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Are U.S. and French Cultural Differences Reflected in Advertising Appeals?

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Communication  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts of Professional Communication

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by  
Ciprian S. Begu  
May 2008

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Keywords: Hofstede, Pollay, Cultural Dimensions, Advertising Appeals, U.S., France

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## ABSTRACT

Are U.S. and French Cultural Differences Reflected in Advertising Appeals?

by

Ciprian S. Begu

Using 2 of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (power distance and uncertainty avoidance) associated by the research of Albers-Millers and Gelb with some of Pollay's value appeals used in advertising, this study successfully replicated 3 of 8 dependant relationships when analyzing the content of print magazines in U.S. and France. Going beyond the scope of a highly educated audience in which Hofstede's cultural dimensions were developed and retested, we indirectly found that these 2 dimensions of culture are partially salient in non-business, less elitist environments in the form of value appeals such as "dear", "untamed", "magic", and "youth" reinforcing the idea that cultural differences can sometimes be empirically tested by contrasting these appeals.

## DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my father who always wanted his son to be good with numbers.

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Most importantly, I thank my grandma in heaven who passed away during the process of writing this document. Without your loving care as a child I would have never gotten this far.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *International Advertising Research: The Importance of Cultural Values*

The internationalization of the communication process and ever more frequent interactions between people and messages residing in different cultural-linguistic environments has made the understanding of cultures and their particularities a top priority for professional communicators. The urgency of this concern is reflected in what is being researched in at least one field of professional communication: advertising. Based on an assessment of 106 articles published in the major journals of advertising research, Okazaki and Muller's (2007) recent meta-analysis, found the most important topics to be cultural values followed by the standardization versus localization debate and the content of advertising. This paper is concerned with the reflection of cultural values in the content of advertising appeals in the context of a waning debate between the advocates of advertising standardization and those of advertising localization. The debate is waning because, as we will see below, one side is winning.

The main components of a culture are the culture's values, along with its beliefs and customs (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). In the cross-cultural research literature the definition of the term "value" is "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to alternate modes of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 160). This "enduring belief" provides a broad framework for what is the culturally acceptable way of behaving in certain given situations (Feather, 1995). Values also act as motivators for action, lifestyle-building, and, what is very important for advertisers, product choices (Tse & Zhou, 1989)

When comparing cultures on their values, seminal works of cross-cultural research scholars have revealed that cultural value orientations are significantly different across cultures (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Trompennars & Hampden-Turner, 1997), and there is a constant flow of studies that are continuously reinforcing this conclusion.

On the one hand, for professionals who seek proficiency in understanding foreign environments, be it for advertising, public relations, or marketing purposes, it is important to study its values. Differences in culture reflected by differences in values may be a key element when designing international advertising strategy (Munson & McIntyre, 1979) and when devising market segmentation categories (Tansey & Hyman, 1990). On the other hand, for researchers who study communications in general, and advertising in particular, the apprehension of value-based cultural differences gives them a valuable lens in classifying and interpreting advertising messages because advertising content endorses and reinforces the prevalent cultural conventions (Khairullah & Khairullah, 2002; Pollay & Gallagher, 1990; Zhang & Harwood, 2004).

Although a value can be prevalent in multiple cultures at the same times, its depiction at the level of advertising content can differ from country to country. For instance Belk, Bryce, and Pollay (1985) found differences in the way Japanese and U.S. advertisements depict relative status and standing out (being highly visible) vs. standing in (quietly cooperating), concluding that for the communication process to be successful, the advertising content must appeal to “values that are salient in the culture of its intended audience (p. 11).

The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of how differences in cultural values between U.S. and France could be reflected in the advertising content in these two countries. This study is following in the footsteps of Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), trying to bring together Hofstede's (1980, 1991) somewhat general model of culture analysis with Pollay's scheme of advertising appeals. This paper is designed to expand the scope of these researchers and apply their findings in a new advertising context.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Standardization vs. Adaptation of Advertising*

The interest of researching cultural values reflected in the messages of advertising has gained momentum as a result of the standardization vs. localization debate in the field of international advertising (Mueller, 1992). The cultural dimensions of the two different nations at which this researcher is looking are part of a greater effort to understand more than whether cultures are different or not, but how they are different. This detailed knowledge is needed in the field of advertising when key strategic decisions need to be made (Zhang & Gelb, 1996).

It is highly important, for instance, for a multinational American company that intends to launch a product in France to know whether on that particular product it has to change its image concept, and if the answer is yes, in what direction, to what degree, etc. In this context, there appears the need for a choice between standardization, that is, keeping the original image concept with minimal amounts of modifications (translation), and adaptation (also localization), that is, redefining the image concept with minimum amounts of standardization. Due to the complex nature of analyzing cultures by measuring them and also due to the diversity of methods used, researchers have been dissenting about which of these two strategies is best to be used for advertising to meet its objectives (de Mooij, 2004).

On the one hand, researchers who support in their conclusions that the marketing strategy, which includes advertising, should be standardized, assert that markets are, in

essence homogeneous. The first proponent of this idea was Elinder (1965), who was working in advertising in Sweden. He remarked that there is a European consumer just as much as there is an American consumer and that the advertising people in Europe are wrong about conceiving different advertising schemes for identical products across the old continent. He argued that “everything from American hair-spray, Greek tourism, Danish foods, [...] other commodities and services can be sold with the same picture material, the same copy, the same advertising approach” (Elinder, p. 7).

In the same period of time Fatt (1967) articulated his advertising philosophy of the universal appeals, image concepts that would be considered universally relevant, like for instance “mother and child”, “freedom from pain”, “glow of health” (p. 61). Ever since Elinder(1965) and Fatt (1967), the issue of whether to standardize or to localize raised a great deal of controversy, both among researchers and among the practitioners in advertising (Papavassiliou & Stathakopoulos, 1997). A later strong advocate for standardization was Levitt (1983) whose concept of global marketing strategy, with standard advertising messages, glossed over what he considered to be superficial differences between cultures. He deeply believed that the basic needs and wants of consumers were homogenous all over the world and he asserted that only global companies will be able to obtain long-term success by focusing on the common wants of people (Levitt, 1983).

On the other hand, there are the proponents of adaptation. Ricks, Arpan, and Fu (1974) show that cultural misunderstandings and the subsequent advertising mistakes are a common cause of failure when advertisers attempt to enter an international market. The authors conclude that the understanding of the culture and its associated social norms is

essential for a success in market-entry (p. 49). A later, more detailed study indicated the high difficulty and cost of using a standardized approach in an analysis of 17 cases of marketing standardization (Kashani, 1989). The multinationals' failure to meet their objectives had a great deal to do with the processes behind the decision-making, and one major influence was the "tendency to over-standardize" (p. 91).

More radically opinionated, Jain (1989), after an analysis of international marketing processes in multinationals concludes that there are a multitude of factors that affect strategy, such as the target market, the positioning, the nature of the product, the physical, legal, and political environmental factors and also the organizational structure (subsidiary relationships and chains of command) (p.71). Through all this mesh of influencing elements that significantly differ from culture to culture the author maintains that standardization is very difficult and even impractical (p. 71).

Research directed at advertising practitioners revealed that localization is already the major strategy used by multinationals and that standardization is being seen less and less as a viable approach. In a study that investigated 96 Fortune 500 American corporations, surveying their advertising executives on the significance of culture in international advertising, Kanso (1992) showed that the majority of firms are guided by the adaptation approach. Although the author agrees with Levitt (1983) that human wants and needs are universal, "the way to address them is not" (p. 10).

