterprises that people have realized the trait of the customers of each country as an important problem for their marketing operation.

Thus the effect of the country of product origin over the consumers' action has been studied from various aspects past 30 years. Several established researches place emphasis on the complexity of the image cue of the producing country, reconfirming the importance and the potential influence of it over the consumers' selection. In other words, researches come to exist specifically concerning the effectiveness of the country of

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2) L. G. Schiffman and L. Leslie, "Perceived Risk in New Product Trial by Consumer", *Journal of Marketing Research*, February 1992, pp.106-108.

product origin led by the product origin cue capable for the consumers to confer meaningfulness.

Johansson, Douglas and Nonaka [1985]<sup>3)</sup> have found meaningfulness for the specific level of the product attribute concerning the effectiveness of the country of the product origin, failing notwithstanding to find the meaningfulness for the overall level. Erickson, Johansson and Chao [1984]<sup>4)</sup> separately from Johansson, Douglas and Nonaka [1985]<sup>5)</sup> conducted researches on the effectiveness of the country of origin with the automobiles of prestigious brand made in Germany, Japan and the United States respectively, but failed to find any clue of meaningful effectiveness out of the consumers' attitude toward their brands. The failure may be attributable to the role of the country image as a halo effect. To say in other explanations, the customers' purchase action is not subject to the country image when they are familiar with the product brands.<sup>6)</sup>

Generally, the effectiveness of the country of product origin clearly acts in three different ways as following.<sup>7)</sup>

Firstly, the customers may use the country of origin cue as one of the many attributes utilized merely to form a product appraisal. Secondly, the label of the country of origin may be created as a halo effect to influence the attentiveness and appraising power of the customers toward the product. Finally, the country of origin may be generalized into a form of a fixed concept of the country useful for the consumers to obtain such

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3) J. K. Johansson, S. P. Douglas and I Nonaka, "Assessing the Impact of Country of Origin on Product Evaluations: A New Methodological Perspective", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 22, November 1985, pp.388-396.

4) G. M. Erickson, J. K. Johansson and P. Chao, "Image Variables in Multiattribute Product Evaluations", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 11, September 1984, pp.694-699.

5) J. K. Johansson, S. P. Douglas and I. Nonaka, op. cit., 1985, pp.388-396.

6) C. M. Han, "Testing the Role of Country Image in Consumer Choice Behavior", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 24(6), 1990, pp.24-40.

7) S. T. Hong and R. S. Wyer Jr., "Determinants of Product Evaluation: Effects of the Time Interval between Knowledge of a Product's Country of Origin and Information about Its Specific attributes", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 17, December 1990, pp. 277-288.

information as is not available to them.<sup>8)</sup>

In the meantime, it may be probable that the effectiveness of the country of product origin does not exist. If it exists, only minimal effect has ever been verified in the customers decision on product purchasing. It is particularly worthy to notice that Olson and Jacoby [1972]; Erickson, Johansson and Chao [1984] and Johansson, Douglas and Nonaka [1985] have raised many doubts about the meaningful effectiveness of the country of origin.<sup>9)</sup>

It is admissible that the effect of the country of origin has incited many researches on the detailed characteristics of its effectiveness. However, it is not yet clear as to whether the effect of the country of origin has ever been changed through the product category, the answering group and such research as adopting different methods.

## 2. Brand Personality

There are numberless kinds of brand that would flash across one's mind when he try to memorize product brands. They can be classified into three categories; the first such is a kind associated with attributes of the product; the second such is a kind without any relation with any attribute of the product and the third such is a brand personality with no relation to any of the product associates.

A brand personality can be defined as a set of 'human personality' associated with a given brand. A brand personality connotes not only

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8) Warren J. Bilkey and Eric Nes, "Country-of-Origin Effects on Product Evaluations", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 8, Spring 1982, pp.89-99.

9) J. K. Johansson, S. P. Douglas and I. Nonaka, *op. cit.*, 1985, pp.388-396.  
J. C. Olson and J. Jacoby, "Cue Utilization in the Quality Perception Process", *Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research*, eds., M. Venkatesan, Iowa City: Association for Consumer Research, 1972, pp.167-179.

