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# **Cross-cultural advertising research: where we have been and where we need to go**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to examine recent patterns and developments in the literature on cross-cultural advertising research.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Citation analysis was performed for cross-cultural advertising articles published in major marketing and business journals from 1995 to 2006.

**Findings** – Cultural values were the most studied topic area in cross-cultural advertising research. Content analysis was the most widely employed methodology, followed by surveys. North America and the original European Union (EU) member states were the most frequently investigated, whereas there appears to exist a paucity of research in newer EU countries, and in Latin American, Middle Eastern, and African markets.

**Originality/value** – Based on findings from the citation analysis, the authors outline future directions for the advancement of cross-cultural advertising research in theoretical foundations, methodological issues, and countries to be explored.

**Keywords** Advertising, Advertising research, Cross-cultural studies

**Paper type** General review

## **Introduction**

The goal of this paper is to summarize where cross-cultural advertising research has been, and to suggest new directions in exploring the role that culture plays in cross-national commercial communications. To assess the research to date, we note previously conducted content analyses of the literature, and update these by performing an expanded longitudinal citation analysis of cross-cultural advertising investigations. Only studies examining two or more countries are included in this analysis. Articles are selected from seven journals considered representative in terms of international marketing and advertising research (Table I). The publications are analyzed by topic areas addressed, research methods employed, and countries examined. Next, we recap the contribution of major cultural theories to international marketing and advertising research, including Hofstede's (1980) widely employed cultural dimensions. We then introduce a new research paradigm, proposed by the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program (GLOBE) Project (House *et al.*, 2004), that is proving fruitful to international marketing and advertising researchers, and we encourage future researchers to look to even more

Journal titles	Number of articles	Percentage
<i>Journal of Advertising</i>	22	20.8
<i>International Journal of Advertising</i>	21	19.8
<i>International Marketing Review</i>	18	17.0
<i>Journal of Advertising Research</i>	17	16.0
<i>Journal of International Marketing</i>	8	7.5
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	8	7.5
<i>Journal of Marketing Communications</i>	5	4.7
<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	2	1.9
<i>Journal of World Business</i>	2	1.9
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	2	1.9
<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	1	0.9
<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	0	0.0
Total	106	100.0

**Table I.**  
Articles by journals

diverse disciplines for potentially useful typologies. We examine methodological issues, such as the weaknesses associated with content analysis, the method that has dominated cross-cultural advertising research to date, as well as cross-cultural data equivalency, and measurement assessment methods. Finally, we note which markets have received the bulk of researchers' attention, and we suggest conducting international advertising research in less frequently explored countries.

### **Where we have been: assessment of prior research**

#### *Trend analysis*

Past researchers have performed citation analyses of major marketing journals in order to investigate patterns and developments in the literature (Albaum and Peterson, 1984; Craig and Douglas, 2001; Nakata and Hung, 2005; Taylor, 2005; Zou, 2005). To both update and expand upon these, we conducted a content analysis of cross-cultural advertising research published in major advertising, marketing, and international business journals from 1995 to 2006. This decade was chosen because the ten-year period provides an adequate timeframe in which to discern meaningful patterns. We adopted Zou's (2005) selection criteria: only those journals that are included in:

- Dubois and Reed's (2000) ranking of international business journals;
- the social science citation index; and
- with a significant number of articles focusing on advertising research were selected.

The major journals included in this analysis are the *International Marketing Review* (IMR), *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS), *Journal of World Business* (JWB), *Journal of Marketing* (JM), *Journal of Marketing Research* (JMR), *Journal of Consumer Research* (JCR), *Journal of Advertising* (JA), *Journal of Advertising Research* (JAR), *International Journal of Advertising* (IJA), *Journal of Marketing Communications* (JMC), *Journal of Business Research* (JBR), and *Journal of International Marketing* (JIM). These journals are widely read by international advertising researchers, and have published a significant portion of the body of cross-cultural advertising research.

Several steps were employed in the analysis. First, each journal was systematically examined for articles dealing with cross-cultural advertising. Second, relevant keywords were used to search ABI/INFORM and EBSCOHOST Business Source Complete, the leading electronic business databases. Given the focus of our investigation, the following studies were excluded, those that:

- examined advertising in a single country only;
- explored advertising in a given country and subsequently compared the results with secondary data from another country; and
- devoted only a minimal portion of their content to the topic of advertising.