Paralleling this ongoing polarizing debate, there are, however, some voices that entertain more integrating views, stressing the fact that both standardization and adaptation strategies are necessary. In a survey of US marketing in the European Economic Community, Fusi and Boddewyn (1986) revealed mixed findings as far as



standardization and adaptation are concerned. Although they detected an increase in standardization in the previous decade, the change was much less than Levitt (1983) had anticipated, suggesting that global companies do not share his degree of enthusiasm for absolute standardization (Fusi & Boddewyn, 1986). The coexistence of some degree of adaptation within a general standardization strategy is bound to be found in any international marketing strategy, shows the study of Douglas and Yoram (1987), which concludes that the implementation of standardization is seriously challenged by practical constraints. Various degree of standardization and adaptation are also invoked by Van Raaij (1997), who contends that, within the four levels of advertising (mission, proposition, concept, and execution) either identical or different elements may be employed across cultures, depending on the degree of similarity of the target markets, the similarity of the item, the product, the organizational structure of the advertiser, and the influence of factors external to the market (p. 259). Drawing on studies suggesting the coexistence of both practices in international advertising, Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos (1997) propose that standardization and adaptation should not be seen as mutually exclusive decisions, but rather as “the polar ends of a continuum of transitional stages” (p. 504). Providing arguments and tools of analysis to the localization-oriented group of researchers, the cross-cultural researcher Hofstede (1980) has come up with a widely used scheme of measuring cultural differences, used in this paper.

To conclude, communication scholars and marketing practitioners are invested in understanding cultural differences for various reasons pertaining to their specific objective. Their motivation always seems to stem from the debate between standardization vs. localization, either at the theoretical or practical level.

While one type of researcher builds up tentatively all-encompassing models of analysis by which they hope describe the cultural values (e.g. Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1980; Pollay, 1983; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997), others take their models and test them in specific cultural contexts, refining them, and making useful connections between them (e.g. Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996).

### *Comparing France and U.S.*

The mutual cultural misunderstandings between Americans and the French are proverbial. Whenever there is a contact between average representatives of the two nations, they are bound to have a difficult time communicating and relating. Confirming this anecdote, Gouttefarde (1996) published an article about the American values in the French workplace. Following a period of 2 years of research on French and American managers inside a French-based company Gouttefarde found that the values of the expatriate Americans and their French peers varied significantly (p. 60). What this means for firms doing business in both these countries is not only that they must offer extensive training to expatriate managers, but it also means that the way they interact with their local markets and the local audiences they advertise to should take into account these differences. Also, for advertising agencies promoting foreign brands to local audiences it might be crucial to acknowledge that they must adapt their messages.

### *Indirect and Direct Franco-American Ad Comparisons*

In a cross-cultural study that included U.S., France, and Taiwan, Zandpour, Chang, and Catalano (1992) focused on finding similarities and differences in the TV ads of these countries. By examining the creative strategy, information content, and the

execution for a sample of 659 TV advertisements, the researchers found significantly different patterns in advertising. For example, US ads emphasized personal preference and consumer problems, while French ads generally attempted at entertaining audiences using symbolism, humor, and drama.

Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) conducted an 11-country cross-cultural study, which also included France and U.S., (1996) content analyzed advertisements from business magazines, matching advertising appeals with the cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede (1980). Advertising was found to reflect the cultural dimension in 18 out of 30 hypothesized relationships, the authors concluding that advertising appeals and cultural values “often relate in a nonrandom way” (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996, p. 57). The authors found significant correlations for 5 of 8 appeals they associated with the power distance dimension (ornamental, vain, dear, and status related positively with power distance and the cheap appeal related negatively). They also found support for three of eight hypothesized relationships between appeals and uncertainty avoidance (untamed, magic, and youth related negatively). Finally, another interesting finding of the researchers was finding support for two of the six appeals they associated with the masculinity dimension.

U.S. and French commercials were also indirectly paralleled in Appelbaum, Ullrich, and Halliburton’s (1993) multi-country project content analysis in which locally created and broadcasted TV commercials from several European countries and the U.S. were compared to internationally broadcasted commercials. The results of the study led researchers to the conclusion that international advertising is more oriented towards building brands, while local advertising is more concerned with building image.

Cutler, Javalgi, and Rajshekar (1992) related ads to product categories with U.S. and French advertising indirectly compared. In this study the visual components of print advertising in the US and the European Community were compared by content-analyzing magazine advertisements from US, the UK, and France. Results indicated that the products were mixed substantially differently across countries. One of the implications of this study was that there are more country differences than similarities, suggesting that standardization of ads across cultures is not simple.

Direct French and American comparative advertising research has looked at ads in terms of emotional appeals, information content, and use of humor. Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet (1992) found that French ads resort to more emotional appeals and more sex appeals than U.S. ads, while U.S. contained more information cues than French ones. Also, the use of humor in ads varied from an emphasis on puns and satire (U.S.) and a reliance on jokes (France).

### *Hofstede's Dimensions*

Okazaki and Mueller (2007) state Hofstede's cultural dimensions typology has been one of the most important theoretical frameworks in cross-cultural marketing and advertising research. Despite its limitations, marketing and advertising researchers have proven its applicability in these fields (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Moon & Chan, 2005).

Examining work-related behavior of IBM employees from 53 countries Geert Hofstede found four major cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance (1980). Later on, after Chinese scholars surveyed

student behavior in 24 countries, another dimension, long-term orientation was added to Hofstede's paradigm.

By analyzing the variance of these five different value orientations, we can compare different cultures using a common model of approach. The cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede were validated in the last decades by more than 200 studies worldwide (de Mooij, 1996, p. 36). The most recent successful replication was that of Merrit who applied Hofstede's dimensions on modern airline pilots (2000). Merrit analyses of the questionnaires completed by the pilots successfully replicated the individualism, power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance indexes. The conclusion for his study was that one-size-fits-all training for pilots from different cultures is not appropriate.

Hofstede's model is not only a tool used for intercultural management and marketing or education but can also be useful for advertisers who would want to adapt their appeals to the local values in order to effectively communicate their messages. Hofstede's dimensions have already been extensively used in advertising-related research in order to explain cross-cultural differences in various types of advertising communications (Cho & Cheon, 2005; Gouttefarde, 1996; Gudykunst, 1991; Hsu & Hsu 2007; Ji & McNeal, 2001; Rubin, 1992; Singh, Zhao, & Hu, 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1988). Depending on the countries compared and the medium used for analysis, Hofstede's dimensions have proved to be effective explanatory and predictive tools.

The present study focuses on assessing French and American advertising appeals in terms of the cultural indexes on which these countries differentiate the most: power distance and uncertainty avoidance. One of the aims of the study is to compensate for the

lack of research in French-American advertising examining these dimensions.

### *Power Distance*

Power distance is “the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” (de Mooij, p. 60). Researchers that have tested hypothesized differences in the communications media of various countries using power distance as the guiding tool have found encouraging results. Difference in power distance manifested in media content have been reported by Singh, Zhao, and Hu (2005), when analyzing the cultural content of Chinese, Indian, and Japanese websites and by Cho and Cheon (2005) when focusing on interactivity features present on the corporate websites of United Kingdom, U.S., Japanese, and South Korean companies. In another example, using Hofstede’s country scores for U.S. and Taiwan, Hsu and Hsu (2007) have compared measurable manifestations of power distance at the level of children’s TV commercials. They found that in the U.S. these commercials use an adult as the spokesperson less frequently than in Taiwan, and commercials in Taiwan target adults more frequently than in the U.S. These results suggest that parents and adults in Taiwan are traditionally given more power to influence their children’s decisions, a conclusion consistent with the fact that the Power Distance Index measured for Taiwan is significantly higher than in the U.S. In countries like France where the Power Distance Index measured by Hofstede is relatively high (Itim, 2006), the society tends to be more hierarchical and the people pertaining to that particular culture would be expected to be more unlikely to question the decisions of an authority. Also, in France status is important to account for one’s social position (de Mooij, 2004, p. 34). In nations such as the United States, where the Power Distance Index is low, the notion of authority has

negative connotations and equality in rights and opportunity are tantamount. Also, as the index predicts in the United States “powerful people try to look less powerful”(de Mooij, 2004, p. 34). The difference is reflected in the intrigued words of an expatriate American manager: “The decision-making process is so hierarchical. In the U.S. I was completely responsible for my decisions. Here everything is so boxed I can just do a few things...No one is individually responsible” (Gouttefarde, 1996, p. 62).

