

A Comparison of Government and Public Institutions Advertising Appeals in Collectivistic and Individualistic Cultures

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집단주의와 개인주의 정부 및 공공기관 광고의 문화적 비교 연구

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Abstract The objective of this research was to examine how cultural values expressed in the contents of government and public institutions advertising, based on individualism-collectivism. This study investigated the extent to which government and public institutions print advertisements in Korea and U.S. Study 1 examined the extent to which government and public institutions print advertisements in Korea and U.S. use its intrinsic cultural values. Study 2 carried out experiment to study cultural differences in relative reaction of collectivistic and individualistic government and public institutions print advertising appeals in two countries. Findings of this study showed that cultural background plays role in the usage of government and public institutions print advertising messages and persuasive communication processes. Global marketers and advertisers realize the significance of the cultural similarities and differences that occur in diverse cultures.

Key Words : Advertising contents, Cross-cultural comparison of marketing communications, Contents of government and public institutions print advertising, Individualism and collectivism, Content analysis.

요약 본 연구는 집단주의 문화와 개인주의 문화 정부 및 공공기관 광고 콘텐츠에서 문화적 가치가 어떻게 표현되고 있는지를 내용분석과 실험연구를 통하여 조사하는 목적으로 실시되었다. 연구1은 집단주의 문화 표본으로 선정된 한국과 개인주의 문화 표본으로 선정된 미국의 정부 및 공공기관 인쇄 광고가 고유한 문화적 가치를 반영하는 가를 내용분석 하였다. 연구2는 두 문화의 정부 및 공공기관 인쇄 광고물의 소구에 대한 상대적 반응이 어떻게 다르게 나타나는지를 연구하기 위하여 실험을 수행하였다. 이 두 가지 연구의 결과는 문화적 배경이 정부 및 공공기관의 광고 메시지 소구방식과 효과의 커뮤니케이션 프로세스에서 중요한 역할을 한다는 것을 보여 주었다. 이 연구는 글로벌 마케터와 광고주는 글로벌 환경에서 광고를 실행할 경우, 문화적 유사성과 차이점을 고려하여 메시지 전략을 수립해야 할 필요성이 있다는 이론적, 실무적 시사점을 보여 주었다.

주제어 : 광고 콘텐츠, 마케팅 커뮤니케이션의 문화적 비교, 정부와 공공기관 인쇄광고, 개인주의와 집단주의, 내용분석

*This work was supported by the research fund of Hanyang University (HY-2020-G).

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Received April 20, 2021

Accepted July 20, 2021

Revised May 18, 2021

Published July 28, 2021

1. Introduction

Many studies in international advertising communications have dealt with comparison between eastern and western cultural distinctions in the process of cross-cultural marketing communications[1-4]. The prerequisite of this field is that cultural feature and creative messages are described in advertising contents in various cultures. It is anticipated the extent to which government and public institutions print advertising messages in collectivistic and individualistic cultures mirror its inherent cultural values and norms[5-7].

Classification of collectivism and individualism is the most used dimension of cultural distinction investigated in cross-cultural validation[2,7]. Ideas associated with this level have been studied in many social science fields[8-10]. However, there have been little research in the areas of comparative marketing communications processes. Which types of persuasive message appealing methods are general in collectivistic and individualistic cultures? And what types of communication claims are more persuasive in these dissimilar cultures? This research investigated an study of these two inquiries. This paper concentrated on comparative usage of collectivistic and individualistic advertising messages and relative effectiveness of these two different types of advertising appeals in collectivistic and individualistic cultures.

2. Theoretical Background

The dimension of collectivism and individualism is explained as the connection between the community and individual that dominates in a particular community[3,6,11]. In collectivistic cultures, individuals want to build interdependent relationships with their in-group members, and individuals tend to value in-group

goals more than individual goals. In individualistic cultures[12,13], in contrast, individuals want to establish an independent relationship with their in-group members, and they tend to prioritize individual goals over group goals[14,15].

