

CULTURE, DEVELOPMENT, AND ADVERTISING CONTENT: AN EXPLORATORY REPLICATION AND EXTENSION OF PAST INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING RESEARCH TO OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

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Advertising practitioners and academics have long focused on adaptation of marketing communications when entering foreign markets. This paper extends and replicates past research on this topic by examining adaptation of outdoor advertising in response to cultural differences and level of country development. A content analysis of outdoor advertisements randomly sampled from a major city in 12 different countries was completed. The analysis focused on the number of information cues and types of cultural appeals. The results find that countries with lower levels of development have more information cues. The results for cultural appeals were not as clear. This may be due to the size of the sample, or related to simplicity and directness in outdoor advertising design.

INTRODUCTION

One of the core issues in international marketing is the degree of adaptation or standardization of marketing messages, including advertising (Baack & Singh, 2007; Khang, Han, Shin, Jung, & Kim, 2016). Past research has identified two main drivers of message adaptation – cultural differences and level of development (Abernethy & Franke, 1996; Baack & Singh, 2007). However, the determination that culture and development shapes message adaptation is based on decades of research focused almost exclusively on three forms of media: television, magazines, and, more recently, web content. These media can be information rich, which easily permit the incorporation of cultural information. Noticeably absent in adaptation and standardization discussions are other types of media, which, if included, would help researchers better understand the generalizability of the theory. This study focuses on one of these overlooked media, outdoor advertising (Khang, et al., 2016; Taylor, 2012, 2005).

Despite being one of the oldest forms of advertising, outdoor advertising remains an

important part of modern-day advertising campaigns (Wilson & Till, 2012a). The medium is uniquely positioned to amplify mobile and online marketing efforts. It also serves as an excellent last-minute reminder for purchases made by consumers who are increasingly on the go. Within the United States, revenue for outdoor advertising has continued to grow for each of the past six years, and 2015 revenues for the category have topped \$7.3 billion (OAAA, 2016). Across the world, outdoor advertising continues to grow as well, fueled in part by the industry's migration to digital formats (eMarketer, 2015).

Beyond its relevance as an important marketing medium, outdoor advertising is vastly different in its ability to convey information as compared to other media, which may affect its capacity to carry information and cultural cues. Unlike television and most online content, outdoor advertising relies almost exclusively on visual cues. It almost never has the opportunity to deliver audible information. In many ways, outdoor advertising is more similar to many of the static images associated with magazine advertising and banner ad content, which have been studied extensively in adaptation-standardization discussions. However, information processing is arguably different for outdoor advertising than it is for the magazine and banner advertisements. Consumers often only have a few seconds to notice and

subsequently process information contained within outdoor advertising before the ad or the consumer disappears from sight (Wilson & Till, 2012a). As such, outdoor advertisements are designed to be simple and straightforward so message processing occurs quickly.

Based on the importance of outdoor advertising as a marketing communications vehicle, and its unique message processing differences, outdoor advertising represents a significant substantive gap within the advertising adaptation-standardization research stream. With outdoor advertising's need for simplicity and limited information, do the previously understood concepts associated with cross-cultural adaptation and standardization of advertising content hold for outdoor advertising as it does for television, print, and web content?

The exploration of boundary conditions, such as this, is an important means to test and move forward many advertising theories and is an important and under-utilized component of academic research (Ang, Lee, & Leong, 2007; Evanschitzky, Baumgarth, Hubbard, & Armstrong, 2007; Madden, Easley, & Dunn, 1995). In fact, there is a paucity of and a need for more replication and extension research (Hubbard & Armstrong, 1994; Kerr, Schultz, & Lings, 2016; Hunter, 2001) as many replications fail to support original findings, especially in the area of outdoor advertising where its consumption is very different than other media (e.g., Baack, Wilson, & Till, 2008; Wilson, Baack, & Till, 2015; Wilson & Till, 2011).

The core contribution of this study is the replication and extension of previous research on advertising content, culture, and level of development by testing the ability to generalize earlier research findings to outdoor advertisements. By extending previous research on international advertising adaptation and standardization into a different medium, this study meets the calls for more advertising replication research and improves our understanding of the boundary conditions of the theories explaining the internationalization of advertising content (Kerr, et al., 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Buzzell first discussed standardizing international marketing in 1968, and since this beginning, the choice between a standardized or adapted marketing mix has been one of the core debates in international marketing (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002). In brief, standardization is the use of the same marketing mix in all markets while adaptation is the customizing of the marketing mix to meet the needs and wants of each consumer (Jain, 1989). Broadly, standardization leads to reduced costs while adaptation leads to increased sales.