One direct comparison between U.S. and France that has used Hofstede’s paradigm was that of Gouttefarde (1996). However, this study was centered on comparing expatriate American managers with native managers and not advertisements.

#### *Uncertainty Avoidance*

The concept of uncertainty avoidance measured by Hofstede’s Uncertainty Avoidance Index reflects “the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid these situations” (de Mooij, p.35). As Hofstede describes it, uncertainty avoidance is the same as insecurity (1980) and predicts a dependence on experts (Rubin, 1992). People living in cultures high in uncertainty avoidance avoid risks, react negatively to change and are not ready to tolerate ambiguous situations (Gudykunst, 1991; Ting-Toomey, 1988). For instance, Ji and McNeal (2001), when comparing Chinese and U.S. children’s food commercials have found that advertisers in China tend to focus significantly more on demonstrations (showing product in use) than in the U.S., in an attempt to reduce ambiguity, paralleling the significant difference in the Uncertainty Avoidance Index between China and the U.S..

In cultures such as France with high scores on U.A.I. rules and formality are valued as ways to decrease uncertainty and to structure life and expertise is also greatly

appreciated as a guarantee of predictable quality. In the U.S., a country scoring low on UAI, people feel that there should be as few rules as possible as they are more oriented on the result than on the process (de Mooij, p.35).

Giving the relevant differences in American and French values found by Hofstede (1980) and confirmed by qualitative studies in intercultural management such as that of Gouttefarde (1992) or large the cross-cultural content analyses that included the two countries mentioned (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Appelbaum, Ullrich, & Halliburton, 1993; Cutler, Javalgi, & Rajshekar, 1992; Zandpour, Chang, & Catalano, 1992), it would prove important to examine whether these differences are reflected at the level of advertisements in non-business publications.

#### *Appeals: Observable Manifestation of Values in Advertising*

By analyzing advertisements researchers can trace changes in cultural values by spotting changes in advertising appeals (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Pollay, 1986). While a value is “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 18) an appeal is a “message about a need that has the power to arouse innate or latent desires” (Moriarty, 1991, p. 18) and, in an advertising context, the appeal is seen as a conscious attempt to motivate audience members to change their consumer behavior (Hong, Mudderisoglu, & Zinkhan, 1987). Hetsroni (2000) also explains the difference between values and appeals by stressing that, while values are already present in the scene, appeals are designed and disseminated by the advertiser. It is at this stage that the advertiser has a significant, some say unfortunate, power to shape the value system by using appeals to reinforce those values that are most suitable for its interests (Pollay,



1987). But at the same time, the power of the advertiser designing the appeal is limited by the pressure of the already existing value-system and a good advertiser knows that advertising that reflects local cultural values is more persuasive than advertising that ignores them (Hong, Muddersoglu, & Zinkhan, 1987). Belk, Bryce, and Pollay (1985) also conclude that "in order to communicate successfully, advertising must appeal to values that are salient in the culture of its intended audience" (p. 11).

### *Pollay's Value Appeals*

Aside from these two, rather overly broad categorical schemes, other more complex frameworks have stood the test of time. Although the research of Rokeach (1973), which distinguished between terminal values and instrumental values and their sub-classes, is extensively used in segmenting advertising content, and the theoretically strong foundation of Schwartz's work (1992, 1994, 1999) has proven useful for some researchers interested in cross-cultural research (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007), this value structure was not adopted for the current research. This research will employ Pollay's scheme of appeals as an instrument of measuring possible differences in cultural values. This decision was inspired by the fact that Pollay's appeals were already used once as operationalizations for Hofstede's cultural dimensions in a seminal study by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996). The current study, which partially replicates Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), is an attempt to delve more deeply in the operational aspects of studying values and the relationship of values to appeals in the advertising content.

Pollay's advertising appeals are also widely used in advertising research (Belk, Bryce, & Pollay, 1985; Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Firth & Wesson, 1991; Lin, 2001; Mueller, 1987; Srikanth, 1991; Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989). Pollay (1983) developed a

list of 42 common cultural appeals (e.g. cheap, adventure, youth, health, status, vain, etc.) after testing, modifying, and collapsing the schemes of appeals previously used by White (1951), Rokeach (1973), and Fowles (1976). A series of meetings and workshops with his colleagues in the fields of sociology, anthropology, and consumer behavior, helped Pollay refine and crystallize the remaining concepts into “dualistic pairs of competitive values” (Pollay, 1983, p. 79). One of the dichotomous pairs, which we will also use in our study, is “cheap” versus “dear” appeals. Whereas a “cheap” ad appeals to the economical sense of the consumer and appeals to the value of being “inexpensive, bargain, cut-rate, penny-pinching,[...], undervalued”, a “dear” appeal values the “expensive, rich, valuable, highly regarded, costly, extravagant, luxurious, priceless” ( p. 80). Later on, Pollay’s list was modified to include only 32 cultural values (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996) and, finally, was reduced to 30 by Albers-Millers and Gelb (1996), who have defined them in correlation with Hofstede’s dimensions.

#### *Correlating Appeals with Values*

Basing their endeavor on the assumption that “the principal conduit for incorporating values into advertising is advertising appeals”, Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) successfully correlated 30 of Pollay’s 42 advertising appeals with Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity-femininity) (p. 2). Their purpose was to empirically test the degree to which advertising appeals differ between countries and at the same time reflect the cultural dimension indexes calculated by Hofstede for those specific countries. After removing outliers from the data, they found significant correlation coefficients for 10 hypothesized relationships between some of Pollay’s (1983) advertising appeals and Hofstede’s (1980;

1991) cultural dimensions. Eight of those established relationships (ornamental, vain, dear, status, and cheap relating with power distance and untamed, magic, youth relating with uncertainty avoidance) will be tested in the course of this study.

A more recent empirical study correlating values with advertising appeals and also using Pollay's scheme is Hestroni (2000), who successfully correlated 13 of Pollay's appeals with either functional, hedonistic and altruistic values. The subsequent value-appeal structure paired functional values with efficiency, quality, and safety appeals, hedonistic values with joy, happiness, leisure, and adventure appeals and altruistic values with charity, patriotism, and collectivism appeals (Hestroni, 2000).

#### *Hypotheses and Research Question*

The objective of the study is relating values salient in a country's work culture, as determined by theoretician Hofstede (1980, 1991) to a wide range of advertising appeals used in that country, delineated by Pollay (1983). The study on which this endeavor was based (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996) had made this connection in a specific context, non-business print magazines, grounding their decision on the fact that the cultural dimensions indexes were measured by Hofstede in a business management context. They have warned that going beyond this field would be risky due to possible differences between the cultural values held by the elite business audience and those held by other audiences. This study attempted to see whether Albers-Miller and Gelb's (1996) warning is relevant and if it is, to what extent changing the audience would have an effect on their findings. Therefore, non-business popular magazines were selected (see Method section).

Using the results of Albers-Miller and Gelb as a theoretical framework, this study will reexamine their hypotheses relating to power distance and uncertainty avoidance to see if the same dependant relationships between appeals and cultural dimensions will be found outside Hofstede's context of application as previously described. In addition, this study also explores whether any possible differences could be moderated by the product category.