These procedures yielded a total of 106 articles related to cross-cultural advertising research. It should be recognized that internet advertising investigations and/or studies related to web sites were included in this analysis.

#### *Frequency of publication*

A detailed distribution by journal is shown in Table I. The three highest ranked journals are *JA*, *IJA*, and *IMR*. The *JA* has published the largest number of cross-cultural advertising studies with 22 articles (21 per cent), followed by the *IJA* with 21 articles (20 per cent), and the *IMR* with 18 articles (17 per cent). The *JAR* published 17 articles (17 per cent), which appears to be a substantial decrease from Zou's findings for the period 1990-2002 (31 articles). The *JIM* and *JBR* each published eight articles, accounting for 7.5 per cent of total articles. Zou's citation analysis noted that *JIM* published seven articles in the period 1990-2002, and it can thus be argued that the number of cross-cultural advertising studies has remained fairly constant in this journal. In contrast, there is a clear paucity of cross-cultural advertising research in international business journals, and in general marketing journals. Cross-cultural advertising investigations had only a marginal presence in *JIBS*, *JWB*, and *JM*, each of which published only two articles. The *JCR* published fewer cross-cultural advertising articles in our period – only one – than in the period 1990-2002. Finally, taken together with Zou's findings, we found that *JMR* did not publish a single study of this kind in the period 1990-2006.

#### *Frequency of topics*

All 106 articles were content analyzed according to Zou's (2005) typology. Topics included:

- the standardization versus localization debate;
- consumer response to advertising;
- advertising content;
- social and regulatory issues;
- cultural values;
- issues related to integrated marketing communications and international advertising agencies; and
- campaign management.

Though some articles explored multiple topics, we coded only the dominant topic for each publication, because our objective was to capture the primary topics investigated

in the published articles. For example, an article analyzing gender role portrayals would be classified as having the primary focus of “cultural values” if the conceptual framework was based on cultural theory. Otherwise it would be classified as “advertising content”. Table II summarizes the frequency distribution of the seven topics. The results show the most studied area between 1995 and 2006 was cultural values (37 per cent), followed by the standardization versus localization debate (22 per cent), consumer response to advertising (16 per cent), and advertising content (11 per cent). Despite its conceptual popularity in advertising literature, IMC and agency topics accounted for only 5.7 per cent of the articles.

#### *Frequency of methodologies*

In Table III, we list the methods most frequently employed in cross-cultural advertising investigations. Methodologies were classified into six types, following Taylor (2005):

- (1) content analysis;
- (2) survey;
- (3) experiment;
- (4) conceptual;
- (5) secondary data; and
- (6) qualitative method.

Approximately, 86 per cent of the cross-cultural advertising articles published during the period 1995-2006 were empirical in nature. Only 11 per cent of the sample was

**Table II.**  
Frequency by topics

Research topics	Frequency	Percentage
Standardization versus localization debate	23	21.7
Consumer response to advertising	17	16.0
Advertising content	12	11.3
Social and regulatory issues	3	2.8
Cultural values	39	36.8
IMC and advertising agency issues	6	5.7
Campaign management	6	5.7
Total	106	100.00

**Table III.**  
Frequency by  
methodology

Research methods	Frequency	Percentage
Content analysis	37	34.9
Experiment	19	17.9
Survey	35	33.0
Conceptual	12	11.3
Secondary data	3	2.8
Qualitative method	0	0.0
Total	106	100.0

classified as conceptual papers. This corroborates Taylor's (2005) finding that only 9 per cent of the international articles published in the *JA* during the period 1994-2004 were conceptual in nature. Content analysis was the most widely used methodology (35 per cent), closely followed by survey (33 per cent). This suggests that, despite recent criticism, content analysis is still commonly employed in cross-cultural advertising research. In contrast, only 18 per cent of the articles employed an experimental method. A mere three articles used secondary data. None of the articles examined utilized a qualitative method.

#### *Frequency of countries explored*

Table IV summarizes the countries explored in the 106 articles. Asian countries dominated, representing 34 per cent of the total studied. Specifically, Japan or China was investigated in 21 articles (8 per cent), while Korea was examined in 16 articles (6 per cent). Other Asian countries included India, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, in order of frequency. Roughly one-quarter of the published studies examined North America (USA and Canada, 27 per cent), followed by Western Europe (specifically, the "original" European Union (EU) member states, 22 per cent). Australia and New Zealand were examined in 16 articles, or 6 per cent of the total. In contrast, none of the articles examined Africa. Some regions are clearly understudied, in particular, developing or emergent economies in Central and Eastern Europe, Middle Eastern countries, and both Latin America and Africa.

