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NEW DIRECTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING RESEARCH

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JAI

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PREFACE

This special volume of *Advances in International Marketing* is devoted to exploring new perspectives on international advertising – a generally under-researched area. It is guest edited by Charles R. Taylor of Villanova University.

The idea for devoting a separate volume on international advertising came from Professor Taylor. He issued a call for papers, which then attracted a variety of submissions of high quality. We owe gratitude to him for screening and evaluating these submissions, and for preparing the final set of chapters. We are also indebted to many colleagues who assisted in the review process. The resulting selections draw from a variety of perspectives and offer rich insights on international advertising issues.

Our thanks to Dr. Taylor for his efforts in creating this volume. Finally, we express our appreciation to Ms. Alison Evans and other staff at JAI/Elsevier Science who saw the volume through the production process.

S. Tamer Cavusgil
Series Editor

INTRODUCTION – NEW DIRECTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING RESEARCH

Charles R. Taylor

International advertising is an area in need of more quality research. While this need is somewhat surprising given the large amount of attention focused on advertising in many parts of the world, one needs only to look at chapters on international advertising in International Marketing or Advertising textbooks to see the problem. In comparison to well-researched areas such as foreign market entry modes, country of origin perceptions of products, pricing strategies, and global branding strategies, there is far too little that is managerially actionable in international advertising discussions. Too often, we are left to give our advertising students vague advice, such as "you need to search for multi-market target audience similarities," in spite of not knowing a lot about how it can be done due to a paucity of research.

Another example of a failure to deliver value to managers, (and our students), stems from being preoccupied with the "debate" over standardization vs. specialization. Too often, the discussion is positioned as a controversy rather than providing managers with specific advice on how to deal with the decision. We also know too little about setting advertising budgets and measuring advertising effectiveness in foreign markets. Research focusing on allowing us a better understanding of the impact of culture on advertising effectiveness and on client–agency relationships is also urgently needed. While the work of early international advertising scholars such as Gordon Miracle and John Ryans, who are among the contributors to this volume, did an excellent job of setting the

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stage for additional research, too often we have fallen short. Some recent key studies suggest promising things are ahead, but more is needed.

There are some understandable reasons why international advertising research has not advanced as far as it might. As noted by Zinkhan (1994), it is simply more difficult to collect data from multiple countries. Taking on multiple co-authors is not viewed as desirable at many universities though it may often be necessary in a large international study. Another issue related to the difficulty of collecting data in multiple markets is that a disproportionately high number of content analyses have been published, perhaps to the neglect of other research techniques such as surveys and experiments. It will be especially important for researchers of the future to build on descriptive research with experiments that focus more on the underlying reasons why various executional techniques are effective in a market as opposed to simply describing the existing content of ads.

Another issue facing international advertising researchers is that elite journals frequently frown on studies from countries other than the United States that do not collect comparable data from the U.S. Even when the U.S. is included, the second country in a study had better be of interest to the "general readership" of the journal if the author hopes to publish it. An additional problem for researchers is that studying multiple countries adds noise to data sets, yet international studies are held to the same reliability levels as domestic studies. Collectively, all of these problems associated with conducting research in international advertising have led to a situation where we have only a very limited number of scholars pursuing programmatic research, and even fewer who have been able to publish their work in the top journals in the field.

While the above problems do, indeed, make it difficult to conduct international advertising research they are not insurmountable, as illustrated by the articles in this volume. Several different methodologies, including experiments, surveys, qualitative research, and content analysis are used in the papers offered here. Moreover, the studies are conducted in several countries from various parts of the world and several delve into neglected areas of inquiry.

The opening section provides some guidance in terms of implementing procedures to ensure that survey data compared in multiple countries is equivalent. The two articles in the Methodological Advances section build on prior work on ensuring that equivalent data are being compared in cross-cultural studies. In the first article, Miracle and Bang discuss procedures for making sure equivalent measurement instruments are produced prior to data collection, including guidelines for effective translations and procedures for training coders when content analysis is used. In the second article, Ewing, Caruana, and Teo build on Steenkamp and Baumgartners's (1998) analytical procedures for

assessing whether data are equivalent by developing the etic Multicultural Advertising Response Scale (MARS). Collectively, these studies demonstrate how it is now possible for researchers to eliminate much of the noise in cross-national research. Employing the types of procedures illustrated in these studies, both before and after the data is collected, will enhance the chances of an international advertising study being accepted in high-level journals.