If a country scores high in power distance it means that in that country powerful people will try and are expected to show their power in a direct or even flaunting manner (Hofstede, 1980; 1991). The power distance index explains how different cultures address basic human inequities in social status, prestige, wealth, and sources of power (1980). Therefore, as would be the case in countries that score low in power distance, such as the U.S., in France it is not considered socially necessary for these people to hide their privileges because the displaying sources of power is regarded as acceptable and even necessary. For example, wearing extravagant clothes or exhibiting a passion for fine arts and endorsing other people who do the same are ways of openly expressing tolerance for high power distance. Consequently, for the purpose of our analysis and considering the description of Pollay's appeals (see Appendix) it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

*H1: The number of ornamental appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S.*

*H2: The number of vain appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S.*

*H3: The number of dear appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S.*

Moreover, in France, the open exercitation of power is a source of self-satisfaction and it is not frowned upon by others. As Gouttefarde's (1996) analysis reveals, the emphasis on formality in French business practices is a way of showing rank, whereas the preference of casual manners in the U.S. would be a praxis that downplays rank. So, if French tolerate flaunting their social position and Americans don't, therefore:

*H4: The number of status appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S.*

As we have already seen, in a country with low scores in power distance the society tends to appear less stratified and people appreciate more a uniformity of appearance rather standing out (Hofstede, 1991). The fact that people try to look less powerful than they are could indicate that they would also prefer to buy a cheaper product rather than an expensive one in order for them not to stand out too much. Therefore:

*H5: The number of cheap appeals will be greater in the U.S. than in France*

In countries where uncertainty avoidance is high, people are less willing to expose themselves to risk. From this, it can also be deduced that, in as much as an action or an idea encourages people to take those risks, these too will not be endorsed. The French's need for strict rules and laws, safety and security, reliance on experts, reflected in their high uncertainty avoidance score (Itim, 2006) could be also correlated with a rejection of magic, untamed, or youth appeals. Conversely, these same appeals could be preferred by people in countries with low uncertainty avoidance scores like the U.S due to their tolerance for insecurity, their need of being subjected to as few rules as possible, and their emphasis on young age. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that:

*H6: The number of magic appeals will be significantly smaller in France than in the U.S.*

*H7: The number of untamed appeals will be significantly smaller in France than in the U.S.*

*H8: The number of youth appeals will be significantly smaller in France than in the U.S.*

Finally, the research will examine whether the different distribution of advertising appeals could be mediated by the product categories adapted from Katz and Lee (1992).

Our question is:

*RQ: Is the distribution of advertising appeals in U.S. and France moderated by product category?*

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

Content analysis has been extensively used as a method of study for evaluating media content in general (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991) and advertisements in particular (e.g. Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Appelbaum, Ullrich, & Halliburton, 1993; Biswas, Olsen, & Carlet, 1992; Zandpour, Chang, & Catalano, 1992;). The method for this study was designed in order to meet the requirements for objectivity, systematization, quantification, sampling, and reliability as delineated by Kassarijan (1977) and reinforced by Kolbe and Burnett (1991).

#### *Unit of Analysis*

In selecting our medium from which to select our advertisements, top-selling, non-business print magazines found both in U.S. and France were selected. According to Wiles, Wiles, and Tjernlund (1996) print magazines are a suitable medium for advertising content analyses as they provide “high quality, enduring images and a strong visual impression of the models in their advertising” (p. 4). Moreover, both France and the U.S. have wide availability of magazines and advertisers spend considerable amounts of money on buying advertising space in magazines.

#### *Sample Selection*

The first step in our comparison was the selection of a suitable sample of print advertisement from US and France. A set of ads from five magazines per country were selected for coding, totaling a sample of 668 ads, 242 for France and 426 for U.S.

Generalizability and manageability of the sample were the reasons we decided to settle around this number, in accordance with the average sampling number for content analyses found in the widely cited research of Kolbe and Burnett (1991).

The first filter for selecting the magazines was presence of magazine in the market of both countries. The second criterion was that the publications would be in the top 100 magazines in both countries according to recent circulation figures in order to ensure a high degree of relevance. The indexes use for this step were the Media Info Center (2007) average circulation figures (U.S. sample) and the Association Pour Le Controle De la Diffusion Des Medias (2007) average circulation figures (French sample). The third filter that was applied was representation of a diverse enough audience in terms of gender, age, and field of interest. Albers-Miller and Gelb's (1996) selection of business publications in conducting their content analysis was motivated by the fact that they wanted to be consistent with Hofstede's field of analysis (intercultural management) for developing the cultural dimensions. They also expressed their doubts whether it would be appropriate to use these dimensions in a different environment (p. 67). However, Hofstede's cultural dimensions were already tested by 200 independent studies in various environments (de Mooij, 2004, p. 36; Sondergaard, 1994) and we found it reasonable to attempt going beyond the scope of management with our content analysis.

Lifestyle, fashion, and entertainment-oriented magazines Maxim and FHM (for men) and Glamour, Cosmopolitan (for women) as well as a parenting-oriented magazine Parents were found to correspond to all exigencies. In the US market, the order was Cosmopolitan (18), Maxim (25), Glamour (27), Parents (29), and FHM (71). In France, the order was Cosmopolitan (41), Maxim (44), Glamour (45), Parents (59), and FHM



(86).

The advertisements were isolated from their environment and numbered in order to ensure manageability. Only half-page or larger ads were counted and, although the ads were taken out of the publications, their original grouping and order was kept. Half-page or larger ads were chosen because they tend to be image and copy-heavy; providing a relevant field of analysis compared with short copy, small ads that may prohibit value research.

### *Coding Process*

#### *Rules and Procedures*

Before proceeding with the coding process, we established the coding rules in accordance with Pollay's (1983) coding book for the eight value appeals as described in Table 1 below. We selected the eight appeals as correlated with power distance and uncertainty avoidance by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996).

Table 1.  
*Eight of Pollay's 42 Advertising Appeals*

Appeal	Description
Ornamental	beautiful, decorative, ornate, adorned, embellished, detailed, designed, styled
Vain	having a socially desirable appearance, being beautiful, pretty, handsome, being fashionable, well-groomed, tailored, graceful, glamorous
Status	envy, social status or competitiveness, conceit, boasting, prestige, power, dominance, exhibitionism, pride of ownership, wealth (including the sudden wealth of prizes), trend-setting, to seek compliments
Dear	expensive, rich, valuable, highly regarded, costly, extravagant, exorbitant, luxurious, priceless
Cheap	economical, inexpensive, bargain, cut-rate, penny-pinching, discounted, at cost, undervalued, a good value

Table 1 cont.

Untamed	primitive, untamed, fierce, coarse, rowdy, ribald, obscene, voracious, gluttonous, frenzied, uncontrolled, unreliable, corrupt, obscene, deceitful, savage
Magic	miracles, magic, mysticism, mystery, witchcraft, wizardry, superstition, occult sciences, mythic characters, to mesmerize, astonish, bewitch, fill with wonder
Youth	being young or rejuvenated, children, kids, immature, undeveloped, junior, adolescent

Another categorical scheme was devised using Katz and Lee's (1992) product categories scheme as listed in Table 2, below. For the purpose of this exploration, out of these 10 categories (apparel and accessories, auto, beauty and personal care, medicine, jewelry and watch, electronics, pc and accessories, food and drink, home, and others), only eight were kept. Due to insufficient occurrences the categories of others and medicine were collapsed together with apparel and accessories and beauty and personal care, respectively.

Table 2.