#### **Where we need to go: issues in cultural theory**

Based on the preceding assessment of 106 articles published in major journals, we summarize the contribution of the dominant cultural theories, address methodological issues, and discuss understudied markets.

#### *Classifications of personal values*

As Table I clearly reveals, over the past decade much cross-cultural advertising research has focused on cultural values. Values have been defined as "an enduring belief that one mode of conduct or end-state of existence is preferable to an opposing mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1968). Core values go

Country/region	Frequency	Percentage
North America (USA/Canada)	71	26.69
Western Europe	58	21.80
South/Southeast Asia	32	12.03
Japan	21	7.89
China	21	7.89
Korea	16	6.02
Oceania (Australia/New Zealand)	16	6.02
Arab	8	3.01
Non-EU countries	6	2.26
Central and Eastern Europe	5	1.88
Africa	0	0.00
Others	12	4.51
Total	266	100.00

**Table IV.**  
Frequency by country

much deeper than behaviour or attitudes, and they determine, at a basic level, people's choices and desires. Indeed, values may be one of the most powerful explanations of, and influences on, consumer behaviour. Researchers have relied primarily on two classification systems: Rokeach's inventory of values, and Kahle and Timmer's list of values (LOV).

Rokeach (1973) distinguished between two levels of values: terminal and instrumental values. Terminal values are desirable end-states, such as a comfortable life, an exciting life, a sense of accomplishment, a world at peace, equality, family security, among others. Instrumental values are desirable modes of conduct that help one to achieve these end-states, such as ambitious, broad-minded, capable, cheerful, courageous, among others. Thus, terminal values serve as motivators to reach instrumental values. This inventory of values was proposed by Rokeach, and was a pioneering framework employed in many studies in the area of international marketing and advertising (McEnally and de Chernatony, 1999; Ueltschy and Ryans, 1997). Kahle and Timmer (1983) developed the LOV, which offers a simpler version of Rokeach's inventory. LOV consists of nine values: a sense of belonging, excitement, fun and enjoyment in life, warm relationship with others, self-fulfilment, being well respected, a sense of accomplishment, security, and self-respect. The LOV also proved useful to researchers who were exploring international marketing and advertising (Goldsmith *et al.*, 1993; Kahle *et al.*, 1994).

#### *Classifications of cultural values*

Though each individual has a unique set of values, there are also values that tend to permeate a culture. Cultural values are distinguished from personal values, because they form the foundation on which culture rests (McCarty, 1994). Such cultural values, transmitted by a variety of sources (family, media, school, church, and state), tend to be broad-based, enduring, and relatively stable (Samovar *et al.*, 1998). The theoretical basis for the analysis of cultural values across nations is that all cultures face similar problems and challenges, which can be dealt with in a variety of ways. Exactly how they are dealt with reflects that particular culture's value system. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) note that, the analysis of cultural values allows for the comparison of similarities and differences between various cultures. An important category of cross-cultural research identifies sets of cultural values useful in describing cultures. The resulting frameworks outline cultural dimensions that serve to explain a significant portion of country-to-country variance. To date, much cross-cultural marketing and advertising research has relied on Hofstede's cultural dimensions. To a lesser extent, researchers have also employed Schwartz's cultural values in their investigations. A third classification system – entitled GLOBE – offers a new alternative.

#### *Hofstede's cultural dimensions*

Hofstede's (1980) typology has been one of the most important frameworks in this area in the past few decades. Based on 117,000 questionnaires from 88,000 respondents in 20 languages, reflecting 66 countries, Hofstede delineated four important dimensions that can be used to classify countries: power distance, societal desire for hierarchy or egalitarianism; individualism, society's preference for a group or individual orientation; masculinity vs femininity, a sex-role dimension; and uncertainty avoidance, a culture's tolerance of uncertainty. Later research resulted in the

addition of a fifth dimension, long-term orientation (Hofstede and Bond, 1988), the cultural perspective on a long- vs a short-term basis.