Collectivist culture pursues group development, mutual respect, mutual cooperation, family happiness, maintenance of social order, and low competition. Individualistic culture, unlike collectivist culture, pursues individuality, individual success, independence, individual happiness, pleasure, and competition. Collectivistic and individualistic cultures are specified by preferred tendencies in person's social realizations and social behavior[3,6,7]. These two types of cultural differences are found in specific regions of the planet. In this research, Korea and U.S. are chosen to represent collectivism and individualism respectively. It is anticipated that advertising in two countries could reflect their intrinsic cultural backgrounds.

Although cultural backgrounds may be mirrored in the usage and effectiveness of different types of advertising claims generally[3], these cultural phenomenon may be mediated by products or services advertised[2]. People don't have the same goals that are associated with them when using all kinds of products or services[2]. Products or services are different in the kinds of benefits that are sought from them. People have different purposes in purchasing different kinds of products or services. Therefore, the advertising message appeal method that people prefer depends on the type of products or services[2].

There are several ways to identify the type of product or service. Among them, the appropriate classification methods for this study are personalized products or services and jointly used products or services. Classification of individual products or services and joint use products or services is anticipated to play a

significant part in the research of advertising appeal in individualistic and collectivist cultures. Shared or joint use products or services are explained as ones for which the influence of the state, society, family or group is great in the process of purchasing decisions[2].

Therefore, in the case of such a shared or jointly purchased product or service, there is a high possibility that there may not be a significant cultural difference in the use and effectiveness of the advertisement appeals individualistic culture and collectivistic culture, unlike individual products or services.

For shared services such as government and public institutions, cultural distinction could affect the usages and effectiveness of print advertising strategy in different cultural backgrounds.

On the evidence of this literature review, this paper hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Korean government and public institutions advertising will use more collectivist appeals and less individualist appeals than US government and public institutions advertising.

Hypothesis 2: As for the advertising effect of the government and public institutions in Korea, collectivist appeals will be higher than individualistic appeals, and the advertising effect of the US government and public institutions will be the opposite.

3. Study1 (Content Analysis)

A content analysis was performed to study the extent to which government and other offices related print advertisements in Korea and U.S. The result of content was analyzed by using SPSS. Statistical methods applied for this study were

frequency, chi-square and ANOVA analysis.

3.1 Sample of Advertisements

The two newspapers with the most subscribers and two current affairs culture magazines in each country were selected for the content analysis of government and public institutions print advertising. This content analysis included newspaper and magazine because advertisements by governments and public institutions tend to use print advertisements more than television advertisements and online advertisements. The advertisement sample for content analysis was 8 years from 2017 to 2018. The analysis period was extended to 8 years because the frequency of advertisements by the government and public institutions was not high, and samples were collected from 2015 until the total number of sample advertisements for the study reached 100. A total number of 25 advertisements (25 for each newspaper and magazine) in each country were included in the content analysis. Table 1 shows the number of printed advertisements selected as samples for study in newspapers and magazines in both countries.

Table 1. The Number of Print Advertising Included in Each Culture

Category	2017 - 2018
Newspaper 1	25
Newspaper 2	25
Magazine 1	25
Magazine 2	25
Total	100

3.2 Coding of Advertisements

The coding manual for this content analysis was developed based on the rationale of collectivism and individualistic cultures. According to the coding manual used in previous research[2,10], print advertisements emphasized claims about relationship with state or group, national integrity, concerns about nation's future, and

national goals were coded for collectivistic category. Print advertisements employed messages about personal happiness, personal goals, personal wealth, personal ambition, and pleasure were categorized for individualistic category.

The print advertisements in each culture were rated by two independent coders who were ignorant of the research hypothesis. In order to increase the reliability of coding, two coders were trained in advance before starting this coding. The degree of agreement between coders was found to be 88%, and this degree of agreement was reasonable in content analysis. Test-retest coding reliability was performed two weeks after initial coding was calculated. The test-retest coding reliability was 92% which was high rate of consent in content analysis.

3.3 Results

As shown in Table 2, there was no statistically difference between the collectivist and individualistic expressions of government and public institution advertisements in Korea and the United States. Contrary to the hypothesis, the result of chi-square analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference in collectivistic and individualistic messages in two cultures (chi-square = 3.87, *n.s.*). Hypothesis 1 was not accepted.