*Eight Product Categories (adapted from Katz & Lee, 1992)*

Product category
Apparel, accessories, and others
Auto
Beauty, personal care and medicine
Jewelry, and watch
Electronics
PC, and accessories
Food and drink
Home

### *Coder Training and Pretest*

Coder training is important to ensure objectivity of the content analysis as it increases the coders' understanding of the coding rules and the operational definitions

(Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). Four coders (two English-proficient, French-born and two American-born undergraduate students) were selected in person out of the pool of students at a Southern U.S. university and were trained in a 3-hour session. An additional sample of 36 advertisements were extracted from the U.S. edition of Parents magazine, an issue other than the one included in the main sample, to be used in the training session and the subsequent pretest. The coders were instructed to carefully read the operational definitions and then the trainer read the entire codebook aloud. After the coders got familiarized with the definitions, they were instructed as to the manner in which they were to complete the code sheet (see Appendix). After each coder confirmed that he or she has understood what was being asked of him or her, we proceeded with six practice-analyses. After each analysis, the coders would stop and compare results and discuss their understanding of the definitions. A difficulty in understanding the ornamental and youth appeals was reported. At the end of the session the coders were given separate folders containing a pretest sample of 30 advertisements and were allowed 3 days of independent coding.

#### *Coder Independence*

According to Kassarijan (1977) and Kolbe and Burnett (1991), it is important that the coders work independently of each other. In this way influence from the part of the researcher and from other coders is excluded, and the coder has full autonomy to make judgments. In our case, two pairs of coders knew each other and were specifically instructed not to work together.

### *Inter-coder Reliability Analysis*

Inter-coder reliability is seen as the standard by which researchers measure the quality of a content analysis (Kassarijan, 1977; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). According to Hughes and Garret (1990), inter-coder reliability is met when the level of agreement obtained is significantly higher than the level that would be obtained by chance. In our study, we calculated the reliability using Perreault and Leigh's (1989) widely employed reliability index formula ( $Ir$ ), a method highly recommended by Kolbe and Burnett (1991). The formula is:

$$Ir = \{[(Fo/N) - (1/k)] [k / (k - 1)]\} \sqrt{\quad}, \text{ where}$$

$Fo$  is the observed frequency of agreement between judges

$N$  is the total number of judgments

$k$  is the number of categories

For the pretest sample inter-coder reliabilities for Pollay's appeals were calculated within each national edition. The average indexes resulting for the French coders were  $Ir(F) = .95$ , and for the American coders  $Ir(US) = .91$ .

#### *Reliability of the Main Sample*

Table 3 shows the reliability indexes calculated for each category in our analysis, by country. The sub-samples consisting of different ads, only same-country inter-coder reliabilities were computed. According to Kassarijan (1977), if reliability is in the range of .85, the analysis can be viewed as satisfyingly reliable. In the US, the average reliability was .87 with only one category (ornamental appeals) significantly out of range (.57). The appeals both coders agreed upon most were status, dear, and untamed with an index of .97. The reliability for the ornamental appeal was also low in the French sample,

with a maximum Ir for the youth appeal (.97). The average reliability for the French sample was also .87.

Once the reliability indices were computed all disagreements between coders were resolved by the primary researcher. The primary researcher reviewed all choices by coders and issued a final decision. This process is consistent with many content analysis studies (Alexander, Benjamin, Hoerrner, & Roe, 1998; Browne, 1998; Frazer, Sheehan, & Patti, 2002; Kelley & Turley, 2004; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Marshall & Roberts, 2008). The primary researcher also personally coded the product categories according to the categorical scheme adapted from Katz and Lee's (1992).

Table 3.  
*Reliability Index by Appeal (according to Perreault & Leigh's, 1989 formula)*

Appeal	Country	
	US	France
Ornamental	.57	.47
Vain	.82	.82
Status	.96	.96
Dear	.96	.91
Cheap	.95	.90
Magic	.91	.94
Untamed	.96	.96
Youth	.83	.97
Average Ir	.87	.87

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

The main sample consisted of 668 advertisements from both France and the US, selected from two sample frames (the lists of top 100 magazines by circulation in France and the US). The following descriptive statistics provide frequencies and proportions for the distribution of the sample by country, magazine, product vs. service, and advertisement size. They also provide a frequency overview for the brands that were observed.

#### *Sample Distribution by Country and by Magazine*

Table 4 illustrates advertisement count and percentage by country and magazine, also providing a total number of ads per magazine. The magazine editions from France (n=242) made up 36.2%; the editions from the US (n=426) made up 63.8% of the sample. The greatest number of ads were contained in Glamour magazine (n=177 representing 26.5% of total ads) and the least amount of ads were found in FHM magazine (n=77, representing 11.5% of total ads). Intersecting the amount of ads per national edition with the amounts per magazine, we find the US Glamour with the greatest number of ads (n=109, 61.6% of the Glamour sample) and the French Maxim with the least amount of ads (n=22, 19.1% of the Maxim sample).

Table 4.  
*Sample Distribution by Country and by Magazine*

Magazine	Country					
	US		France		Both	
	Frequency	Percent of magazine	Frequency	Percent of magazine	Frequency	Percent of N
Parents	91	63.2%	53	36.8%	144	21.6%
Glamour	109	61.6%	68	38.4%	177	26.5%
Cosmopolitan	83	53.5%	72	46.5%	155	23.2%
FHM	50	64.9%	27	35.1%	77	11.5%
Maxim	93	80.9	22	19.1%	115	17.2%
Total	426	63.8%	242	36.2%	668	100%

*Sample Distribution by Ad Type*

Table 5 shows the distribution of the advertisements by type. Products made up the majority of the sample (n=566, 84.7%), both in France (n=208, 85.9%) and in the US (n=358, 84.03 %), while advertisements for services accounted for only 15.3% (n=102) of the total sample, 14.1% (n=34) of the French sample and 15.5% (n=68) of the US sample.

Table 5.  
*Sample Distribution by Ad Type*

Ad Type	Country					
	US		France		Both	
	Frequency	Percent of US	Frequency	Percent of France	Frequency	Percent of N
For product	358	84.03%	208	85.9%	566	84.7%
For service	68	15.5%	34	14.1%	102	15.3 %
All	426	100%	242	100%	668	100 %

*Sample Distribution by Product Category*

As evident in Table 6, after selecting only the products (n=566) from the sample the ads was broken down by product category. More than a third of them were for beauty, personal care, and medicine products (37.2%), followed by apparel, accessories, and others (17.8%). The least amount of ads were for home products (4%).

Table 6.  
*Sample Distribution by Product Category*

Category	Country				Total	
	U.S.		France			
	Frequency	Percent of category	Frequency	Percent of category	Frequency	Percent of products
Apparel, accessories, and others	45	44.6%	56	55.4%	101	17.8%
Auto	11	52.4%	10	47.6%	21	3.7%
Beauty, personal care and medicine	149	70.6%	62	29.4%	211	37.2%
Jewelry, and watch	30	69.8%	13	30.2%	43	7.5%
Electronics	44	73.3%	16	26.7%	60	10.6%
PC, and accessories	29	72.5%	11	27.5%	40	7%
Food and drink	46	57.5%	34	42.5%	80	14.1%
Home	13	56.5%	10	43.5%	23	4%

*Make-up of Sample by Brand Frequency and Size of Advertisement*

The brand distribution within the sample was highly diverse, 469 different brands for a sample of 668 advertisements. The top brands represented were Verizon and L’Oreal, with 13 ads, Samsung and Calvin Klein with 6 ads across samples from both countries. The next echelon of represented brands such as LG, Pantene, Adidas, Crest, Guerlain, and others, with a frequency of 4 to 5 ads. The rest of the sample was made up of brands represented 3 times or fewer. As far as the size of the advertisements, out of the total sample only 2.39% (n=16) were half page ads, the rest of 97.61% (n=52) consisting of one page or larger ads.



*Hypotheses and Research Question*

H1 stated that the number of ornamental appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S. After the comparison was made for the total sample of five magazines (N=668) no significant differences in the distribution of appeals were found. Therefore, H1 was not supported.