The second section of the volume is titled "Standardization vs. Specialization Issues." These studies examine the advances that have been made in recent advertising research on standardization and reflect the need to see the issue from a managerial perspective, as opposed to becoming preoccupied with the "debate." In a review of the literature on standardization vs. specialization in the 1990s, Taylor and Johnson stress the growing consensus that brand positioning or the main selling message can often be standardized while individual country executions must be carefully analyzed when making a decision whether to standardize. Thus, at a general level, the decision to standardize should become a matter of "what"and "how," as opposed to whether. The authors also call for more research on the client–agency relationship vis-a-vis standardization and on inter-market segmentation.

The second article in this section, by Chandra, Griffith, and Ryans, investigates the relationship of process standardization to program standardization using results from a survey of U.S. multinationals operating in India. This study provides an excellent country-specific example of the level of analysis recommended by Taylor and Johnson for determining whether specific programs (or executions) can be standardized. The third contribution to this section is a fascinating piece by Onkvisit and Shaw in which the universality of theories and concepts contained in U.S. textbooks is examined and questioned. As textbook authors, their call for more research evaluating and replicating advertising concepts in other cultural contexts should be taken especially seriously, as they have first hand the need to summarize the state of knowledge on international advertising. In the final article in this section, Raymond and Lim provide a detailed case study that, again, illustrates the level of depth of analysis needed in making the decision of what can be standardized. Their case study of Hyundai's Santa Fe SUV shows how country of origin effects and other factors need to be considered in deciding whether adaptation is necessary.

The third section of the volume is entitled "Advertising in Central/Eastern Europe." The two articles here focus on two transitional economies, Poland and the Czech Republic, that have seen substantial growth in advertising over the past decade. De Pelsmacker, Maison, and Geuens conduct an experiment which examines how emotional vs. rational advertising appeals work in positive versus negative media contexts. Experimental studies of this type are too rare

in advertising research in general, but especially in transitional economies. The second article, by Taylor, Bonner, and Dolezal provides evidence on two issues. First, it reports on a survey of Czech perception of advertising clutter in various media. Second, it analyzes Czech consumers' perceptions of what types of advertising executions are effective, using data from both a survey and personal interviews.

The fourth section is titled, "Global Advertising, Social Responsibility, and Country of Origin Effects." Polonsky, Carlson, Prothero and Kapelianis start the section off with a study of environmental information contained on packaging in four countries – Australia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. Using a new methodology in which judges in each country determine the categories for coding as well as performing the actual coding, the study finds that some types of information not traditionally classified as environmental were identified. The authors also provide implications for advertisers. The next study, authored by Hill and Dhanda, analyzes secondary data in order to assess the impact of differential access to the internet on the ability to promote goods and services worldwide. Macro-level implications for advertisers are provided. The final paper in this section, by Yun, Lee, and Sego, conducts an experiment in which the impact of hybrid vs. non-hybrid country of origin effects on response to an ad are analyzed. The study, conducted over the Internet, also examines the effect of indirect foreign language cues in the form of foreign language slogans.

Advertising in Asia Pacific is the title of the final section of the volume. Oh and Kim lead off the section with a study of how power impacts on client–agency relationships. Drawing on theory that is often applied in a channels context but seldom in an ad agency context, they find that differential power between clients and agencies can actually play a constructive role. The second paper, by Zhou, Xue, and Zhou, examines advertising and its relationship with materialism, self-esteem and life-satisfaction. Their results, from a student sample, clearly demonstrate that Chinese students are optimistic in terms of their future and that the relationship between the tested variables is complex. In the final paper, Hughes and Polonsky compare the information content in the advertising of Australian, Japanese, and U.S. MNEs in Australia. Their findings suggest that Japanese and U.S. firms use different levels of information in Australia than they do in their home markets.