Table 2. Ratio of Collectivist Advertisement Expression and Individualistic Advertisement Expression

	Ratio of cultural values in print advertisements	
	Collectivistic appeals	Individualistic appeals
Collecti-vistic culture	74%	3%
Individ-u-alistic culture	68%	5%

4. Study2 (Experiment)

An experiment was performed to investigate

cultural differences in relative responses of collectivistic and individualistic advertising messages. Subjects in Korea and U.S. read print advertising that emphasized collectivistic and individualistic appeals, and responded dependent measures that reacting the acceptance of those advertisements.

4.1 Participants

Collectivistic subjects were 46 undergraduates between the ages of 21 and 26 enrolled in classes majoring in advertising and marketing at a university in metropolitan area, Korea. Individualistic participants were 42 undergraduates between the ages of 19 and 24 registered in classes majoring in advertising and marketing at a university in metropolitan area, USA.

The subjects in each culture were instructed to read a content of the magazine and then an experimental print advertisement. After reading the magazine content and test-advertisement, they were evaluated their acceptance on a seven-point scales.

4.2 Experiment Materials and Dependent Measures

Experimental advertisements were created first in Korean. U.S. version of experimental advertisements was translated with a series of double-translations with de-centering.

Dependent measures were included attitude toward advertisement, attitude toward brand, and purchase intention (3 questions each). All three dependent measures will be evaluated on a seven point scale. Participants in each culture participated in groups of 15 to 30.

4.3 Results

Three dependent variables include in this study have shown acceptable reliability (attitude cronbach's alpha = 0.866; brand cronbach's alpha = 0.814; purchase cronbach's alpha =

0.803). All of dependent variables were averaged in one index for computing the statistics.

As shown in Table 3, in two cultures, government and public institutions advertising used more collectivist appeals and less individualistic appeals. There was no statistically significant difference in the answers of the subjects in the collectivist culture and the individualist culture to the two contrasting advertisement expressions ($F = 1.23$, *n.s.*). Thus, hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 3. Participants' Acceptance Rating to the Collectivistic and Individualistic Advertisements Appeals

	Cultural orientation	
	Collectivistic appeals	Individualistic appeals
Collectivistic culture	5.74 (0.88)	2.15 (1.28)
Individualistic culture	5.51 (1.39)	2.66 (1.54)

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted to understand the cultural comparison between government and public institution advertisements in the culture of collectivism and individualism. First, content analysis was performed to find out whether print advertisements of governments and public institutions in Korea and the United States use the collectivist or individualistic appeal method, which is their own cultural background. Second, an experimental study was performed on a sample of college students to investigate how Korean and American consumers react to the contrasting cultural appeals of government and public institution advertisements.

The research results of content analysis and experimental research showed that the characteristics of products or services play a mediating role in the cultural comparison of advertisements. Contrary to the general belief

that advertisements belonging to collectivist culture prefer collectivist advertisement appeals to individualist advertisement appeals, and advertisements belonging to individualism culture prefer individualist advertisement appeal to collectivist advertisement, both cultures have shown that they tend to use more collectivist advertising than individualistic advertising and collectivist method of advertising claim was more persuasive.

These findings show that the characteristics of the advertised product or service play a mediating part in the usage and persuasiveness of the advertising appeal method between the two contrasting cultures. Therefore, global advertisers who advertise in regions with different cultures should consider not only cultural differences, but also the characteristics of their products or services, and establish an advertising message appeal strategy.

The theoretical and practical contributions and suggestions of the current research are that it raised the importance of new concepts of personal and shared products, which were neglected in the comparative cultural research of advertising. Global advertisers and marketers should keep in mind the insights of this study in finding culturally appropriate appeals when executing advertisements for shared products or public services.

It is hoped that the limitations of this study will be improved in future studies. First, this study has limitations including only one culture for each culture in the study of comparative culture. It is valuable to increase the number of countries included in the study for comparative culture research on the relationship between advertising and culture.

Second, this study did not target television advertisements or mobile advertisements that affect the people of all cultures the most, but has limitations in that it was conducted on print advertisements. In order to increase the validity

of the research results and to carefully examine the practical effects, it is necessary to expand the medium to be studied.

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