However, when breaking down the sample into individual magazines and also grouping them according to their predominant audience orientation, the relationship hypothesized was illuminated in some cases. Thus, as summarized in Table 7 below, in Glamour magazine, a more than expected presence of ornamental advertisements was found ( $\chi^2(1, n=177) = 3.22, p = .05$ ). This was also found when making the comparison after grouping together Glamour and Cosmopolitan as female-oriented magazines (Table 8). Here, again, more than the expected number of ornamental appeals was counted ( $\chi^2(1, n=332) = 6.40, p = .008$ ).

Table 7.  
*Ornamental Appeals in Glamour Magazine*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	49	45%	60	55%	109	100%
France	40	58.8%	28	41.2%	68	100%
Total	89	50.3%	88	49.7%	177	100%

$\chi^2(1, n=177) = 3.22, p = .05$

Table 8.  
*Ornamental Appeals in Magazines with Female Audience*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	91	47.4%	101	52.6%	192	100.0%
France	86	61.4%	54	38.6%	140	100.0%
Total	177	53.3%	155	46.7%	332	100.0%

$\chi^2(1, n=332) = 6.40, p = .008$

When analyzing the sample for a possible relationship for Maxim magazine (Table 9) and for the male audience magazines (Table 10), a surprising situation was found. The direction of our hypothesis was reversed. Significant differences were found in the distribution of ornamental appeals in the US and France, with a more than expected count in US for both Maxim ( $\chi^2(1, n=115) = 7.77, p = .005$ ) and the male-oriented magazine group (Maxim and FHM) ( $\chi^2(1, n=192) = 4.21, p = .030$ ) and a less than expected presence in their French counterparts.

Table 9.  
*Ornamental Appeals in Maxim Magazine*

country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	56	60.2%	37	39.8%	93	100.0%
France	6	27.3%	16	72.7%	22	100.0%
Total	62	53.9%	53	46.1%	115	100.0%

$\chi^2(1, n=115) = 7.77, p = .005$

Table 10.  
*Ornamental Appeals in Magazines with Male Audience*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	91	63.6%	52	36.4%	143	100.0%
France	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	49	100.0%
Total	114	59.4%	78	40.6%	192	100.0%

$\chi^2(1, n=192) = 4.21, p = .030$

H2 posited that the number of vain appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S. After computing the findings and testing for a relationship between country and the presence or absence of vain appeals in the five magazines from our sample, no significant relationship was found, thus H2 was not supported. The only sub-sample that contained the hypothesized relationship was FHM magazine (Table 11),

where more than expected vain appeals were detected in the French edition than in the US edition ( $\chi^2 (1, n=77) = 3.55, p = .049$ ).

Table 11.  
*Vain Appeals in FHM Magazine*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	24	48.0%	26	52.0%	50	100.0%
France	7	25.9%	20	74.1%	27	100.0%
Total	31	40.3%	46	59.7%	77	100.0%

$\chi^2 (1, n=77) = 3.55, p = .049$

H3 stated that the number of dear appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S. H3 is the first hypothesis that was supported (Table 12). There was a statistically significant difference found when we compared US and French advertisements on the distribution of the dear appeal ( $\chi^2 (1, N=668) = 33.3, p = .00$ ). Only 3.1% of the US ads contained the appeal, compared to 15.3% of the French sample, confirming the predicted direction of the relationship.

When analyzing by individual magazine and audience, significant differences in the presence of the dear appeal were found for Glamour magazine (Table 13) and for Cosmopolitan magazine (Table 14), with  $\chi^2 (1, n=177) = 16.03$  and  $p = .00$  and  $\chi^2 (1, n=155) = 15.05$  and  $p = .00$ , respectively. Only 4.6% of the US Glamour sample contained a dear appeal, compared to 25% of the French sample, and only 3.6% of the US Cosmopolitan had dear appeals, compared to 25% in the French Cosmopolitan, confirming the direction of our hypothesis.

Table 15 summarizes significant differences in dear appeal occurrence that were also found in the female audience sample (Glamour and Cosmopolitan) ( $\chi^2 (1, n=332) =$

31.16,  $p = .00$ ), where only 4.2% of the US sample contained dear appeals, compared with 25% of the French sample, as expected in our hypothesized relationship.

No Chi-square testing was possible for FHM due to the insufficient number of occurrences of the dear appeal for the valid performance of the Chi-square test. The test was also not feasible for Parents magazine as no dear appeal occurrence was reported.

Table 12.  
*Dear Appeals in US and French Magazines*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	13	3.1%	413	96.9%	426	100.0%
France	37	15.3%	205	84.7%	242	100.0%
Total	50	7.5%	618	92.5%	668	100.0%

$\chi^2$  (N=668) = 33.3,  $p = .00$

Table 13.  
*Dear Appeals in Glamour Magazine*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	5	4.6%	104	95.4%	109	100.0%
France	17	25.0%	51	75.0%	68	100.0%
Total	22	12.4%	155	87.6%	177	100.0%

$\chi^2$  (1, n=177) = 16.03,  $p = .00$

Table 14.  
*Dear Appeals in Cosmopolitan Magazine*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	3	3.6%	80	96.4%	83	100.0%
France	18	25.0%	54	75.0%	72	100.0%
Total	21	13.5%	134	86.5%	155	100.0%

$\chi^2$  (1, n=177) = 16.03,  $p = .00$

Table 15.  
*Dear Appeals in Magazines with Female Audience*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	8	4.2%	184	95.8%	192	100.0%
France	35	25.0%	105	75.0%	140	100.0%
Total	43	13.0%	289	87.0%	332	100.0%

$\chi^2 (1, n=332) = 31.16, p = .00$

H4 stated that the number of status appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S. After computing the findings, H4 was not found to be supported in the US-France comparison of all the ads. The sub-samples didn't contain enough ads for a valid Chi-square test.

H5 said that the number of cheap appeals will be greater in the U.S. than in France. The hypothesis was not supported in any of the cases mentioned above. For Cosmopolitan, FHM, and Maxim magazines there were not enough occurrences for a significance test.

H6 stated that the number of magic appeals will be significantly smaller in France than in the U.S. There was no significant difference in the distribution of magic appeals across countries; therefore, H6 was not supported. However, there was a particular case when the hypothesized relationship was found.

Comparing the occurrence of magic appeals in the Parents magazine sub-sample (n=144) (Table 16), 22% percent of the US ads contained the appeal and only 9.4% of its French counterpart. The difference was significant ( $\chi^2 (1, n=91) = 3.67, p = .042$ ) and the direction of the relationship confirmed our hypothesis.

No calculations were possible for Glamour, Cosmopolitan, FHM, and the female audience samples due to insufficient expected counts.

Table 16.  
*Magic Appeals in Parents Magazine*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	20	22.0%	71	78.0%	91	100.0%
France	5	9.4%	48	90.6%	53	100.0%
Total	25	17.4%	119	82.6%	144	100.0%

$$\chi^2(1, n=144) = 3.67, p = .042$$

H7 said the number of untamed appeals will be significantly smaller in France than in the U.S. This hypothesis was supported, with a significant difference in the number of untamed appeals appearing in the two country samples ( $\chi^2(1, n=144) = 4.51, p = .025$ ). Table 17 shows 3.5% of the US sample containing untamed appeals, compared to only 0.8% of its French counterpart; thus, the direction of the hypothesized relationship is confirmed.