Collectively, these studies provide a basis on which to build new directions in advertising research, or to continue to build on existing trends in areas in need of research. I would like to thank S. Tamer Cavusgil, the Series Editor, for his encouragement and for the opportunity to edit this issue, and Kathy Waldie of Michigan State University for her support throughout the process.

Special thanks are also due to Alison Evans of Elsevier who served as Administrative Editor of the Volume and Kyong Ryul (Kevin) Koo, my graduate assistant at Villanova University who worked hard on this project. Finally, I very much thank the Editorial Board members who reviewed the papers for this issue, thereby ensuring its quality.

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ACHIEVING RELIABLE AND VALID CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH RESULTS IN CONTENT ANALYSIS

Gordon E. Miracle and Hae-Kyong Bang

ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural research presents unique challenges due to language and cultural differences. Based on a large-scale research project involving television advertisements from Japan, Korea, and the U.S., the article identifies a number of problems encountered in developing equivalent research instruments in, and discusses ways to achieve reliable and valid results in cross-cultural content analysis research. The importance of understanding the languages and culture, selecting, training and supervising coders in a consistent manner and the practical value of back-translation process in cross-cultural research in achieving reliable and valid research results are emphasized. Specific guidelines for ensuring equivalent research instruments are provided.

INTRODUCTION

Many products and services are produced in one country and sold in distant and culturally different markets. Often international marketers depend mainly on judgment to adjust advertising for differences in foreign markets. Some even

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attempt to find globally acceptable advertising that can be used in all markets. Cross-cultural research methods guide such decisions. Such research requires specialized techniques to overcome cross-national problems of functional, conceptual and linguistic equivalence (Miracle, 1988). In fact, ensuring equivalence is essential to producing useful research (Douglas & Craig, 2000; Kumar, 2000). However, results of a meta-analysis of major studies of the information content of advertising suggest that, all too often, appropriate measures are not taken to ensure that the results of research conducted in two countries are equivalent (Abernethy & Franke, 1996). Notably, the Abernethy and Franke study suggested that studies that followed training procedures for coders produced different, and one can surmise, more accurate, results than those that did not.

The article describes selected research design ideas, techniques, and lessons that have been found to be useful in doing cross-cultural research in Japan, Korea and the USA. These lessons may also be useful to those who would do research to guide advertising in other cultures. Many of the ideas are not expensive to implement, and can be helpful to both academics and practitioners conducting research in international markets.

The study that provided the experience for this methodology article was a large content analysis of television commercials in three countries: Japan, Korea and the USA. A number of articles and papers have been written, and some are already in print or in press (Miracle et al., 1992a, b; Taylor et al., 1992; Miracle et al., 1992). Subsequent data collection and analysis also resulted in articles (Taylor et al., 1997; Taylor et al., 1994).

Cross-cultural research encompasses not only the entire range of problems encountered when doing research within one culture, but also problems that arise from differences in cultures. Although this article is based on lessons learned from content analysis, some of these methods may also be useful for survey research. Indeed some of the interpersonal communication problems encountered and resolved when preparing data coding forms, when training and using translators, and when training supervisors and coders, may be similar to those encountered when preparing interviewers, and training them to handle telephone or personal interviews.

The Concept of Culture

The concept of culture is elusive. Although culture has been defined in many ways, it is not appropriate here to deal comprehensively with the many definitions and components of culture. For our purposes it seems suitable to use Hofstede's (1984) definition: "... culture is the collective programming of the

mind which distinguishes the members of one group or society from those of another . . . culture is reflected in the meaning that people attach to the various aspects of their life; their way of looking at the world and their role in it; in their values, that is, in what they consider as 'good' and as 'evil'; in their collective beliefs, what they consider as 'true' and as 'false'; in their artistic expressions, what they consider as 'beautiful' and as 'ugly'."

Advertising reflects culture. Differences in culture between societies suggest measurement problems. The central issue addressed in this paper is how to define and measure culturally influenced characteristics of Japanese, Korean and U.S. television advertising systematically, objectively and quantitatively so as to achieve reliable and valid research results. As alluded to earlier, many of these lessons are applicable to advertising research in other cultures.

