
문화적 접근에 기초한 한국 텔레비전 방송 주요시간대 광고 분석

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Analyzing Korean TV Commercials during Prime Time based on Cultural Background

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요약 본 연구의 목적은 현재 한국 광고의 메시지 전략 및 트렌드를 분석하기 위해 실시되었다. 본 연구 목적을 실행하기 위해서 한국 주요 3사 방송국 (KBS, MBC, SBS)의 주요 시간대 (저녁 7시-9시)의 광고를 내용분석 하였다. 내용분석 결과 한국 방송 광고의 주요 내용은 직접적인 메시지가 간접적인 메시지보다 많았고, 제품과 광고 메시지의 관계가 높았다. 더불어 브랜드 광고 빈도가 높았으며, 유머가 적게 나타났고, 회사의 명성을 중요시하는 광고가 많았다. 본 연구의 결과는 글로벌 기업들에게 한국시장의 프로모션에 관련된 지역화 전략을 수립하는데 유용할 것으로 판단된다.

주제어 : 한국 텔레비전 광고, 지역화 전략, 문화적 척도, 창의적 광고전략

Abstract This study investigated Korean TV advertising's creative strategy and trend. To achieve the goal, we conducted content analysis for prime time TV advertising messages (KBS, MBC, SBS). We found that Korean TV advertising contents showed more direct messages than indirect messages, much relationship between ads messages and product, more brand in advertisements, little humor, relatively many celebrities in ads. and much importance on the reputation of the firm. The findings will be a significant source regarding promotion strategy for global company who plans to enter into Korean market.

Key Words : Korean TV commercials, Localized Strategy, Cultural Dimensions, Creative Advertising Strategy

1. Introduction

The markets' globalization is apparently reality. Many of the top 100 brands have worldwide presence in more than 100 countries including Korea [11]. Global brands, however, have been struggled to represent tasty for each country in advertising, because the markets are not homeogenous. Accordingly, successful global brands need to develop a localized market strategy. Even global brands' overheating competition

accelerates the needs of localized advertising strategy for local consumer. Initiating or creating a localized advertising strategy, however, is not easy at all because of transformation of local culture and consumer culture change.

Korea is one of leading countries in technological development and international trade in the world, and significantly influences East Asia's culture and economic. Korea has benefited from globalization when the Korean state modulated globalization well and made

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it work for its economy [2]. Such globalization affects Korea consumers' culture change, which needs a drive of a new creative advertising for attracting Korea consumers. The purpose of the study is to find creative advertising strategies in Korea advertisement. Exploring the creative advertising strategy of Korea is meaningful in that it gives an insight for global brands or a foreign company planning to enter Korean market, as well as other Asian Market because Korea recently presides over culture and economic in East Asia.

A useful way to analysis of creative advertising strategy in Korea is to utilize cultural dimensions. In 1992, Benedetto, Tamate, Chandran published an article, "Developing Creative Advertising Strategy for the Japanese Market Place." The article suggested useful dimensions for analyzing creative advertising strategies based on culture. The current study applies those constructs in order to investigate Korea's creative advertising strategy. Through a content analysis of advertising aired in three major broadcasting networks, this study can be to explore the distinctive characteristics of Korean advertising. Ultimately, this study can give advertisers of global brands what should they keep in mind to choose the right creative strategy for their advertising efforts in Korea.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Localization

One of the most difficult challenges for advertisers in the global marketplace is to develop consistent images of brands by understanding various cultural differences and unique situational factors in their countries. Frazer (1983) stressed that appropriate advertising creative strategies should be used for their markets and cultural and environmental factors [5]. To develop effective international advertising strategies, standardization and localization should be considered in determining appropriate advertising messages and target markets [22]. Previous international advertising

research has examined the similarities and differences of advertising from different cultures/countries. Related to this, general standardization and localization have been dealt as a critical issue since it determines a success of global marketing communication [21][18][26][25][15].

Rhee (2010) examined the degree in message recognitions with respect to the same global brand ad campaign intended for local consumers in Korea, China, and the U.S [22]. He concluded that cultural and environmental differences of markets represent different degrees in message recognitions among these three countries and localization based on local cultures and market situations is more important than general standardization in the future global brand ads campaigns.

2.2 Culture and Creative Strategies

Advertising reflects cultural values by delivering cultural and societal background to products and brands [13]. Previous research have discussed that creative strategy depends on cultural diversity[20][27]. The majority of previous studies have employed Hofstede's five cultural dimensions: individualism-collectivism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation for explore creative advertising strategies [7][9]. Among them, individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance is more associated with communication pattern.

Individualism "describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity which prevails in a given society" [7]. In contrast, collectivism is defined as the self in relation to the group [24]. It stresses the goals of th group over personal goals, conformity, in-group harmony, sharing, duties, and obligations [7].