Table 17.  
*Untamed Appeals US and French Magazines*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	15	3.5%	411	96.5%	426	100.0%
France	.8	9.4%	240	99.2%	242	100.0%
Total	17	2.5%	651	97.5%	668	100.0%

$$\chi^2(1, n=668) = 4.51, p = .025$$

H8 posited that the number of youth appeals will be significantly smaller in France than in the U.S. When comparing the advertisements by country, statistically significant differences were revealed for the youth appeal ( $\chi^2(1, n=144) = 4.51, p = .025$ ), as shown in Table 18, supporting the stated hypothesis. Seven percent of the US sample contained youth appeals compared with only 1.7% of the French sample, a direction of difference predicted in the hypothesis.

Table 18.  
*Youth Appeals in US and French Magazines*

Country	Presence		Absence		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
US	30	7.0%	396	93.0%	426	100.0%
France	4	1.7%	238	98.3%	242	100.0%
Total	34	5.1%	634	94.9%	668.0	100.0%

$$\chi^2(1, n=668) = 9.27, p = .001$$

The research question we asked sought to establish whether the differences in the appeals distribution are moderated by different product categories. Due to insufficient number of occurrences of appeals in most of the product categories, only a limited number of comparisons could be made (for ornamental, vain, and dear appeals).

The number of ornamental appeals could be compared in the two countries for all categories, except autos, and the results yielded no differences in any of the categories, a result consistent with H1. When comparing the two countries by the number of vain appeal occurrences no differences were found for the four categories that had sufficient numbers of appeals (apparel, beauty, jewelry, and electronics), reflecting consistency with H2. Finally, the only comparison of dear appeals could be made on the beauty products category due to insufficient numbers of occurrences. The findings show that there were significantly more dear appeals in France than in the U.S., offering a partial support for H3 ( $\chi^2(1, n=211) = 44.4, p = .000$ ) (see Table 18 below).

Table 19.

*Dear Appeals In U.S. And France By Product Category*

Category	Presence				Absence			
	U.S.		France		U.S.		France	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Beauty, personal care and medicine	56	37.6%	31	50%	93	62.4%	31	50%

$\chi^2(1, n=211) = 44.4, p = .000$



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

#### *Summary of Findings*

The purpose of this study was to reexamine part of Albers-Miller and Gelb's (1996) hypotheses that found that Pollay's (1983) value appeal distribution for different countries related in a non-random way with the indexes measured for the cultural dimensions in those countries (see table 19). Whereas Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) focused their analysis on advertising samples from business print magazines, we have shifted this focus on non-business publications and made sure that the comparisons would be made between magazine issues of the same brand (e.g. Cosmopolitan US vs. Cosmopolitan France) and from the same month and year.

Of the 668 advertisements extracted from the five magazines, 63.8% were found in American magazines and 36.2% in French magazines. The U.S. Glamour magazine contained the most ads (109), while the French Maxim contained the least amount (22). In both countries women's magazines had more pages and more ads than men's magazines. The vast majority of the ads were for products (84.7%) versus only 15.3% for services and with almost all ads having a size of one page or more (97.61%) versus only a miniscule 2.39% half-page ads.

The main assumption carried over from the Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) study was that the main way to introduce cultural values into advertising is through the appeals designed by the advertising agencies. As successful advertising has to take into account the cultural values "salient in the culture of its intended audience" (Belk, Bryce, &

Pollay, 1985, p. 11) it is reasonable to expect a reflection of the local culture in the local advertising.

*Hypothesis Support*

Three of the eight hypotheses were supported. H3 predicted that the number of dear appeals will be significantly greater in France than in the U.S. H7, concerned with untamed appeals, said that there will be more of this type of appeals in U.S. advertising than in French advertising. Finally, H8, dealing with youth appeals also found support. The hypothesis stated that there will be more youth appeals in the U.S. than in France and was confirmed. Table 20 displays the supported relationships and the type of association (either positive or negative).

Table 20.  
*Relationships Between Advertising Appeals and Cultural Dimensions*

Appeal (hypothesis)	Power Distance relationship	Uncertainty Avoidance relationship
Ornamental (H1)	n.s.	n.s.
Vain (H2)	n.s.	n.s.
Dear (H3)	positive	n.s.
Status (H4)	n.s.	n.s.
Cheap (H5)	n.s.	n.s.
Magic (H6)	n.s.	n.s.
Untamed (H7)	n.s.	negative
Youth (H8)	n.s.	negative

The specific comparison regarding the power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimensions that this paper used was also made by Gouttefarde (1996) in a qualitative context. The author found different values held by American and local French executives on these two dimensions. Other authors have looked to compare creative content, execution, and information content at the level of TV ads. They found significant differences for U.S. and France (Zandpour, Chang, & Catalano, 1992). U.S. and French TV ads also differ in the distribution of emotional vs. rational appeals and the use of

humor (Biswas, Olsen, & Carlet, 1992). At yet another level, visual components in print advertising, U.S. and French samples were found to vary significantly (Cutler, Javalgi, & Rajshekar, 1992). Overall, the findings in this research add to the greater body of knowledge regarding cultural values manifest in French and U.S. advertising exhibited in consumer magazines.

#### *Partial Support and Reversal*

Except for H4, regarding status appeals and H5, regarding cheap appeals, all other unsupported hypotheses found partial support, and sometimes reversals, when we tested the individual magazines as well as audience-related sub-samples. Although these hypotheses were not supported in the main sample, it is still interesting to examine the hypothesized relationships based on content and audience-specific contexts.

H1 was supported for Glamour magazine and the female audience. This might suggest that women in France, a high power-distance culture, appreciate flaunting their sources of power (Hofstede, 1980, 1991) in an original way. One way the French women would show and emphasize superior qualities such as possessing a sense of beauty, good taste, good style, attention to detail and also to be more distinguishable and original in what they display in public and to cultivate activities with a more ornamental value, such as a passion for fine arts. Wearing extravagant clothes and endorsing other people who do the same are ways of openly expressing tolerance for high power distance (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996). Surprisingly, for Maxim magazine and the male audience magazines together the hypothesis was reversed, with more ornamental appeals found in the U.S. editions than in the French editions. It seems that there may be a gender-based difference in which American and French young people appreciate the ornamental value.

H2, dealing with vain appeals, had no support in any of the sub-samples, but, for FHM magazine we had the interesting finding that the hypothesis was reversed. Whereas our hypothesis predicted more vain appeals in the French publications than in the US ones, the opposite was the case. This would suggest that young men in France are less concerned with having a socially desirable appearance, being well-groomed, and graceful as in the U.S.

H3, which was globally supported, also found support in the Glamour magazine, Cosmopolitan magazine, and the female audience sub-samples.

H6, globally unsupported, was supported in the Parents magazine sub-sample, with more magic appeals in the U.S. sample. The magic appeal, partially negatively related here with France, a high uncertainty avoidance culture, also is also negatively related by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) with high uncertainty avoidance. Indeed, a magical environment could be considered by some people an uncontrolled, highly uncertain type of environment. Certainly an appeal to magic would not be an appeal to being rational and careful. This partial finding corroborates well with H7, where untamed appeals are also found to have a low count in France compared to U.S. Both appeals encourage people to prefer uncontrolled and uncertain situations, offering a sense of imaginative freedom and mystery (Pollay, 1983).

H8, confirmed for the main sample, could not be tested at the level of individual magazines and the audience-oriented samples due to an insufficient number of occurrences. This could be because the audiences comprising the sample were already young and did not need to be encouraged to go back to being a child, at an age where

proving your maturity is more important.

### *Value Appeals and the Cultural Dimensions*

Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) related Pollay's (1983) value appeals to Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions when indirectly comparing France and the US in their content analysis of business magazines. The authors found eight correlations between Pollay appeals and the cultural dimensions. This study supported three of those relationships in the sample and partially confirmed some of them in the individual and audience-oriented sub-samples.