The Emic-Etic Distinction

An emic generalization is one that is valid within a single culture. An etic generalization is the one that is valid in two or more cultures. Cross-cultural research is concerned with identifying and distinguishing emic from etic generalizations. Etic generalizations depend on the equivalence of culture between two or more societies.

Equivalence

There are differences and similarities between cultures and the ways in which language is used to express ideas and information. These differences and similarities can be grouped into functional, conceptual or linguistic characteristics of a culture and language. These similarities or differences can be important influences on setting advertising objectives, deciding advertising strategy, or doing advertising creative executions.

Functional differences and similarities of cultures relate to behavioral phenomena. From the standpoint of advertising, an important question is whether or not habits and customs with respect to consumer purchasing behavior or product usage are the same or different in the culture under study. For example, it may or may not be appropriate to discuss business at meals, to eat a particular food for breakfast, or to use a bicycle for the same purpose (e.g. for pleasure or for basic transportation).

Conceptual differences and similarities of culture relate to the existence or non-existence of certain ideas or ways of thinking in a culture. Of importance to advertising is whether certain concepts of consumer purchasing behavior or product usage are the same or different in the cultures under study. For example, the meaning of certain colors may or may not have the same

connotations; white may be the color of purity in one country or the color of death in another. The concepts of "ethnic" and "foreign" may be different in the USA, but virtually identical in Korea. What is humorous in one nation may not be at all humorous in another.

Linguistic differences and similarities relate to the translatability of function and concepts from one language into another. For example, Eskimos may have many more words to express different kinds of snow than are available in English. Sometimes idioms or metaphors are meaningful in one language but not in another. An example is the U.S. expression: it is as easy as rolling off of a log. This expression, if translated, may be entirely meaningless in many languages. Such words as "marketing," "computer" and "television" have been incorporated into many languages in which there is no word that is exactly equivalent. When such a word is adopted into a language, there may remain a difference in the meaning for an extended period of time. Additionally, some words are translatable but require lengthy explanation to express the full idea.

Determining Reliability

In its simplest form, reliability is the "degree of correspondence between two sets of frequencies of classified symbol data when the analysis of the same communication is done by two independent analysts or groups of analysts." (Janis et al., 1943, p. 293)

Three types of reliability have been identified in the literature, First, *stability*: the degree to which a process is invariant or unchanging over time when measured at different times by one observer. It is also known as consistency or intraobserver reliability. This is also the weakest form of reliability. Secondly, *reproducibility*: the degree to which a process can be recreated under varying circumstances at different locations by different coders. It is also known as intercoder reliability. Finally, *accuracy*: the degree to which a process functionally conforms to a known standard, or yields what it is designed to yield. This is the strongest reliability test available, surpassed only by a measure of validity that assumes the known standard must be true (Krippendorf, 1980). In this project, we were concerned with reproducibility and accuracy.

In creating equivalent coding or data collection instruments across two or more cultures, the translation process may pose a problem either by decreasing reliability or by increasing reliability. Unlike the common belief that the reliability level may only diminish in cross-culture studies, several factors may actually create seeming equivalence: (1) translators may have a shared set of rules for translating certain non-equivalent words and phrases; (2) some back-translators may be able to make sense out of a poorly written target

language version; or (3) the bilingual person translating from the source to the target may retain many of the grammatical forms of the source (Brislin, 1970). Should this take place, the result may be higher reliability but lower validity. In order to secure consistent measures, translations and back-translations should be done by those who are knowledgeable not only about the languages, but also about the subject of research, in this case, advertising.

While a full discussion of the best measures for reporting reliability is beyond the scope of this paper, it should be noted that there is now a widespread consensus among marketing and advertising researchers that reported reliability figures should be corrected for chance agreement (Taylor & Stern, 1994). Perrault and Leigh (1989), Hughes and Garrett (1990), Franke (1992), and Rust and Cooil (1994) all provide excellent discussions of this issue.

Determining Validity

As Holsti (1969) points out, the meaning of validity can vary from study to study, depending on the investigator's purposes. According to the American Psychological Association Committee on psychological tests, four types of validity can be distinguished such as content validity, predictive validity, concurrent validity, and construct validity. Content validity, also sometimes referred to as face validity, has most frequently been relied upon by content analysis. If the purpose of the research is a purely descriptive one, content validity is normally sufficient, and this type of validity is usually established through the informed judgment of the investigator.