During the 1980s, the debate evolved from an "us vs. them" grouping to a more complex approach, and since then the concept of total standardization has become "unthinkable" (Jain, 1989). Instead, marketers balance degree of adaptation and degree of standardization in response to the unique local features of each market. By doing so, marketers are able to effectively meet the needs of local consumers while still saving costs through some level of global standardization (Harvey, 1993).

Information Content

Advertising researchers consistently find that international advertising varies in terms of information content. Analysis of the information level of advertising was first systematically undertaken in an investigation of the information content of television commercials (Resnik & Stern, 1977). As of 1996, the measure of information content introduced in this study had been used in almost 60 studies of advertising content (Abernethy & Frank, 1996). Additionally, Franke (1992) found it to be a generalizable measure, and it has been used to measure information content in television, print, and online advertising (e.g., Choi, Rifon, Trimble, & Reece, 2006). Abernethy and Franke's (1996) meta-analysis found that television contains fewer information cues than magazines, newspapers, and radio with outdoor advertising having significantly less than all others.

The first cross-cultural investigation of information content was the comparison of Australian and American television

commercials in Dowling (1980), and since this initial study, researchers have looked at the information content of advertisements from Africa and the Middle East (magazine, Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000), Australia and Hong Kong (magazine, So, 2004), Belgium (magazine, de Pelsmacker & Geuens, 1997), China (magazine, Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989; television, Chan, 1995; Chan & Chan, 2005), Ecuador (television, Renforth & Raveed, 1983), Europe broadly (magazine, van Herpen, Pieters, Fidrmucova, & Roosenboom, 2000), France (magazine, Biswas, Olsen, & Carlet, 1992), Hong Kong (magazine, So, 2004), India (magazine, Rajaratnam, Hunt, & Madden, 1995; Srivastava & Schoenbachler, 1999) Japan (magazine, Madden, Caballero, & Matsukubo, 1986; television, Lin, 1993; online, Okazaki & Rivas, 2002), Korea (mobile, Choi, Hwang, & McMillan, 2008), Mexico (magazine, Falk, Jones, Foster, & Rehman, 1999), South Korea (magazine, Moon & Franke, 1996; television, Taylor, Miracle, & Wilson, 1997), Saudi Arabia, (magazine, Noor Al-Deen, 1991), Sweden (television, Martenson, 1987), Turkey (magazine, Akan, 2007), and the United Kingdom (television, Nevett, 1992). The aforementioned studies indicate that there is a long tradition of research on the information content of international advertising.

Two theoretical explanations are given in the literature for these country-level information content differences: 1) level of development and 2) cultural differences. More specifically, past research has linked level of development between countries to the number of information cues used in an advertisement (Abernethy & Franke, 1996). In brief, the explanation for this relationship is that the higher levels of education and literacy in developed countries results in higher levels of information content (Abernethy & Franke, 1996; Noor Al-Deen, 1991). While a meta-analysis of the information content literature by Abernethy and Franke (1996) provided strong support for this relationship, other authors have found that countries with low levels of development actually have *more* informative advertisements. The explanation for this alternative view is that in developing countries many products are in the introductory stages of the product lifecycle and require detailed communication of its features and benefits to market the products

effectively (Renforth & Raveed, 1983). Another study offered an additional explanation for the increased number of information cues in developing country advertising. Falk, et al. (1999) suggested that developing countries receive fewer mediated messages on a daily basis permitting advertisers to include more informative advertisements without the risk of message overload.

Culture, specifically the high or low context explanation rooted in the writing of Edward Hall (1976), is the second common explanation of information content differences. In brief, in high context cultures, message meaning is transmitted through both the message content and the message's corresponding context. In low context cultures, messages are more direct and explicit, with context playing a smaller communicative role (Biswas, et al., 1992). This results in differences in the amount of information in advertisements from countries from these two cultures.