G. M. Erickson, J. K. Johansson and P. Chao, *op. cit.*, 1984, pp.694-699.

typical human personality but also such personal peculiarities as gender, age and sociological and/or economic class. Its attributes are as much lasting as human personality. For instance, Coca-Cola is the brand of a beverage favored by people of prudent and active personality who think much of tradition. Contrary to this, Pepsi-Cola is known to have settled down as a beverage suitable with younger generations who tend to reject conventional concept but assume strong spirit of independence and like to speak newest jargons.

The brand personality exercises influence over the consumers to become selective and to prefer to purchase specific products. The brand personality is known to stimulate the consumers to become highly selective of the products, whereas any product that has personality unattractive leads the customers to look away from such product. Every product brand has its personality regardless of whatever product order it may appertain to. Each product has to be entitled for a brand, and thereby the brand should come to stand for meaningfulness. As a result of this process, the brand of a product brings forth a certain 'direction indicative' to the customers, mind set different from the satisfaction the customers feel with the product purchased merely for the sake of the product.

The personality of person is constituted with various peculiarities of various levels. Likewise, the personality of a brand comes into existence in a combination of various associates with the brand. In detail, a brand personality comes into being in a combination of direct associates such as the product category, the price and even its package. It may also appear in a combination of various indirect factors for the existence of the product such as end users, corporate image, country of origin, style of advertisement, sponsorships, age of the brand, symbol, the top management and etc. It is noteworthy that the words expressing human personality are also used for brand personality in exactly same senses.

Plummer [1985]<sup>10</sup> started to refer to human personality and peculiarity as such youthfulness, gorgeousness, or kindness in connection with

advertisement. By 1996, David Aaker [1991]<sup>11)</sup> associated the brand image with the brand personality as a factor for forming a brand equity. Most recently, Jennifer Aaker [1997]<sup>12)</sup> developed the brand personality scale in order to construct a brand personality. She classified the brand personality into five factors of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness, and indicated that factors become apparent when the brands are separated by age or by gender, explicitly explaining the differences between brands.

The study of the brand personality scale helps measure how far positive or negative each brand attitude is by means of comparison of the brands of a group of brands. It is noteworthy that the personality variations are closely related to their attitudes and that their relations are changing according to brand.

### 3. Hypothesis of the Study

Now is the time when the global business strategy is rapidly changing. Under this business environment of rapid development, the relation between the product and the country is no longer a phenomenon concerned with a single country.<sup>13)</sup> The tendency of the world marketing is toward the increase of the so-called hybrid products, designed by a country but produced by another country, in the global market. Under the current tendency, many researchers share a common advocate for differentiating the brand effect in the country where the brand was designed from the country where the brand was assembled or produced. They attempted an approach

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10) Plummer, Joseph T., "How Personality Makes a Difference", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 24, No 6, 1985, pp.27-31.

11) Aaker, David, *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*, New York: The Free Press, 1991, pp.51-93.

12) Jennifer L. Aaker, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp.347-356.

13) P. Chao, "Partitioning Country-of-Origin Effects: Consumer Evaluations of a Hybrid Product", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1993, pp.291-306.



to verify that other information cues such as brand name, price and warranty appear along with the country of origin.

However, taking the peculiarities of the subject product, or automobile, into consideration, and for the purpose of simplifying the model, the concept of the country of origin applied in this study means a non-hybrid brand or a genuine country of brand origin or a uni-national brand, which does not differentiate the country of the brand origin from that of the production origin sourcing country.

This study attempts to single out the country image, the functional attribute and the brand personality of a product in order to analyze how they influence the consumers for their preference and purchase intention of the product. With this plan in mind, the study has constructed a research model to make comparison with the forms of the consumers of Korea, the United States and Japan. Particularly, the measuring device of the brand personality has been applied in order to observe what influences the images of symbolic aspects exercise to the consumer's selection. And then, a comparative study has also been applied to the country images and the functional attributes of the product, which have been investigated by many of the preceding researches. Furthermore, the consumers' selection is categorized into preference and purchase intention. In order to compare the consumers of Korea, the United States and Japan, the following hypothesis have been established:

**Hypothesis 1** : The variations of a country image affect the consumers' selection of the middle and small size automobile.