Since the research on which this article is based was descriptive, it was deemed sufficient to rely on content validity. The researcher's judgments on validity depend on the research methods used and the care with which they are employed. The main thrust of this article is to illustrate such methods.

RESEARCH METHODS

The Translation/Back-Translation Process

The data coding instruments for this study were prepared initially in English. They were based largely on the review of the U.S. literature (see references in Miracle, 1988), but also on several cross-national and non-U.S. studies. Additional adaptations were based on the language and advertising experiences of the researchers in Japan and Korea. Many uncertainties were encountered and resolved as to which items on the data coding instrument were emic or etic.

In view of the importance of problems of equivalence, it was important to devise a method to: (1) identify differences when they exist; and (2) resolve

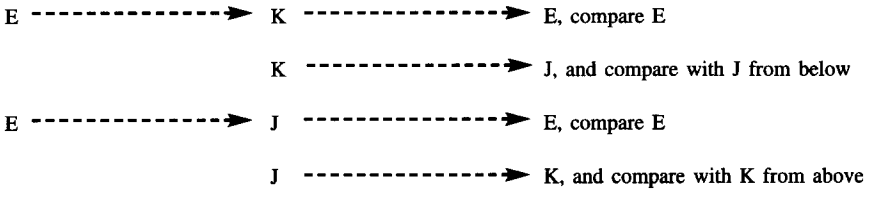
them when possible, especially to discover if they are an artifact of a particular translator rather than a genuine difference.

One technique to deal with problems of equivalence is to: (1) use one or more persons to translate material from the original language into a second language; (2) translate it back into the original language; and (3) compare the original with the back-translated version.

This study involved three languages: Japanese, Korean and U.S. English. Thus it was more complex than if only two languages had been involved. The scheme is shown in Fig. 1.

In each language, it is important for a competent translator to translate into his or her own native language. It is not only easier and quicker to translate into one's own native language, but more accurate as well. A translator should have a current knowledge of his or her own native language from recent experience, since languages evolve continuously and the translator must be up to date. The cultural, economic and social backgrounds of translators are also important regarding their perspectives on functions, concepts and language. Additionally it was important for this particular project that the translators should know the technical language of advertising. Miracle (1988) reported more fully on the requirements for effective translations of advertising and related material.

When each back-translation was compared with the original in that language, many differences were discovered. A few apparently genuine emic concepts were identified, as well as a number of differences that arose from what appeared



Notes: 1. E = English, K = Korean, J = Japanese
2. The direction of the arrows shows the translation from one language into the other.
3. In each case the end product back-translated must be compared with the original in that language – for purposes of identifying and resolving problems of functional, conceptual and linguistic equivalence.
4. At each stage, one or more independent translators must be utilized.

Fig. 1. Translation and Back-Translation Performed on the Data Coding Instruments and Codebook.

at first to be linguistic non-equivalence. These were subsequently resolved by improving the translations.

Special Problems of Translations Between Japanese and English

Written Japanese is a combination of three symbol systems: (1) Chinese characters or symbols known as kanji; (2) indigenous Japanese symbols known as hiragana; and (3) indigenous Japanese symbols known as katakana. The latter are used primarily for transliterating foreign words so they can be pronounced in Japanese. All three symbols may be used in the same sentence. If a kanji or hiragana symbol is not available to express a foreign concept, the Japanese can write a word in katakana so that they can pronounce it. For example, the word "television" becomes a three syllable word "te-re-bi," "beer" becomes a two syllable word, "bi-ru," and the word "Miracle" becomes a four syllable word, "Mi-ra-ku-ru." The interesting feature of this practice is that someone reading the transliterated katakana can render it back into the original language, without understanding the meaning of the word. In our study, such a problem arose when a translator used katakana to translate a few "difficult" words from English into Japanese. Some of the back-translations from this Japanese into English showed remarkable agreement with the original English, suggesting the false conclusion that there were no problems of equivalence. The problem was compounded by the fact that even though such transliterated words have become a part of the Japanese language, these words often take on new connotations, or lose part of the original meaning. For example, the katakana rendering of skeleton (se-ke-ru-ton) carries the meaning of "outline" (as used when referring to an outline of an article).