While there is much research taking this perspective (e.g., Biswas, et al., 1992; Taylor, et al., 1997), the robust findings of Abernethy and Franke's (1996) meta-analysis provides strong evidence that economic development, not high or low context, causes differences in information levels between countries. Moreover, much of the research on information cues has focused on cross-cultural differences in the type of information cue used rather than the total number of cues (e.g., Madden, et al., 1986). While these country-by-country comparisons are useful, our study is instead concerned with the broader drivers of information differences. For this exploratory replication, the focus is not on a cue-by-cue comparison between the countries sampled. Instead, the focus is on the overall effect of economic development on the number of total information cues per outdoor advertisement.

Therefore, in the light of the above discussion, we test the following hypothesis:

- H₁:** The number of advertising information cues in outdoor advertisements is correlated positively with country developmental level.

Advertising Appeals

Cultural differences are an additional important driver of advertising adaptation. The importance of culture to international advertising has been discussed since Donnelly (1970), and Jain (1989) posits that as target markets become less culturally similar, messages to those markets need to be more adapted. This link between increased cultural variation and increased adaptation has been supported for a variety of components of the marketing mix, in a variety of settings (Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003). Advertising research has specifically linked cultural differences, typically described in terms of Hofstede's (1980, 2001) cultural typology, to adaptation of advertising appeals for various media including television, print, and online advertising (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000; Cho, et al., 1999; Lin, 2001; Tse, et al., 1989). Overall, research is consistent in its claim, regardless of the advertising medium, that advertising appeals have been found to both influence and be influenced by cultural differences (Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000). This holds true even when the countries involved are fairly culturally similar, such as the cultural-rooted differences between British and American television advertising as found in Caillat and Mueller (1996).

To extend this finding into the under-research media of outdoor advertising, Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) is used as the modeled study. Their work is theoretically rooted in the cultural model introduced in Hofstede (1980, 2001). This model consists of four dimensions on which cultures differ: Individualism (IDV), power distance (PDI), uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and masculinity (MAS). These dimensions are defined as follows (from Baack and Singh, 2007, pg. 183) "1) Individualism-Collectivism: explores individuals' relationships with society and the extent of societal-individual dependence; 2) Power Distance: explains the extent to which cultures accept social hierarchy and social inequalities; 3) Uncertainty Avoidance: measures cultures' tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity in daily life; and 4) Masculinity-Femininity: explores how gender roles are allocated in society." While there are other potential cultural

frameworks that could be applied to this study's research questions, such as Schwartz (1994) or the GLOBE Project (House, Gupta, Dorfman, & Javidan, 2004), Hofstede (1980, 2001) is one of the, if not the most, commonly applied cultural frameworks for advertising adaptation studies (Baack & Singh, 2007). Therefore, for this particular replication, an application of Hofstede's (1980, 2001) framework is most appropriate.

Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) used Pollay's (1983) advertising appeals as the basis for their measure of Hofstede's (1980) dimensions. Through extensive reviews of past advertising literature and values research from other disciplines, Pollay (1983) identified 42 advertising appeals commonly used in advertising. However, Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) dropped 12 appeals from their study because of a lack of agreement about a hypothesized relationship with Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions or because the appeal did not appear to correlate with any dimension. This resulted in their study testing thirty separate hypotheses. Our replication uses the same measures, but for brevity's sake, we test five overall hypotheses. The hypotheses are based on both the findings of Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) and the broad tradition of research finding that culture influences advertising as reviewed above:

- H₂**: Cultural values are reflected in outdoor advertisements.
- H_{3a}**: The relative frequency of advertising appeals reflecting high individualism is correlated positively with country scores on the individualism dimension.
- H_{3b}**: The relative frequency of advertising appeals reflecting high power distance is correlated positively with country scores on the power distance dimension.
- H_{3c}**: The relative frequency of advertising appeals reflecting high uncertainty avoidance is correlated positively with country scores on the uncertainty avoidance dimension.
- H_{3d}**: The relative frequency of advertising appeals reflecting high masculinity is correlated positively

with country scores on the masculinity dimension.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Outdoor advertisements were sampled from cities in 12 countries (Montreal, Canada; Beijing, China; Bogota, Colombia; Budapest, Hungary; Delhi, India; Oslo, Norway; Bratislava, Slovakia; Zurich, Switzerland; Taipei, Taiwan; Istanbul, Turkey; Providenciales, Turks and Caicos; and New York City, the United States). These countries represent a range of development, vary in terms of scores on Hofstede’s dimensions (see Table 1 for a list of the scores), and represent Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Additionally, the sample meets the call from Abernethy and Franke (1996) for more international advertising research sampling Muslim countries and Eastern European transition economies.