**Hypothesis 2** : The variations of the functional attributes affect the consumers' selection.

**Hypothesis 3** : Each factor of a brand personality affects the consumers' selection of the middle and small size automobile in the subject countries all alike.

### III. Methodology

#### 1. Object of Analysis and Investigation Method

Korea, the United States and Japan are selected as the subject countries for this study. Particularly, the purpose to have singled out the United States and Japan from other countries lies in the reason that they are the countries of our special concern both in terms of politics and trading which occupies major share of the world market, and therefore an analysis of our appraisal of their products in comparison with Korean products is expected to be very suggestive for our realistic market strategy.

This study singles out durable consumer product as subject product in order to reduce deflection occurring due to probable flimsiness of the objects as much as possible. Accordingly, the brands of the selected products are the middle and small automobiles of 'Ford,' 'GM,' of the United States; 'Toyota,' 'Nissan' of Japan and 'Hyundai' 'Daewoo' of Korea. This selection is made with expectation in mind that the consumers would be highly involved in the study and would positively participate in expressing a brand personality of their own preference in terms of social aspect.<sup>14)</sup>

In order to verify the model and the hypotheses of this study, a series of questionnaires on the medium and small size automobiles of Korean, American and Japanese made were distributed. The total number of the questionnaires was 720 sheets comprising 120 such per 6 brands. Of 650 sheets, the 615 sheets exclusive of unusable ones were finally taken up for the use of this study.

The key issues concerning the collection of the materials for the study

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14) David Aaker, "Building Strong Brand", New York: The Free Press, 1996, pp.137-174.

were as follows: (1) Relatively well off adults of over middle class and over 18 years old were selected as the object of the questionnaires. (2) The object cities were Columbia, Missouri of the United States, Chiba of Japan and Seoul of Korea. (3) A random sampling method was adopted for the study process. (4) the investigation method was an individual interview method through the questionnaires. Finally, the investigation was carried out during the summer of 2005.

## 2. Design for the Analysis of the Actual Proof

### 1) Manipulative definition

In order to measure a country image, the multi-dimensional measuring method developed by Martin and Eroglu [1993]<sup>15)</sup> has been introduced. For this purpose, a country image is categorized into 14 items to be measured by 7-point semantic differential scale. The concrete items are (1) economic development, (2) democratization, (3) production system, (4) civil government system, (5) industrialization, (6) labor expenses, (7) education level, (8) welfare system, (9) free market system, (10) economic environment, (11) export and import of agricultural product, (12) quality of products, (13) standard of living and (14) level of technological study.

Consumers' conviction in the functional attributes of a product has been measured in terms of five items, namely technical advancement, prestige, workmanship, price and serviceability, which are obtained from an analytical research by Han and Terpstra [1988]<sup>16)</sup> on the primary factors of the 14 items utilized in the research by Nagashima [1970, 1977].<sup>17)</sup>

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15) I. M. Martin and S. Eroglu, "Measuring a Multi-Dimensional Construct: Country Image", *Journal of Business Research*. Vol. 28, 1993, pp.191-210.

16) C. M. Han and V. Terpstra, "Country-of-Origin Effects for Uni-National and Bi-National Products", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 16, (Summer), 1988, pp.235-256.

17) A. Nagashima, "A Comparison of Japanese and US Attitudes Towards Foreign Product", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 34, (January), 1970, pp.68-74.

A. Nagashima, "A Comparative 'Made In' Product Image Survey Among Japanese

For measuring variations of a brand personality, the items presented by Jennifer Aaker [1997] have been used after having them complimented through an advance investigation.<sup>18)</sup> To say in detail, 30 Q&A items are used to cover the five personality factors of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. The returned 30 items are measured by 5-point semantic differential scale through the standard average value of two opposing opinion per item to verify the hypotheses.