Of late, Hofstede's work has come under some scrutiny. The description of countries using only four or five dimensions is seen as insufficient, and there is concern that important dimensions may be missing. Hofstede (1980, p. 313) himself admitted "it may be that there exist other dimensions related to equally fundamental problems of mankind which were not found . . . because the relevant questions simply were not asked". Hofstede has also been criticized regarding the measurement of his dimensions, the equivalence of the meaning of values in each of the cultures, as well as the age of his data, which was mainly collected between 1968 and 1972. Further, Hofstede measured work-related behaviours and values among employees in a large multinational organization (IBM), and so the transfer of his results to other groups (such as consumers) or other areas (for example, marketing and advertising), and the use of his results to discriminate national cultures in general, are considered speculative by some. Finally, many important countries and cultures were not included in Hofstede's study. No Arab countries were included, and the entire continent of Africa was represented by only a single country: South Africa. However, despite these limitations, many marketing and advertising researchers have recognized the potential applicability of Hofstede's dimensions to both advertising and marketing research questions (Albers-Miller, 1996; Bang *et al.*, 2005; Milner and Collins, 2000; Moon and Chan, 2005; Moon and Franke, 2000).

#### *Schwartz's cultural values*

Schwartz (1992, 1994) provided the second typology of cultural values. Schwartz conducted a survey of individual values that were recognized across cultures, in an attempt to develop a framework of cultural values on a societal level. He reported survey data from 38 nations representing 41 cultural groups. Schwartz identified three basic social issues: the relationship between the individual and the group; assuring responsible social behaviour; and the roles of humans in the natural and social world. Cultural adaptations to resolve each of these three issues constitute the framework, which consists of seven national-cultural domains that serve to differentiate cultures. The seven dimensions are conservatism, a cultural emphasis on maintenance of the status quo, propriety, and restraint of actions or inclinations that might disrupt the solidarity of the group or the traditional order; intellectual autonomy, a cultural emphasis on the right of individuals to independently pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions; affective autonomy, a cultural emphasis on the right of individuals to independently pursue affectively positive experience; hierarchy, a cultural emphasis on the legitimacy of an unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources; egalitarian commitment, a cultural emphasis on transcendence of selfish interests in favour of voluntary commitment to promoting the welfare of others; mastery, a cultural emphasis on seeking to actively master and change the world; and harmony, a cultural emphasis on accepting the world as it is, rather than attempting to change or exploit it. Schwartz's typology has been less widely applied to marketing or advertising. This may well be because his findings are scattered across a large number of publications, and each focus on a single segment of the total number of cultures explored. Conversely, this may be because Hofstede's previously published work had already been so widely accepted. Nonetheless, because of its strong theoretical foundation, Schwartz's typology has proven useful to some researchers (Watson *et al.*, 2002).



*The GLOBE study: an alternative framework to Hofstede?*

A more recent body of work from organizational and management science, entitled the GLOBE Project, appears to offer researchers an alternative to the previously discussed frameworks. As part of the GLOBE Project, over 160 researchers surveyed 17,000 subjects in 62 countries (House *et al.*, 2004). Middle managers from three industries were surveyed: financial services, food processing, and telecommunications. GLOBE outlined nine cultural dimensions: assertiveness, the degree to which individuals in societies are assertive, confrontational, aggressive, and straightforward; uncertainty avoidance, the extent to which members of a society strive to avoid uncertainty, by relying on established social norms and practices; power distance, the degree to which members of a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally; collectivism I (institutional collectivism), the degree to which societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action, as opposed to individual distribution and individual action; collectivism II (in-group collectivism), the extent to which members of a society express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their groups, organizations, or families; gender egalitarianism, the degree to which a society minimizes gender role differences; future orientation, the degree to which members of a society engage in future-oriented behaviours, such as planning, investing, and delaying gratification; and performance orientation, the degree to which a society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence; and humane orientation, the extent to which a society encourages and rewards its members for being fair, altruistic, friendly, caring, and kind to others. With regard to the first six dimensions, GLOBE partly draws on Hofstede's work, but although the labelling may be similar, correlation analyses show that they are quite clearly differentiated.