The dimension of individualism-collectivism consistently differentiates Eastern cultures from Western cultures. According to Hofstede (1984), for example, the U.S. is a highly individualistic society. It indicates the U.S. culture has more an individualistic attitude and relatively loose bonds with others [7].

Individual culture uses more frequently explicit verbal messages based on fact and data, whereas collectivism culture uses more frequently implicit messages and non-verbal communication. Hall's cultural theory that the way people communication with each other shows an important component of culture [6]. He argues that low context cultures are generally monochronic and people communicate in explicit way, while high context cultures are polychronic and people communicate in implicit way, because they share more common sense and have more communication cues in basic than low context society.

Uncertainty avoidance is defined as the extent to which the members of organizations within a society feel threatened by uncertain, unknown, or ambiguous situations [7]. A low uncertainty avoidance indicates a society that has fewer rules and does not attempt to control all outcomes and results. Compared to South Korea, the U.S. has a low uncertainty avoidance index. Korean based on strong collectivism and high uncertainty avoidance use imaginative strategies whereas American based on high individualism and low uncertainty avoidance culture use brand information strategies [12].

2.3 Cultural Comparison for Creative Advertising Strategy

Simon (1971) found that American advertisements used more frequently individuals' direct story telling or celebrities' testimonial by showing rational approaches [23]. Ramaprasad and Hasegawa(1992) found that American advertising used more frequently comparative strategies whereas Japanese advertisings used more preemptive strategies [20]. Kim et al. (2007) found that there are significant differences among Korea, the US and Japan [13]. In particular, the U.S. used the most diverse creative strategies among the three countries, followed by Japan and Korea. The tests revealed that Korea is different from the U.S. and Japan. It was confirmed that there exist significant differences in the creative strategies of the three

countries, and these differences are due to the fact that public service advertising of each country reflects the cultural and organizational characteristics in part.

Based on the previous finding [14], Benedetto et al. (1992) discussed seven characteristics of Japanese ads by differentiating from American ads [1]. First, Japanese ads use more frequently indirect expressions rather than direct expressions in advertisement messages, which were used more commonly in American ads. They explained the reason from their culture reflecting Japanese culture consider a decisive expression as an offensive and inappropriate way of speaking. By the same token, Japanese ads do not show much relationship between ad content and product, which is the second characteristic of Japanese ads. It could be explained by that Japanese are more used to abstract, vague messages as well. This incongruity may make the commercials difficult for other countries to understand, even if it may be appropriate for Japanese audiences. The third characteristic of Japanese ads is that they only show short information or narration, unlike American ads have detailed explanation of brand's characteristics. It is because that Japanese preference for indirect forms of expressions discussed above. Fourth, Japanese ads used humor to create a bond of common feelings between advertisers and viewers by using humorous dramatizations of situations [1], and black humor [3], instead of using slapstick or demeaning humor. As a similarity to American ads, Japanese ads use famous celebrities much for close acquaintances [1]. In addition, Japanese ads focus more on company image rather than product quality. More ads in Japan are only 15 seconds long, since Japanese advertisers try to avoid showing detailed explanations about the brands quality.

Based on these characteristics, this study aims at examining how creative advertising strategies are currently used in Korean ads. We use seven different advertising formats: direct message, the relationship between product and message, brand information, humor, advertising using celebrities, company image,

length of advertising. We adopted these advertising characteristics from Benedetto and his colleagues' study. Analyzing advertising message presented in major Korean broadcasting during prime time will show cultural trendy and what advertising characteristics are dominant in Korean society. The study will have meaning implication especially for foreign companies who need to build localized promotion strategy in Korea. We will investigate the following research questions:

- RQ1. How much were direct expressions used in Korean advertisements?
- RQ2. How much do Korean advertisements show the relationship between product and ads messages?
- RQ3. How much do Korean advertisements show the brand information?
- RQ4. How much humor is used in Korean advertisements?
- RQ5. How much do famous celebrities appear in Korean advertisements?
- RQ6. How much were the company image shown in Korean advertisements?

3. Method

3.1 Sample

To find creative advertising strategies in Korea, this study conducted content analysis of primetime advertisements in three major broadcasting networks. According to AC Nielsen data, the prime time during a week on TV is 7pm to 9pm. Three hundred advertisements cross three different networks appeared in the prime time from March 15, 2010 to March 19, 2010 were selected for analysis. A total of 159 advertisements were used for the analyses; KBS (n=44), MBC (n=59), and SBS (n=56). During the prime time, 7pm-9pm, major programs through KBS, MBC, and SBS, are sports, commentary, news, music, variety show, drama, action/adventure, talk show, health &

medicine and so on. Types of ads during the time are program ads, subtitle ads, sponsorship ads, and so on. This study analyzed program ads that are shown in the time between a front program and a rear program.