In order to measure the variation of the brand preference, two opposing expressions are used in terms of either "I want to select xx brand", or "I don't want to select xx brand." In the meantime, for measuring the variation of brand purchase intention, two opposing expressions are also used in terms of either "I want to buy xx brand," or " I don't want to buy xx brand."<sup>19)</sup>

## 2) Measuring variations

A specific concept has been broken down into various items to measure variations of each item. In order to verify the feasibility of the variation, a factor analysis is applied per variation, while Cronbach's Alpha value is calculated to verify the reliability of the verification.

In order to verify the hypotheses, an factor analysis has been applied to country image, functional attribute and variation of brand personality and then the result of the analysis of each item has been utilized to execute a multiple regression analysis. Each factor of country image, functional attributes and brand personality has 10 kinds of independent variations but two kinds of the subordinate variations which are brand preference and brand purchase intention.

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Businessmen", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 41, (July), 1977, pp.95-100.

18) Jennifer L. Aaker, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp.347-356.

19) Jennifer L. Aaker, "Brand Personality: Conceptualization, Measurement and Underlying Psychological Mechanisms", Ph. D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1995, pp.102-115.

## IV. Results of Analysis

### 1. Analysis of Materials

In order to analyze the credibility of the measured key concepts, the credibility of the country image, the functional attribute and the brand personality has been examined based upon the answers to the questionnaires about the middle and small automobile.

<Table 1> Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

variable	item	U.S.	Japan	Korea
country image	14	0.788	0.739	0.837
functional attribute	5	0.777	0.778	0.912
brand personality	30	0.946	0.941	0.974

The result of the examination indicates that the Cronbach's Alpha of all the variations is measured as high as minimum 0.7 which is judged to indicate acceptability of the methodology.(Refer to <Table 1>). On the other hand, as this study uses the results of various measurements verified by earlier researchers, we can be assured that the validity of the constituting concept can pass a certain level of acceptability.

However, after an inquiry being made as to whether these attributes are practically of a single dimensional or not, the study carried out an investigation to see how the determination factors influence the consumers' brand selection in order to obtain the factor scores useful for a regression analysis as well as to look into the correlations among the factors classified by products.

As for the model for an analysis of the factors, the principal component analysis method which uses total dispersion was adopted. In addition, a

circulation was implemented in accordance with a varimax method in order to help the factors translate each others and maintain independence among themselves.

<Table 2> The results of factor analysis

country image		functional attribute		brand personality	
<u>factor 1</u> (quality)		<u>factor 1</u> (prestige)		<u>factor 1</u> (charming)	
economy	0.79	technical	0.80	up-to-date	0.60
industrialized	0.69	prestige	0.87	intelligent	0.65
welfare	0.62	workmanship	0.73	successful	0.64
environment	0.75			good looking	0.70
quality	0.86			glamorous	0.64
living	0.71			charming	0.74
technological	0.85			smooth	0.50
				<u>factor 2</u> (sincere)	
<u>factor 2</u> (democratic)		<u>factor 2</u> (price)		family oriented	0.75
democratic	0.83	price	0.92	real	0.75
products	0.78	serviceability	0.66	sincere	0.68
civilian	0.74			hard working	0.50
free market	0.67			leader	0.61
agriculture	0.65			honest	0.65
				reliable	0.49
				corporate	0.47
				<u>factor 3</u> (unique)	
<u>factor 3</u> (education)				exciting	0.62
labor cost	0.62			young	0.67
education	0.86			unique	0.71
				independent	0.63
				imaginative	0.51
				sentimental	0.48
				<u>factor 4</u> (daring)	
				down to earth	0.52
				daring	0.79
				wholesome	0.70
				cheerful	0.73
				spirited	0.74
				Western	0.55
				<u>factor 5</u> (rugged)	
				outdoorsy	0.58
				tough	0.71
				rugged	0.79

As a result, three country images, two functional attributes and five brand personalities are found to have eigen value 1 or more. And the names of the factors are appropriately designated in sincere scrutiny of the variations which are highly correlated with the corresponding factors. However, those factors the questions of which are formed in self-explanatory words retain the names of the factors without any alteration.(Refer to <Table 2>).