Within each respective country, outdoor advertisements were sampled from the city that serves as the primary business or financial center for the country. To randomly sample outdoor advertisements, each city was divided into quarter-mile sectors. Using a random number generator in Excel, five sectors were selected for cataloging. Following Wilson and Till (2012b), outdoor advertising was defined as all above-ground, fixed outdoor advertising including billboards and pedestrian panels (i.e., posters placed on bus shelters, phone booths, subway entrances, and scaffolding). Advertising found below ground within garages and subway stations and attached to buses, taxis, and trucks were not included. Advertising in garages and subway stations is more likely to target a transient, rather than resident, population. Buses, taxis, trucks etc. are not permanently stationed in particular blocks, but rather traverse the city more broadly. Storefront signage was also not included in the sample as it is not publicly available, does not fall within

**TABLE 1:
Scores on Hofstede’s (2001) Dimension and the Human Development Index for the Twelve Countries Sampled**

Country	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	HDI	Info Cues
Canada	39	80	52	48	95	.80
China	80	20	66	30	76.8	2.25
Colombia	67	13	64	80	79	1.07
Hungary	46	80	88	82	86.9	1.48
India	77	48	56	40	61.1	1.92
Norway	31	69	8	50	96.5	1.73
Slovakia	104	52	110	51	85.6	1.13
Switzerland	34	68	70	58	94.7	.87
Taiwan	58	17	45	69	92.5	1.63
Turkey	66	37	45	85	75.7	1.13
Turks and Caicos	45	39	68	13	79.5	1.27
United States	40	91	62	46	94.8	1.17

Sources: Hofstede typology scores (PDI = Power Distance, IDV = Individualism, MAS = Masculinity, and UAI = Uncertainty Avoidance) from Hofstede (2001) (Jamaica scores used for Turks and Caicos). Human Development Index (HDI) scores from Human Development Report (UNDP, 2007).

the definition we are using, and is not represented by outdoor advertising placement agencies. In cases where photos of more than 30 advertisements were obtained, 30 advertisements were randomly selected for analysis. This resulted in a sample of 319 advertisements across the 12 countries.

This study used two variables that are expected to influence outdoor advertising messaging – level of development and culture. As noted previously, echoing Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), the measure of cultural differences was scores on Hofstede's (1980, 2001) four cultural dimensions. The measures of development level used were the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI). This index reflects the belief that level of development should be seen as a multidimensional concept with many more dimensions than just an economic one. Specifically, the HDI is a composite index of four statistics: life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, school enrollment ratio, and GDP per capita in purchasing power parity terms.

Content Analysis Procedure

This study uses a content analysis method to code the information and cultural content of the sampled outdoor advertisements. By definition, an advertising appeal is any approach within an advertising message that is intended to influence the attitude of consumers toward the product or the service. Again echoing Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), it is assumed that advertising appeals are the main instrument for incorporating culture into advertising (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010), and, as noted previously, the organization of Pollay's (1983) advertising appeals into the four Hofstede (1980) dimensions is repeated in this study based on Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996). Resnik and Stern's (1977) informational cues are used to code information content. This resulted in 44 coded items (see Tables 2 and 3).

Before the coders began the coding process, a training session was conducted. This consisted of coding 10 practice ads with explanations for each ad to guide the to-be-trained coder. After completing the training, data coding began.

When coding the outdoor advertisements, coders were asked to identify whether each

appeal or information cue was present or absent from the ad by checking the appropriate box. To facilitate comparisons, the appeals were grouped by cultural dimension. Coders were asked to code the entire sample of ads for each group and to continue on to the next group.

For each country, other than Slovakia, two or three native speakers coded each ad independently and then compared results. For Slovakia, a native speaker translated the copy in the advertisements into English and two native English speakers then coded the advertisements. All disagreements were resolved and a unanimous final coding was agreed upon. The average percentage agreement between coders across all variables was 94.6%.