GLOBE provides data on the societal level, and explicitly differentiates between societal values and societal practices. The distinction between values and practices was incorporated to correspond with Schein's (2004) concepts of artifacts vs espoused values, as two distinct levels of culture (House and Hanges, 2004). Artifacts are the visible products, processes, and behaviours of a culture. They primarily reflect the "as is" and, as such, the cultural practices. In contrast, espoused values are the individuals' or society's sense of what ought to be, as distinct from what is. They primarily reflect the "should be" and, as such, the cultural values. GLOBE recognizes that, on occasion, both levels of culture may even be in conflict. Although, GLOBE provides data on the societal level, rather than on the individual level, individuals are socialized through the values that are held and the behaviours that are practiced in their cultures, and therefore they are likely to adopt the practices that are shared by members of their society (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

GLOBE offers researchers an alternative perspective to the existing frameworks on cultural dimensions. It challenges two a priori assumptions that much recent cross-cultural advertising research, influenced in great part by Hofstede (1980), makes in theory development. First, it assumes that measuring individual-level values is a robust way of measuring cultures. The conventional wisdom is that calculating the respondents' individual values is a sufficient measure of the collective culture. This has been termed the ecological values assumption, meaning that knowing the values of members of a culture is a sufficient way of knowing the culture. Second, it assumes that the linkage between values and specific perceptions of an ad can be generalized to the relationship between values and general perceptions of advertising in the culture. There is evidence that values are related to such practices as voting behaviour or

managerial behaviour, and so when people in a society report that they value future orientation, then these people must also be practicing future orientation in their day-to-day activities. In other words, it is assumed that knowing the values in a culture tells us about what actually happens in that culture. We call this the onion assumption, after Hofstede's Onion Diagram. GLOBE decided not to accept the first assumption (ecological values assumption) and to verify the second (the onion assumption) (Javidan *et al.*, 2006). Table V summarizes the primary differences between the Hofstede and GLOBE frameworks.

Criteria	Hofstede	GLOBE
Purpose	To conduct a <i>post-hoc</i> interpretation of the findings from a survey on employee morale	To design and implement a multiphase and multimethod program to examine the relationship between national culture, leadership effectiveness, and societal phenomena
General characteristics	Consulting project to address the needs of IBM corporation	Academic collaboration with over 160 scholars from 62 cultures
Study period	During the 1960s	Starting 1993
Questionnaire development	Questionnaire items generated by a team of six European researchers to cover the issues that were of concern to IBM identified through interviews with employees	All research collaborators were directly involved in research design, and conducted individual and focus group interviews with managers in their own countries
Translation issue	Questionnaire items were translated into local languages without back-translation	The survey instruments were translated and back-translated in each country
Theoretical base	Constructs and scales that are developed from pure empiricism	Constructs and scales that are cross-culturally developed, theoretically driven, and empirically verifiable
Primary assumptions	Accepts two <i>a priori</i> assumptions: (1) ecological values assumption (knowing the values of members of a culture is a sufficient way of knowing the culture); and (2) onion assumption (knowing values in a culture tells us about what actually happens in that culture)	Decided not to accept ecological values assumption, and to verify the onion assumption
Structure of cultural dimensions	One level: cultural values based on the onion assumption (desired values)	Two levels: (1) cultural values (as they are); and (2) cultural practices (as they should be)
Psychometric properties of the scales	Ambiguous psychometric instrument design process, which may not satisfy established psychometric requirements. Cross-cultural comparison without evidence for within-country aggregability	Ample evidence from a multi-level, multi-trait, multi-method confirmatory factor analysis, to establish construct validity. Rigorous statistical procedures to verify that the scales are aggregable, unidimensional, and reliable, and to ensure cross-cultural differences

**Source:** Based on Hofstede (1980, 2006), House *et al.* (2004) and Javidan *et al.* (2006)

**Table V.**  
Differences in Hofstede's  
vs GLOBE's research

There appears to be significant potential for the application of the GLOBE framework of societal values and practices to marketing and advertising research (Terlutter *et al.*, 2006). To date, however, it has received only limited attention. A preliminary investigation by Terlutter *et al.* (2005) was the first attempt to apply the GLOBE dimensions to advertising. The focus of this investigation was on the dimension of assertiveness. A second investigation (Diehl *et al.*, 2007) explored the dimension of performance orientation. In addition to these two dimensions, the GLOBE framework offers additional dimensions that are worthy of analysis by international marketing and advertising researchers.