As a result of this validity verification, the measuring devices to be used for the analyzation have been found to be suited to attaining the purpose of the study. Based upon this judgement, after the analyzation of the factors, the mathematic mean has been calculated per factor to give effect to correlation between factors to find a few factors with high correlation. In case they are in the correlation or in the first degree functional relation between one another, the analysis may run in danger of becoming faulty due to problems of a multicollinearity. Therefore, in order to take complementary measure to this problem, a certain representative variations have been abstracted from the country images and the functional attributes, and then the correlations between them have been analyzed to find relatively low correlations there.

## 2. The Verification Result of Hypotheses

### 1) Regression analysis on the selection by the entire consumers of the three subject countries

Through the multiple regression analysis which takes three representative variations of the country image, two representative variations of the functional attribute and five brand personality factors as independent variations on one hand and the customers' preference and their purchase intention as subordinate variations on the other hand, this study have made an comprehensive observation at what factors excercise meaningful influence

to the consumers of Korea, the United States and Japan.

The result of the analysis indicates that all the variations but the product quality of the country image in the customers' preference category exercise meaningful influence though there were some differences in the matter of influence degree. And in the category of the brand purchase intention, the variations except for product quality, education level, promotion of status are found to be able to exercise meaningful influence, according to the analysis.

In the comparison between countries based on Korea as the standard, the United States and Japan have appeared to have more or less meaningful differences in the consumers' preference and purchase intention. Thus, judging from the result of the investigation on the consumers' attitude, country image, it has been verified that functional attributes and brand personality with a few exceptions are capable to exercise influence to the consumers' preference and purchase intention although there are differences in the matter of influence degree.

In the existing investigations that presented the country image only, the variations of the country image were singled out to exercise influence to the consumers' selection because they were the only cue of the country image. However, it has been verified that under multi-cue circumstances, where other information cues are also provided along with the country image like the case of this study, the consumers' selection becomes affected by other variations besides the country image. In other words, when the country image is combined with other information cues, the effect of the country image cue becomes reduced, whereas the brand personality becomes exercising meaningful influence to the consumers' selection.



<Table 3> The results of factor analysis on the selection by the entire consumers of the three subject countries

	preference		purchase intention	
	Parameter Estimate	T value	Parameter Estimate	T value
Intercept	2.194	13.704	2.816	12.783
quality	0.002	0.088	0.012	0.295
democratic	0.044 *	1.773	0.086 **	2.530
education	0.070 **	3.160	0.007	0.231
prestige	0.112 ***	5.731	0.004	0.149
price	0.119 ***	6.444	0.313 ***	12.326
charming	0.394 ***	15.067	0.275 ***	7.652
sincere	0.309 ***	12.351	0.243 ***	7.069
unique	0.361 ***	14.838	0.273 ***	8.172
daring	0.394 ***	15.564	0.197 ***	5.642
rugged	0.188 ***	7.764	0.297 ***	8.914
U.S.(1)	0.260 ***	2.864	0.231 *	1.851
Japan(2)	0.218 **	2.365	0.221 *	1.748
	$R^2=0.40$ (F=145.25)		$R^2=0.21$ (F=57.89)	

2) The regression analysis to the selection of the consumers of Korea, the United States and Japan

The investigation on the individual selection of the Korean, American and Japanese consumers indicates as follows:

Firstly, the result of the investigation on the Korean consumers' selection of the factors applied to the entire customers of the three countries indicates that all the five factors of the brand personality affect the consumers' preference and purchase intention as is presented in the <Table 4>. No variation of the country image exercises influence to the consumers' preference, but almost all the variations exercise more or less influence to the consumers' purchase intention. In the meantime, all the variations of the functional attitudes have appeared to exercise influence to the consumers' preference, but the variations of the purchase intention exercised influence

to the price only. In the comparison of differences among the countries, consumers' purchase intention of the United States has showed meaningful difference from the Korean consumers' purchase intention.