RESULTS

To facilitate a more representative comparison between countries, the total number of information cues for each country was divided by the number of advertisements sampled for that country. The average across the sample was 1.37 information cues per advertisement (see Table 1). This is comparable to the averages in the Abernethy and Franke's (1996) meta-analysis – namely, the 1.42 average for outdoor advertising. For each country, the average number of cues per advertisement was then correlated with its Human Development Index score. The resulting correlation coefficient, using the non-parametric Spearman Rho, is -0.496 (p -value = 0.045). Despite being significant, the outcome is in the opposite direction. Hypothesis 1 is not supported.

The second step was to analyze the cultural appeals in the outdoor advertisements. This analysis followed the methods used in Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996). The first step was a Chi-Square analysis of the 30 advertising appeals (a 2 x 12 comparison, the appeal was present or absent times the 12 countries sampled). One item, modest, never occurred in the sample of advertisements and was excluded from the analysis. Overall, the analysis of the remaining 29 appeals found significant results for 17 items ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed) (Independence, Distinctive, Self-respect, Popular, Family, Community, Ornamental, Dear, Cheap, Plain, Safety, Tamed, Youth, Casual, Effective,

TABLE 2:
Advertising Appeals Items for the Culture Focused Content Analysis

Content Analysis Item	Individualism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity
Independence	+			
Distinctive	+			
Self-respect	+			
Popular	-			
Affiliation	-			
Family	-			
Succorance	-			
Community	-			
Ornamental		+		
Vain		+		
Dear		+		
Status		+		
Cheap		-		
Humility		-		
Nurturance		-		
Plain		-		
Safety			+	
Tamed			+	
Durable			+	
Adventure			-	
Untamed			-	
Magic			-	
Youth			-	
Casual			-	
Effective				+
Convenient				+
Productivity				+
Natural				-
Frail				-
Modest*				-

*Item excluded from correlation analysis due to no occurrences in the sample.

TABLE 3:
Information Cue Items for the Development Focused Content Analysis

Information Cue	Description
Price / Value	Mentions product cost or value for the money.
Quality	Product characteristics relating to workmanship, engineering, durability, excellence of materials, structural superiority, superiority of personnel, attention to detail, or special services.
Performance	Details what the product does and how well it does in comparison to alternative purchases.
Components / Contents	Details product components, ingredients, or ancillary items included in the product. This cue also includes prominent mention of actors/artists/performers that are performing in an event, television program, or movie.
Availability	When and where the product can be purchased or viewed (including store names, addresses, television channel, and hours of operation). This cue also includes the date and/or time of an advertised event or television program as well as the telephone number and/or website address for the advertiser.
Directional Information	Provides directions to where the product can be purchased (i.e., “next exit”, “exit 7”, “around the corner”, “next to McDonald’s”, etc.)
Special Offers	Lists limited-time, non-price deals available with product purchase.
Taste	Information is presented that the particular product is perceived superior in taste by a sample of customers.
Nutrition	Data presented about the nutritional content of the particular product.
Packaging / Shape	Details what special shapes or models the product is available in or references that the product’s packaging is better than alternative purchases.
Guarantees / Warranties	Post-purchase assurances are detailed.
Safety	Mentions safety features for the particular product.
Research	Data is presented about independent or company-sponsored research.
New Ideas	New concepts or advantages are presented.

Source: Adapted from Stern, Krugman, & Resnik, (1981).

Productivity, and Frail) and approaching significant results for two other items ($p < 0.10$) (Status and Humility). Ten items were not significantly different (Affiliation, Succorance, Vain, Nurturance, Durable, Adventure, Untamed, Magic, Convenient, Natural).

The next step used a correlation analysis to confirm the hypotheses. For the advertising appeals, the data were first transformed using the same proportional measure as in Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996). This involved “dividing the use of a particular appeal by all uses of all appeals, country by country” (pg. 66). The proportion for each advertising appeal was correlated with its corresponding cultural dimension. In addition, as this study focused on

replication of the broad finding that culture is reflected in outdoor advertising, the proportions for each advertisement were grouped according to their underlying cultural dimension (e.g., high power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, etc.) and then summed. The low occurrence items were removed for both of these steps. The summed proportions were then correlated with their corresponding Hofstede (1980) cultural dimension score.