### *Power Distance and the Appeals*

Ornamental, vain, dear, and status appeals were positively correlated by Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) with the power distance dimension. That is, the higher the Power Distance Index for a country, the more ornamental, vain, dear, and status one would expect at the level of advertising. The rationale was that in countries where power distance is high it is not considered necessary for people to hide their privileges as displaying and even flaunting their sources of power is regarded as acceptable and even necessary (Hofstede, 1980). And also, by trying to show their power, they would possibly be more inclined towards more expensive rather than cheaper products.

In our study, we found only support for one of the relationships, dear appeals, as well as partial support for ornamental. Additionally, we discovered a reversed relationship for vain in FHM and no support for status and cheap appeals.

It appears that the strongest relationship between Pollay's values and Hofstede's (1980) power-distance dimension, found in Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), when tested

in a non-business environment (outside Hofstede's area of analysis), is at the level of dear appeals. For the other relationships, their partial support reflects market differences in magazine audiences, publishers, or a combination of the two.

#### *Uncertainty Avoidance and the Appeals*

Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) negatively related the untamed, magic, and youth appeals the uncertainty avoidance dimension. The higher the uncertainty avoidance in a country, the less of these types of appeals we would expect in their advertising. The reason why this correlation was proposed by the authors was that societies with high uncertainty avoidance, risks tend to be avoided. While a low uncertainty avoidance culture would be favorably inclined towards taking risks, uncontrollable situations and youth-related mentalities while a high uncertainty avoidance culture would try to avoid risks and be more inclined towards a more tempered mentality, symbolized by the maturity and wisdom of the older generation.

In our study, two of the relationships were supported, and one of them was partially supported. Untamed, magic, and youth appeals were confirmed to be in significantly higher numbers in U.S. than in France (only for the Parents audience for magic), confirming Albers-Miller and Gelb's (1996) supposition that high uncertainty avoidance cultures would not be promoting risk-taking and immaturity as much as low uncertainty avoidance cultures would. Moreover, this study supports that Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension can be confidently operationalized at the level of advertising by measuring untamed and youth appeals and, for a more limited audience and with a lower degree of confidence, by measuring magic appeals.

### *Appeal Distribution and Product Categories*

Due to the relatively low number of appeal occurrences by product category only three cross-country comparisons could be made, and even those in a limited number of categories. Thus, ornamental appeals could be compared on seven categories, vain appeals on four categories and dear appeals on one category. Mirroring its corresponding hypothesis (H1), the distribution of ornamental appeals does not differ in France and U.S. in any of the product categories found. In the same manner, the number of vain appeals is not significantly different in France and the U.S., supporting (H2). And finally, the distribution of dear appeals significantly differs in U.S. and France, with more appeals in France, as predicted in H3.

Although some tests could be made that show that differential appeal distribution and, therefore, different cultural values are not moderated by product category, there are insufficient data available to clearly establish this.

### *Implications*

In the context of the ongoing debate on standardization vs. localization this study found differences in the cultural values present in advertising appeals published in top selling print magazines from the U.S. and France. Therefore, adaptation of advertising content in the form of dear, untamed, and youth appeals is a suggested step in order for advertising to be culturally sensitive and, therefore, more effective. In this cross-section of reality, localization in action could be observed at some level meaning that the top

multinational magazines (in our sample) published in the French and in the U.S. have internalized the practice to adapt messages to the local culture at least to a relevant extent.

For cross-cultural advertising researchers who want to operationalize power distance in a non-business environment, measuring the occurrence of dear appeals would be a good start. If uncertainty avoidance is to be measured, studying the occurrence of untamed and youth appeals would also be a relevant operationalization. Less appropriate, but, nevertheless, useful for measuring uncertainty avoidance would be to study the rate of occurrence of magic appeals, especially in audiences that have children.

Albers-Millers and Gelb (1996) proves to be a good starting point in unifying widely used cross-cultural research schemes such as Hofstede's (1980) with Pollay's (1983) communicated value appeals, in an attempt to increase the validity of measuring cultural differences in media content. However, given the fact that half of the hypotheses were not supported, it is necessary for advertising researchers to take into account Albers-Millers and Gelb's (1996) warning that relating Hofstede's cultural dimensions with value appeals could be a tricky business when going beyond the confines of a highly-educated audience, on which Hofstede's indexes were established. The degree an elite member of a culture values something may not be fully representative of how the masses of that culture appreciates that value.

Also, another implication for the field of advertising research is that, when using Pollay's scheme of appeals, the ornamental appeal definition needs to be refined, as, in its present form it creates confusion, reflected in a low reliability index (.58 for the US coders and .47 for the French coders).



### *Limitations*

As in any cross-sectional research design, analyzing data from only a small interval of time (the November 2007 issues of FHM and December 2007 issues of Parents, Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Maxim) paints a limited picture of reality. Also, in our particular case, studying issues of magazines published just before and during the Christmas holidays (in two countries where these traditions are very important) could create a possible sample bias contamination toward certain appeals. Given the unifying nature of Christmas for majority-Christian countries, it might as well be that the occurrence of some type of appeals, especially magic and ornamental appeals, would be also more homogenous during the holidays, when talking about Santa Claus and flying reindeer and offering adorned presents is common. And with stores offering many Christmas deals, as it is traditional for this holiday, the cheap appeal distribution may have been more homogenized than usual. To establish this, a non-tradition laden time frame could be used in a possible future replication of this study.

Due to the decreased popularity of other types of multinational magazines, we could not build a sample as diverse as we would have wanted. The children audience and the older audience were not represented in the sample. At this point we might even speculate that a possible reason why we found no differences for the vain appeal would be the fact that concern with one being beautiful and desired is more prevalent in the young adolescent and young adult audiences comprising our sample.

Another limitation for our study was reflected in the low reliability for coding the ornamental appeal. When studying latent content, if the operational definition is even slightly ambiguous, the coders will have difficulty in being systematic in recognizing a

category (Marshall & Roberts, 2008). H1, which predicts that there will be significantly more ornamental appeals in France than in the US, each had a reliability index of .57 for the US and .47 for the French sample, respectively. As remarked from the training session, both the French and the US coders had a difficulty applying Pollay's operational definition of ornamental appeals (see Table 1) to their analysis. Because the reliability for the other appeals was high, the conclusion of this paper is that the operational definition for ornamental appeals should be changed.

### *Future Research*

Cross-cultural research studies such as this one are focused on comparing two (or more) culturally differing Western countries, with similar systems of government, similar religious traditions, and even similar interest in magazines. It would be interesting to replicate this study comparing other countries from different types of civilizations. There are 12 new ex-communist countries that entered the European Union in the last 5 years, such as Romania, Bulgaria, or Poland . Very few, if any, studies are concerned with studying anything related to advertising in those countries. Considering the fact that investment in business in those countries is rapidly increasing and advertising expenditures are proportionately increasing, finding out how they stand in terms of advertising adaptation or standardization or what the particular relationship of their cultural values is with the messages in the media would be useful.

Another research direction would perhaps be a longitudinal study of the same countries to see if our findings are also confirmed in a long-term dimension. Also, studying issues from non-religious holiday months would give more credibility to our

conclusions.

Finally, studying advertising meant for more diverse audiences such as children's magazines, sports magazines, or elder-oriented audiences and appearing in different communicational environments (websites, newspapers, billboards) would increase the scope and the generalizability of our results.

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APPENDIX  
CODE SHEET

1. Ad #: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Brand: \_\_\_\_\_
3. U.S.            France
4. Magazine title: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ad size:        Full page or more    ½ page
6. Pollay values:

ORNAMENTAL

- 1.present        2.absent

VAIN

1. present        2.absent

DEAR

1. present        2.absent

STATUS

1. present        2.absent

CHEAP

1. present        2.absent

UNTAMED

1. present        2.absent

MAGIC

1. present        2.absent

YOUTH

1. present        2.absent

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