Secondly, the result of the investigation on the American consumers' selection of the factors applied to the entire customers of the three countries indicates that all the five factors of the brand personality affect the consumers' preference, but in respect of the purchase intention the variations of 'sincere,' 'daring' and 'rugged' are found to exercise meaningful influence. In respect of country image, all the variations except for the product quality, or economic aspect affect the customers preference, while in the brand purchase intention, only 'democratic system,' or political aspect affect meaningful influence. And in the functional attributes, all the variations without exception exercise influence to the consumers' preference and purchase intention alike.

In the comparison of difference between countries, the consumers' preference of Korea and Japan alike showed difference from that of American consumers, while only Korean consumers differed from American consumers in respect of the consumers' purchase intention.

Third, the result of the investigation on Japanese consumers' selection of the factors applied to the entire customers of the three countries indicates that all the five factors of the brand personality affect the consumers' preference, but in respect of the purchase intention the variations of 'unique,' 'daring' and 'rugged' are found to exercise meaningful influence. In respect of country image, the variations of democratic system, or political aspect and of education level, or sociological aspect are found to exercise influence to the purchase intention.

<Table 4> The results of regression analysis to the selection of the consumers of Korea, the United States and Japan

	Korea		U.S.		Japan	
	preference	purchase intention	preference	purchase intention	preference	purchase intention
Intercept	2.857 (12.249)	3.349 (12.000)	1.223 (5.550)	3.045 (9.815)	2.029 (8.699)	2.853 (8.750)
quality	-0.007 (-0.186)	0.095 * (1.896)	0.020 (0.435)	0.094 (1.466)	0.001 (0.013)	0.019 (0.308)
democratic	0.009 (0.250)	0.130 * (3.026)	0.179 *** (3.145)	0.134 *** (1.675)	0.074 * (1.775)	0.089 * (1.649)
education	0.023 (0.684)	0.091 ** (2.242)	0.202 *** (5.302)	0.021 (0.383)	0.163 *** (3.935)	0.107 ** (1.974)
prestige	0.092 *** (2.811)	0.016 (0.414)	0.091 *** (2.681)	0.089 ** (1.868)	0.158 *** (4.388)	0.015 (0.303)
price	0.119 *** (3.748)	0.109 *** (2.884)	0.111 *** (3.437)	0.306 *** (6.748)	0.103 *** (2.909)	0.394 *** (7.906)
charming	0.474 *** (10.811)	0.560 *** (10.665)	0.254 *** (5.594)	0.023 (0.362)	0.364 *** (8.456)	0.070 (1.157)
sincere	0.454 *** (11.749)	0.368 *** (7.063)	0.273 *** (6.198)	0.347 *** (5.654)	0.218 *** (5.092)	-0.083 (-1.383)
unique	0.538 *** (11.909)	0.571 *** (10.547)	0.233 *** (5.358)	0.071 (1.180)	0.158 *** (3.670)	0.151 ** (2.516)
daring	0.189 *** (4.858)	0.128 *** (2.746)	0.368 *** (8.546)	0.549 *** (9.044)	0.411 *** (9.591)	0.408 *** (6.815)
rugged	0.363 *** (8.932)	0.348 *** (7.162)	0.273 *** (6.198)	0.105 ** (1.694)	0.113 *** (2.616)	0.227 *** (3.748)
U.S.(1)	0.182 (1.066)	0.883 *** (3.731)	0.744 *** (4.825)	0.422 * (1.897)	0.083 (0.548)	0.229 (0.247)
Japan(2)	0.205 (1.299)	0.227 (1.266)	0.533 *** (3.390)	0.066 (0.293)	0.104 (0.632)	0.027 (0.899)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.52	0.43	0.31	0.33	0.40	0.21
F-value	97.23	67.39	39.32	19.12	145.25	57.89

In the functional attributes, all the variations exercised influence to the consumers' preference, but in respect of the purchase intention only the variation of price appeared influential. There has been found no difference in the comparison between the three countries.

### 3) Result of hypotheses verification

As the analysis indicates in the above section, most of the hypotheses presented herewith are positively supported. The result of the verification is as follows:

First, the regression analysis on the selection of the entire consumers' of the three countries shows that in case of the beta value which corresponds to the importance of regression coefficient, the factors of the brand personality appeared higher than the functional attributes. In the observation at the influence by factors, 'charming' of the brand personality and 'price' of the purchase intention appeared to exercise the strongest influence.