Again following Albers-Miller and Gelb’s (1996) methods, a simple count of correlations in the predicted direction is used to test each hypothesis.

Individualism: None of the single appeals correlated significantly with country scores on

Individualism. Independence, Affiliation, Succorance, and Community had non-significant correlations, but they were in the predicted direction. Distinctive, Self-respect, Popular and Family had non-significant correlations, and their correlations were in the wrong direction. The correlations for the summed high and low individualism scores for the advertising appeals were not correlated to the Hofstede score and were in the wrong direction. These results fail to support Hypothesis 3a.

Power Distance: Status, Cheap and Nurturance had non-significant correlations, but they were in the predicted direction. Ornamental, Vain, Dear, Status, Humility, and Plain had non-significant results, and their correlations were in the wrong direction. The correlations for both the high and low summed power distance scores were not significant. For high power distance, the correlation was not in the predicted direction but it was in the predicted direction for low power distance. These results fail to support for Hypothesis 3b.

Uncertainty Avoidance: Safety Appeal had a significant (p -value < 0.05) Spearman Rho correlation with uncertainty avoidance and in the predicted direction. Untamed had non-significant correlations, but it was in the predicted direction. Tamed, Durable, Adventure, Magic, Youth, and Casual had non-significant results, and their correlations were in the wrong direction. The correlation for the summed high uncertainty avoidance score was non-significant but in the predicted direction. In contrast, the correlation for the summed low uncertainty avoidance score was non-significant and in the wrong direction. These results provide initial, but very partial support for Hypothesis 3c.

Masculinity: Spearman Rho correlations for Effective and Frail were insignificant but in the predicted direction. In contrast, Convenient, Productivity, and Frail were not significant and in the wrong direction. The correlation for the high summed masculinity scores was insignificant and not in the predicted direction while the summed low masculinity scores was insignificant but in the predicted direction. Overall, these results fail to support Hypothesis 3d.

Taken as a group, the results of the cultural analysis find little to no relationship between scores on Hofstede's four culture dimensions and the cultural appeals in the outdoor advertisements. This fails to support Hypothesis 2.

DISCUSSION

International advertising research is consistent in its findings that advertising content should be adapted to reflect differences in local cultures and development levels (Abernethy & Franke, 1996; Baack & Singh, 2007; de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). The goal of this paper is to replicate and extend these findings to outdoor advertisements. Using two common methods in the field, this study found partial support for the extension of these theoretical claims to this under-researched medium (Taylor, 2010, 2012). This study finds evidence that the amount of information in an ad is related to development level but not in the hypothesized direction. With a sample size of 12 countries of varying geographic and cultural backgrounds, the statistical results show that the level of development influences advertising content within outdoor advertising in that countries with lower scores on the Human Development Index are more likely to have more information cues. This corresponds to a portion of past research on the topic that suggests more informative ads are found in developing countries for two reasons. First, because consumers are often in the early stages of many product lifecycles, there is a greater need to educate consumers on product benefits. Second, many developing countries are said to have relatively low levels of advertising intensity across all media compared to developed markets thereby minimizing cognitive overload arising from information-laden advertisements regardless of its form (Falk, et al., 1999; Renforth & Raveed, 1983). Our results run counter to Abernethy and Franke's (1996) research that suggests more informative ads are found in developed countries because higher education levels in these countries support more information cues.

Outdoor advertising likely takes on a very different role in less developed countries where Human Development Index scores are lower. Here outdoor advertising is relatively

inexpensive and reaches a larger number of consumers. Other advertising media is used less frequently by marketers because communication infrastructure is less developed; lower incomes prevent wide spread TV ownership and internet usage, especially in rural areas; and low literacy rates impede the coverage of print media (Austin, 1990; Sinha, 2008). As such, including more information in an outdoor advertisement is likely seen as necessary in less developed countries because these ads may be the only true mass medium available.

The results with respect to cultural value reflection are disappointing. Only one of the advertising appeals had a statistically significant relationship with its corresponding culture dimension (safety for high uncertainty avoidance). While exact correspondence is rare for content analysis studies of this kind (see Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) or Baack and Singh (2007)), the results of this exploratory replication and extension are remarkably weak. This may be due to the number and type of countries used in our sample, although a similar sample was used in Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996). That said, it is more likely that the results reflect on the unique characteristics of the medium.