With all languages, virtually all translations suffer at least a little from a partial rather than full correspondence in the meaning of words. For example, the Japanese expression for "computer graphics" carries the meaning of a picture – a drawing, an illustration or sketch, but not a graph. Another example is the Japanese word for "animation" which in translation carries the meaning of "comics" or "cartoons".

Although the items on the data coding instrument originated largely from U.S. literature and experience, Japanese and Korean literature searches provided a few information and executional variables that had not arisen in English. However, the review of the Japanese literature was necessarily not as comprehensive as the review of the U.S. literature, and some Japanese emic concepts were probably missed.

Special Problems of Translations Between Korean and English

An example of a problem with the translation of "English to Korean and back to English" occurred with the use of the words "ethnic and "foreign". Although they have two separate meanings in English, there is only one word for both of them in Korean, and ethnic is considered to be identical to foreign. Koreans believe they are one ethnic group, so whoever comes from a different ethnic group is considered by them to be foreign.

Training and Using Translators

In this study there were four main types of items to be translated: (1) data coding instruments; (2) code books of operational definitions of the items on the data coding instruments; (3) instructions for coders; and (4) sampling specifications and procedural instructions.

The initial translations from English into Japanese and from English into Korean were done in the USA. These native Japanese and Korean translators were a part of the research team and therefore met regularly with the entire research team during the planning and discussion of all phases of the project. They participated first in the pilot study, learning from this early testing. They participated in the early discussion of probable emic and etic concepts, and the discussion of probable difficulties with equivalence. They helped to develop the research design. Therefore they were prepared to translate the real meaning of the concepts on the data coding instruments and the definitions in the code books.

After these translations were followed by back-translations, the research group discussed in detail the problems of equivalence that were found. The data coding instruments and code books in English, Japanese and Korean were then revised.

At this point, a pilot study was done to test the data coding instruments and code books. This experience led to further improvements in the data coding instruments, and in the code books, as well as in the plans for training supervisors and for recruiting and training data coders. These improved data coding instruments and code books, after the pilot test, were then put though the back-translation processes from the English to Japanese to English, and from the English to Korean to English. Translators were used who had had no prior exposure to this research. Both comparisons of the back-translated English with the original English indicated that equivalence had been achieved.

The next step in preparing the data coding instruments and code books was to: (1) translate the revised Japanese version into Korean and then back into Japanese; and (2) translate the revised Korean version into Japanese and back into Korean. These two tasks were accomplished in Japan and Korea respectively. These back-translations were then compared with the original

versions by members of the research team. These comparisons provided additional input into the final versions of the research instruments and especially to guide the training of the native Japanese and Korean coders who did the coding in their respective countries.

Sampling

In order to obtain random samples that are comparable and representative, carefully designed specifications were followed in each country. In selecting a sample of television commercials, it was important at the outset to learn about differences in government and media policies with regard to program times, number and timing of airing of commercials, and so forth. The sampling method led to samples in each country that were comprised of a comprehensive range of product categories normally advertised on national television. These samples of national brand commercials from each country contained a similar proportion of products advertised. Therefore, differences in research results could not be attributed to differences in the types of products advertised.

Recruiting Coders

For the pilot study, six each of Japanese, Korean and U.S. coders were recruited from students at a U.S. university. From this pilot study it became clear that it was important to find coders with an interest in and knowledge of advertising. It was not possible to train those with little knowledge of advertising to code as accurately as those who had substantial knowledge of advertising.

In the pilot study it also became clear that native Japanese and Koreans who had lived in the USA for several months had become knowledgeable about the U.S. culture. They apparently internalized some of this knowledge in ways that caused them to have difficulty in coding commercials in their native language in the same way that "uncontaminated" natives of each country would do the job. They had a tendency to judge commercials in their native languages according to characteristics or standards of U.S. commercials. Moreover, after even a few months, there were brands, products and commercials in their native countries that were unfamiliar to them – those that had been introduced since they had left. Some of these commercials had new expressions or ideas, and coders said they had difficulty in understanding or interpreting them accurately. Therefore it became clear that the best alternative was to recruit uncontaminated coders living in their native countries, i.e. in Japan, Korea and the USA.