3.2 Measurement

Direct vs. Indirect Message. Direct message indicate that advertising content include explicit information about the product or brand. Conversely, indirect message refers to implicit message about the product or brand. Some television ads do not mention a specific function of a product or name of brand. Instead showing the brand, ads let viewers think about it.

The relationship between product and ads message. Sometimes television ads is vague in the connection between product and ads message. CRM (cause related marketing) advertising message is an example. CRM advertising message is not focusing on a product and people who need help. For example, "if you buy this product, you will save a child's live."

Brand information. If advertising message technically includes the brand name, coders count on it.

Humor. It is difficult for measuring whether the ad message is funny or not. Humor is very sensitive to different culture, age, gender, and so on. Even in the same culture and society, humor code varies based on social class and age. In this study, coding humor in advertising message is decided by students coders. The coders are 20 ages. In that sense, it has limitation to generalize to other generation.

Celebrity. Celebrity refers to whether the ads message includes a current celebrity or public figure.

3.3 Coding Procedure and Reliability

Data from the advertisement in the sample were collected using the content analysis method and a detailed content coding instrument. All of the advertisements were coded by the undergraduate students who were trained on the coding instrument and the coding rules by a principal researcher. A subset of 60 advertisements from the actual sample was

reviewed and coded by coders. Inter-coder reliability using Scott's Pi was .91.

4. Findings

Using the Chi-square analysis, we compared frequencies in each type of advertising format. For RQ1, direct messages (n=98, 61.6%) were used more than indirect messages (n=61, 38.4%) in Korean advertisements. It shows a significant difference between the two (p<.01).

For RQ2, more than half (n=83, 52.2%) showed much relationship between ads messages and product. 34.6% (n=55) showed little relationship, and no relationship was also 13.2% (n=21). The differences were significant (p<.001).

For RQ3, the amount of information that Korean ads showed brand in advertisements were little (n=65, 40.9%), followed by much (n=59, 37.1%), and none (n=35, 22.0%). It was statistically significant (p<.001)

For RQ4, it was found that more than half (n=108, 67.9%) did not use humor. 24.5% (n=39) were showed little humor and much humor was 7.5% (n=12), which was a significant difference (p<.001).

For RQ5, a majority of Korean ads (n=90, 56.6%) used celebrities and no celebrities in 43.4% (n=69). The differences were not significantly different (p>.05).

For RQ6, most ads are more likely to place much importance on the reputation of the firm 69.6% (n=109), whereas 31.4% (n=50) were more focused on product quality, which was a significant difference (p<.001). Table 1 summarized the findings above.

5. Conclusion

The result of research question one showed that Korean advertising characteristic is more direct. According to Benedetto et al. (1992), Japan advertising message was more indirect which represent Japanese culture. Japanese language is very vague or abstract, and Japanese expression often is difficult to translate. Such cultural characteristics melt in Japanese advertising message [1]. How is Korean culture? Based on Hofseted's cultural dimension, individualism society is more highly explicit in verbal than collectivism society. Hofseted (2001) ranked East Asia such Japan, Taiwan, or Korea in more collectivism society than Western countries including USA or Italy [10]. According to Hofseted's cultural ranking, Korea is collective society, and language is indirect and vague. However, the finding showed that advertising message was more directive. The possible interpretation for the opposite result is that Korean society move toward individualistic society. Korea is one of countries in East Asia who dramatically change in politics and economy. Korean society adopted modernization earlier than other East Asia countries. The speedy growth of economy, currently 10th ranking in the word, has changed cultural characteristics over a few decades, which boosted the gap between young generation and old generation. Maybe people understand that young generation likes to express explicit language and expression in Korea.

The finding responding to the research question two showed that advertising messages in the study presented much relationship between product and the ads message. It implies that Korean commercial

〈Table 1〉 Summary of the Results

Research Question	Contents	p-value
RQ1: Message Type	Direct vs. Indirect	p<.01
RQ2: Relations BTW Ad message and product	Relation vs. No relation	p<.001
RQ3: Brand in Advertising	Brand in ads vs. No in ads	p<.001
RQ4: Humor in Advertising	Humor in ads vs No Humor in ads	p<.001
RQ5: Celebrities in Advertising	Celebrities in ads vs. No Celebrities in ads	p>.05
RQ6: Reptuation vs. Product Quality	Reputation vs. Product Quality	p<.001

seemed to be more descriptive and informative. It can be said that Korean advertising strategy is more rational appeal than emotional appeal.

Regarding research question three, the finding showed that commercial message included more product brand information. The result is positively associated with findings of research question one and two. It means that Korean commercial is very distinctive message delivered to consumer.