Outdoor advertisements focus more on simplicity and directness. With distracted and cognitively limited target consumers, effective outdoor messaging typically uses few words, simple images, and quickly processed copy (Wilson & Till, 2012a). An examination of a simple count of the number of occurrences of each appeal supports this potential explanation. Eight appeals occurred ten or fewer times across the entire sample of 319 ads (Magic (8 occurrences), Untamed (7), Frail (5), Tamed (5), Succorance (4), Casual (3), Humility (2), and Modest (0)). The highest occurring items, Distinctive and Cheap, both only occurred 44 times across the 319 advertisements, a low 13.8% occurrence rate.

It is possible that outdoor advertising is just not a culturally laden media. Facing the realities of the processing constraints of outdoor advertising, advertisers likely focus on core messaging that does not easily reflect deep, complicated cultural contexts. Contrast this

with other forms of print advertising, such as magazine and banner advertisements, where consumers are free to spend as much time as they wish to read and perhaps reread information found within the ad. These ads are able to be much more complex. This is likely why other research has consistently found magazine and web advertisements to be flush with overt and subtle cultural cues (e.g., Choi, et al., 2006). The opportunity for message processing is simply greater in print media where consumers more readily control message exposure.

Theoretical Implications

There are two very important theoretical implications derived from this study. The first is related to the importance of replication research. The prevailing wisdom within international marketing is that cultural differences between countries are reflective within each country's advertising content. Years of advertising research have shown this to be the case. However, this extensive research has only occurred within three forms of media, which are quite capable of supporting information-rich, cultural appeals: television, print, and web content. By replicating this research and extending it to outdoor advertising, we find that the use of cultural appeals do not vary across countries. We believe that our study's inability to support previous cross-cultural research is related to the media itself and how consumers process information within it. Due to the few seconds that many consumers devote to the processing of outdoor advertisements, these ads often do not contain many information cues. As such, culturally-laden cues are also not prevalent. Indeed, we found that many cultural appeals were infrequently used or not used at all. Without our replication, this boundary condition would not have been discovered. The importance to managers and advertising strategy is discussed in greater detail within the next section.

Replication research is often not pursued by many researchers for fear that it will not be published or that it will hinder career advancement by it being considered unoriginal or lacking innovation (Kerr, et al., 2016). Yet, journal editors are recognizing the importance

of such work and are publishing reinquiry research (Eisend, Frank, & Leigh, 2016). Recognizing that human behavior is evolutionary and that artifacts of this behavior, such as advertising, may change over time or simply not function as anticipated if viewed from a different media angle, is quite important to the scientific process. We hope that our replication of an important, long-standing principle, such as the adaptation-standardization of marketing communications, encourages others to support the scientific method through replication research.

The second important theoretical implication is concerned with our understanding of how information cues vary by level of human development. Prior international advertising research is conflicted as to whether more information cues are found in low versus high human development levels (Abernethy & Franke, 1996; Falk, et al., 1999; Noor Al-Deen, 1991; Renforth & Raveed, 1983). Our inquiry into outdoor advertising suggests that more information cues are present in countries with lower levels of human development. Despite our assumed knowledge about the use of information cues, we may not truly understand how and when they are used. Referencing again the importance of replication research, it appears that the occurrence of information cues is not only related to human development but also to the type of media.

Managerial Implications

Taken together, the results of this study provide insight into cross-cultural advertising practices and suggest what methods might work best in a country. The insights represent topics that international advertising scholars have indicated are critical in moving research in this area forward and are important to help managers develop more effective international advertisements (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; Taylor, 2005). Specifically, the results indicate that culture influences the use of outdoor advertising differently based on what is said versus how it is said. Ad content, or the “what,” appears to be influenced by culture through a country’s level of development while the appeal, or the “how,” appears to differ less by culture. In less developed countries, as measured by the Human Development Index,

outdoor ads have greater levels of information value whereas more developed countries have less information. From an appeal’s perspective, outdoor advertising is just not that culturally driven. The media limits cultural content by focusing instead on short, pith delivery. Facing these media based issues, an advertising appeal’s use is not correlated with a country’s cultural values and may be related to the need to use simple designs that aid in message processing.