Second, according to the observation at the difference of influence between the three countries, Korean consumers showed stronger influence than American consumers in respect of 'unique' of consumers' preference and purchase, while Japanese consumers showed stronger influence than American consumers in respect of 'daring' of the brand personality.

## V. Conclusion

The earlier studies on the brand function were normally limited on the functional attribute of a brand. However, this study has made for the weak point of the functional attribute with addition of the brand personality, which is a symbolic attribute. To say in detail, this study has analyzed how the consequence of correlating the functional image, that forms the brand attribute, and the symbolic image variations with the country image exercise influence to the consumers' selection.

In the first place, the concept of the country image has been explicitly established through a theoretical inquiry. Based upon it, then, the attributes that form the country image and the brand personality have been observed. Subsequently, the roles of the country image, the functional attributes and

the brand personality, the key points of this study, have been closely examined. Particularly, by means of making the consumers of Korea, the United States and Japan as the objects of this study, a close scrutiny has been rendered to how the brand personality exercises influence to the consumers.

As a result, the following points have been discovered.

In respect of the role of the country image, it has been analyzed for the country image to play a partially favorable role to the consumers' selection. In the earlier studies which presented only the country image, as it was the unique information cue. It exercised a great influence to the consumers' selection. However, when various information cues are proffered as is the case with this study, it has been verified that the country image-consumers' selection relation has been superseded by the brand personality-consumers' selection relation. In other words, whereas the country image cue stops to play a key role when it is combined with other information cues, the brand personality remains to exercise a considerable influence to the consumers' selection. And when the consumers are already familiar with the brand, the country image can exercise a direct influence to the consumers, but in an opposite case, the evaluation of the product attributes exercise influence to the consumers' selection, which confirms the existing research results.<sup>20)</sup>

In the analysis of the roles of the functional attributes, it has been revealed that the functional attributes are all capable to exercise favorable influence to the consumers' selection although there were some differences in terms of influence degree in accordance with the consumers by countries. In the mean time, the research result that the functional attributes exercise favorable influence to the consumers' preference and purchase intention confirms to correspond to the result of the existing researches.<sup>21)</sup>

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20) C. M. Han, op. cit., 1989, pp.222-229.

21) M. Fishbein and I. Ajzen, op. cit., 1975, pp.102-145.

H. C. Triandis, *Attitude and Attitude Change*, New York, NY. John Wiley and Sons, 1971, pp.169-187.

In the verification about the brand personality, although there are some differences of degree in terms of influences among the consumers of the three countries, the factors of the brand personality have been found to exercise favorable influence to the consumers' preference and purchase intention.<sup>22)</sup> This accords with the result of the existing researches that indicate that specific brand personality exercises influence to the customers' preference to and liking for the brand. In the inter-country comparison with Korea as the standard, the consumers of the United States and Japan are in possession of meaningful differences in respect of the consumers' preference and purchase intention, although some differences of degree lie between them.

The strategic implication of this research are as follows: functional attribute above all else was revealed as the most powerful variable. Next, brand personality presents as a symbolic aspect that accounts for a significant amount of differences in consumers' brand selection. Throughout this study, it can be acutely recognized that brand personality in relation to its symbolic aspect has an important influence on consumers' brand selection.

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22) Jennifer L. Aaker, *op. cit.*, 1995, pp.169-173.

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**ABSTRACT**

Consumer Evaluation of Country Image and Brand Personality  
under Export Marketing

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This study suggests the necessity of effort to develop representative brands a unique personality in connection with country image. That is, brand personality adds brand identity to reliability and makes for stronger brand in the international market. It also furnishes the differentiation for guiding effective brand marketing.

In summary, it is clear that country image and brand personality are strategic factors which should be considered by world enterprises and government in this era of globalization. In addition, the cross-cultural examination of country of origin effect and brand personality in connection with foreign consumers' selection is worthy of study.

Key Words : Country Image; Functional Attribute; Brand Personality