Research question four indicated that Korean advertising messages do not much use humor and entertainment. Benedetto et al. research found that Japan commercial used humor and entertainment. They explained that humor and entertainment ads messages created some emotional feeling which helped memory [1]. However, Korean commercial is not as much as Japanese commercial using emotions. Korean commercial also uses emotional cues in advertising message, but it has different emotions such as sympathy or empathy more often. For instances, Orion Chocopie TV commercial is a good example showing how Korean TV commercial use sympathy. The message of Orion Chocopie, "Sharing Chocopie shares our warm heart with you," presents that Korean audiences can attach the message. In other word, sympathy present common sense under Korean culture, which can be a creative advertising strategy at Korea market.

The result for research question 5 was not significantly different in frequency between ads featuring celebrities and ads not featuring celebrities, showing that celebrity endorsement in Korean TV commercials in the study was over 50%. The amount is tremendous compared to American TV commercial. American TV commercials generally do not often endorse movie stars, sport stars, or public figures instead using general publics. Mandell (2010) argue "about ten years ago, celebrities doing commercials in the U.S. was considered selling out, but the public now see it as corny" [17]. The use of celebrity endorsements in commercials help consumers acknowledge a product

brand, have some attitude toward the brand, or motivate purchase intention. However, using big name come with big risk. Given Tiger Woods who cheated with dozens of women, have endorsed to Nike commercials, consumer might feel disgusting Nike ads featuring Tiger Woods after the scandal. In Korea, the effect of celebrity endorsements looks powerful to a consumer's perception to a product, attitude toward a product, or a purchase behavior. Recently, athletics who won medals from London Olympic often appears in TV commercials and even entertainment programs. Lee recent study found that the use of celebrity endorsement affected a consumer's advertising attitude resulting in corporate reputation and corporate reliability [16].

The finding of research question 6 showed that TV commercials in the study more focused on corporate image than product information. The result reflects not only Korean TV commercial trend but also universal trend in advertising, which means that recent advertising strategy focus more on corporate image than a product itself. Often TV commercials do show image advertising, a form of contextual advertising, to create the awareness of a firm trust and preference for its product and brands [19]. Building the reputation of the company and trust is greater emphasized in Korean commercials. Benedetto et. al argue that American and Japan also stress a company's reputation and trust by using image advertising [1].

In sum, the characteristics of Korean TV commercials during prime time focused more on explicit message and direct message, brand advertising, less humor, and building reputation. In general, explicit and direct message are often used in individualism society. According to Hofstede's cultural model, individualism is more pronounced in Western nations, while collectivism is inherent in Eastern nations that are developing countries. Korea is one of Eastern countries, but it is a developed country. In economy size, Korea is tenth in the world. Korea is used to be a developing country and joined the rank of advanced

countries in two decades. It implies that Korean society might have changed into individualism with economic growth. The global economic growth is basically necessary to exchange cultures as a byproduct of international trades and investment and an vigorous cultural industry such as tourism or entertainment. Brand advertising and building reputation in advertising strategy looks global trend beyond localized tasty. Humor less presented in Korean commercials was different from Japanese commercial trend, but Korean commercial uses different emotions such as sympathy or empathy that is penetrated across Korean heart.

For global companies who are planning to enter into Korean market, this findings of the study will be a significant source for strategic promotion plan. Television advertising is still powerful vehicle for delivering information of a product, making consumers acknowledge the product, and brand positioning. To reach local tasty in promotion, an effective localized strategy should be necessary. The current study contributes to building localized advertising strategy for global company. Recently, Korean flow become popular cross the world, and many global companies are interested in Korean entertainment market. To enter the market, the first job to is make consumer acknowledge a product of the company. The current study become a steppingstone for reach Korean consumers.

Even if the study helped figure out current Korean TV commercial trends and strategies, it has limitations in method and theoretical background. First, the study conducted content analysis coded by university students. Inter-coder reliability between coders in the study was high, but coders were 20s and their perception and understanding toward TV commercials could be different from other generations such as 30s and 40s. For instance, humor code might be different between 20s and other generations. In Korea, the prime time TV commercial from 7pm to 9pm targets more on 30s, 40s, or 50s than 20s. Twenty ages watch TV late

over 10pm (KOSIS, 2012). If we employed 30s or 40s for analyze the content, more accurate explanation for the commercials would be acquired.

Another limitation was the lack of theoretical background for explaining Korean TV commercial strategies. We employed Hofsteds' cultural dimensions, which have been used in numerous international studies. His cultural comparison between Eastern and Western using the cultural dimensions (individualism vs. collectivism and uncertainty avoidance) was conducted almost for two decades ago. Applying the outdated information and model to the current situation is unreliable and less credible. The present world is called global village in which each country exchanges cultures and adopts new environment. Korea follows the tide more faster than others especially in East countries. In the future study, much outdated theoretical background and perspectives should be approached to penetrate into current cultural transformation.

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