This seems to suggest that the degree of standardization is less likely across a divergent group of countries but may be possible in countries with a similar level of development. Consequently, this may permit a higher degree of standardization of appeals across markets. Outdoor advertising should be preferred, in terms of cost, because by its nature it needs less adaptation. What was once viewed as a constraint, namely a limited amount of information that can be delivered, can instead be viewed as an advantage in an international advertising context. With outdoor advertising, the same basic message can be used across markets.

In terms of information cues, managers face a counter concern. The results find that more information cues are possible in countries just beginning to develop. This is even in the case of a constrained, potentially low information, medium. Outdoor advertising is unique, and the results present a real challenge for managers. How do you present a great amount of information in this format? It is certainly possible, and the results push managers to focus on being brief but powerful in their messaging. A country-level analysis provides important exemplars of adaptation in practice. The first topic to consider is the role of information cues. As discussed, our findings support a portion of theory that low levels of development correspond to a need to educate consumers regarding the product. Looking at our sample, we find examples of this.

India, which scores at one of the lowest levels on the HDI in our sample, is a case in point, and Exhibit One is a clear example of education in an advertisement. The product is military service. The advertisement is high in information, even while being low in terms of

actual copy or words. Instead, the advertisement uses images to capture service in the Indian Air Force. This approach crosses various language barriers, including illiteracy, to educate the viewer. It is worthy to note that the limited copy is in English, capturing the prestige associated with serving in the Indian Armed Forces.

Cultural cues represent a more complicated discussion. As noted above, many of the items had a low level of occurrence, reflecting the simple nature of outdoor advertising as a medium. The use of cultural appeals in outdoor advertising just doesn't seem to be a typical practice. That said, looking at these advertisements in sum, it is possible to reflect culture in outdoor advertising, and doing so might present an opportunity for brands to increase ad efficacy relative to competitors. We review exemplars for practitioners below to provide guidance on how to better reflect cultural values.

Consider the case of Slovakia, which scores the highest on power distance. The advertisement in Exhibit Two emphasizes the importance of growing up. The copy, roughly translated, is "enjoy the taste of growing up." For countries scoring high on power distance, any attempt to highlight status will resonate. This advertisement is an example of that.

This study is unique in that it has a sample of advertisements from the Caribbean. Specifically, our sample from Turks and Caicos Islands allows us to examine the uncertainty avoidance value in one of the starkest examples of this value. With a score of 13 it ranks near Singapore, at 8, and other lowest scoring countries, and indicates that individuals who are part of the Turks and Caicos culture are quite comfortable with ambiguity. This value can be seen in Exhibit Three. The claims made are vague, almost magical, and lack specificity. A final Hofstede (1980) value to consider is masculinity. With Norway in our sample, we have a stark case of low masculinity to guide practice. Looking at Exhibit Four, you see that the model is frail and the product being sold is natural – characteristics that are associated with a more feminine culture. This reflects the cultural values in Norway. Advertisers may

take this as an example as how to reflect, or not reflect, masculinity in practice.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations worth mentioning. First, the use of only two coders per country increases the possibility of one idiosyncratic coder skewing the results. This potential, coupled with the number of countries sampled, could potentially have led to spurious results. One should also be careful generalizing the results outside of the 12 countries sampled. Lastly, the number of countries sampled limited the power of the statistical analysis, and, as a result, few statistically significant results were found. In lieu of this, interpretation of the null results for cultural appeals is especially difficult.

Future research should start by increasing the number of countries sampled to improve the power of any statistical analysis. Additionally, future research might explore differences in specific information cues and more directly test whether information cue differences have cultural or development causes. Future studies should also consider how additional variables other than culture or the Human Development Index might account for these results. Lastly, future research may further extend research on culture, development, and advertising content into other new media such as banner advertising.

To conclude, the broad goal of this paper was to replicate and extend previous research on advertising content, culture, and level of development to the under-researched media of outdoor advertisements. The authors have met this goal and invite others to build on their findings.

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**EXHIBIT 1:
High Information Content in an Indian Advertisement**



**EXHIBIT 2:
High Power Distance in a Slovakia Advertisement**



**EXHIBIT 3:
Low Uncertainty Avoidance in a Turks and Caicos Advertisement**



**EXHIBIT 4:
Femininity in a Norway Advertisement**