Training Coder Supervisors and Coders

It was recognized at the outset that the reliability and validity of the research findings would depend directly on comparable coding in all three countries.

Therefore coder training, supervising and control necessarily had to ensure that the coding would be done in the same way and according to the same rules and standards in each country, while still consistent with the culture of all three nations. Therefore every effort was made to train, supervise and control the coders so that their output would be comparable. Many of the procedures followed were consistent with the recommendations of Kolbe and Burnett (1991), an article that provides excellent guidelines for training coders.

Sixteen U.S. coders were trained by the principal investigator. Three other members of the research team, one American, one Japanese and one Korean, were also present. The American was the one who would later supervise and control the coders and the coding process for U.S. commercials. The Japanese and Korean researchers were the ones that would go to Japan and Korea to train the Japanese and Korean coders respectively.

After each training session, the principal investigator discussed the training with the Japanese, Korean and U.S. research assistants who would later train and supervise coders in their respective countries. The discussion continued until it was clear that the Japanese and Korean trainer/supervisors felt they would be able to train coders in their countries equivalently to the way U.S. coders were trained.

Reliability Testing Procedures

The next step was to conduct a reliability test. All U.S. coders working in one room coded 30 commercials, with no discussion among them, except that any coder could ask to see or hear part or all of the commercial as often as needed. This reliability testing process required nine sessions totaling a little more than 13 hours. This same process was later followed by the Japanese and Korean coders in their respective countries.

Coder Supervision and Control

After the training and reliability testing was completed in the USA, written instructions, forms for weekly productivity reports, and a schedule of weekly meetings of coders with their supervisor were prepared. The U.S. supervisor collected the completed data coding forms each week, answered coder questions, resolved difficulties, informed other coders of relevant details, and prepared a log of all activities. This log was then used as the basis for a summary report at the end of the coding to evaluate the entire process. This experience was then shared with the Japanese and Korean trainers/supervisors so that they would supervise and control their coders using the same process in a comparable manner.

After the U.S. coding was completed, the native speaker Japanese and Korean trainer/supervisors traveled to Tokyo and Seoul respectively. There they met with

local Japanese and Korean research colleagues respectively and together they trained the coders.

Reliability Calculation Methods

A review of previous communication studies revealed that a reliability coefficient is often expressed as correlations among coders' classifications (Hughes & Garrett, 1990). In many cases, a correlation among the coders' responses is interchangeably used to mean an agreement among the coder responses. However, it is important to note that it is the degree of agreement, not of correlation, that should be measured in order to achieve both reliable and valid results. An important distinction was made by Robinson (1957) regarding the validity of this kind of interchangeability. He stated that agreement requires that paired values must be linked by a linear relationship, or if one defines correlation more broadly, that the paired values be linked according to some mathematical function. Thus, agreement is a special case of correlation, or a narrower form of correlation, in that two variables that agree must be correlated, but variables which are correlated need not necessarily agree.

Determination of an acceptable reliability level depends on the complexity of the research task (Hornik, 1988). Those who best know the whole process of research should decide which level is acceptable because the problems of reliability and validity involve every phase of the content analysis process. Therefore, the analyst must determine what level of agreement is satisfactory to him (Budd & Thorp, 1963). The current consensus among many researchers is that 0.85 is an acceptable level of reliability (Kassarjian, 1977; Krippendorff, 1980). In our study, it had been determined that the 85 percentage level of agreement is sufficient. In our study, the intercoder percentages of agreement exceeded 90% within each country. Additional tests to correct for chance agreement were undertaken, and, again, the categories exceeded the Kassarjian standard.

EVALUATION OF RELIABILITY RESULTS

Some possible explanation for the high mean percentages of agreement achieved in this study are: (1) adequate coder training, and (2) accurate and precise definitions of variables. Since the analysis was done by groups of 10 Japanese, 12 Korean and 16 U.S. coders (not just by two or three coders as in many previous content analysis studies), the high percentages of agreement can be considered as especially noteworthy.

The achievement of equivalence through translation and back-translation in this study was designed to identify both emic and etic characteristics of the