## **Where we need to go: issues in research methodology**

### *Content analysis*

Our assessment of the 106 articles identified content analysis as the most frequently employed methodology in the period 1995-2006. This method first became popular in the late 1970s, and during the 1980s and 1990s numerous researchers made significant contributions to the literature on cross-cultural advertising research employing this method (Mueller, 1987, 1992; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Whitelock and Chung, 1989). Kolbe and Burnett (1991) provide an empirical review and synthesis of published studies based on content-analysis methods. Despite its dominance in cross-cultural research, content analysis has not been without criticism. The former editor of the *Journal of Advertising Research*, Kover (2001), wrote that “The *JAR* is about what advertising does, not what it is”. As a result, the number of publications in *JAR* employing this methodology decreased dramatically. Our investigation revealed that, in the period 1995-2006, *JAR* accepted only four studies based on content analysis, substantially fewer than *JA*, which published 12 such articles in the same period. Major marketing journals may have adopted a policy similar to that of *JAR*, given that they seldom regard content analysis as a scientific method.

Several researchers have examined the methodological limitations of content analysis. Reliability and validity often prove difficult to establish. However, one of the most important criticisms concerning content analysis relates to the limited generalizability of its results. Content analysis is more an objective measure of advertising content than a reflection of the consumer’s subjective experience with the ad (Abernethy and Franke, 1996). To remedy this weakness, Lerman and Callow (2004) proposed a variation on content analysis that is predicated on consumer interpretation of advertisements. They argue that an advertiser may use the same ad or image (e.g. a well-dressed woman) across countries, but that consumers in one country may interpret the ad theme differently (e.g. social status) from those in another country (e.g. extravagance). To capture the meaning of the language and cultural systems embedded in ads, Lerman and Callow (2004) suggest having subjects from the target audience (rather than judges) interpret the messages in the form of narrative texts. Subjects are instructed to base their interpretations on a set of questions established by the researchers, and to provide a written account of their interpretations. When the cultural interpretations are completed, judges are then used to categorize the narratives. This method appears to be particularly appropriate for identifying advertising themes or appeals across cultures.

Additional problems relate to content analysis coding procedures. Typically, researchers tend to employ nominal or dichotomous scales to quantify the presence or

absence of the categories under study. However, the use of a nominal scale has serious limitations, because it registers a given category only once, and thus cannot capture the real strength of a variable. For example, if a researcher attempts to examine “materialism” in a given ad, he or she may simply note whether or not it is present as a whole, but fail to measure how many materialistic components may be present in the ad. To correct for this, Lin (2001) proposes a four-point ordinal scale to differentiate the degree to which cultural values are reflected. She assigned numerical values of 0 (not present), 1 (weak), 2 (moderate), and 3 (strong), and then performed *t*-tests to identify statistical differences. Ordinal or interval scales are a better alternative than nominal scales, as long as the coders are given rigorous instruction and training. Furthermore, careful consideration of the most appropriate scale types leads to more sophisticated statistical analysis, such as multiple correspondence analysis or multidimensional scaling (Alden *et al.*, 1999).

### *Cross-cultural data equivalence*

In conducting cross-cultural surveys, it is critical to ensure that responses from different countries are conceptually and statistically equivalent (Taylor, 2002). Response equivalence should be examined in terms of both construct equivalence and measure equivalence. Construct equivalence consists of functional equivalence, conceptual equivalence, and category equivalence, while measure equivalence is comprised of calibration equivalence, translation equivalence, and metric equivalence (Craig and Douglas, 2005). Table VI summarizes these concepts.

Often, a problem with construct equivalence occurs because of a lack of linguistic equivalence. Validation of equivalence among respondents in different cultures can be enriched by employing the translation/back-translation method. However, a recent investigation revealed that the translation/back-translation method may not be sufficient to ensure conceptual equivalence. Douglas and Craig (2006) propose an alternative approach, known as “collaborative and iterative translation”. It begins with a committee establishing the equivalence of terms, followed by parallel translations. These translations are then pre-tested and revised, and, when satisfactory versions are attained, the questionnaire is administered to the selected population.

For measure equivalence, two elements of equivalence are typically considered: the equivalence of the scale (or scoring procedure) used to establish the measure, and the equivalence of response to a given measure in different countries. Scalar equivalence, which ensures that the score obtained in one culture has the same meaning in another culture, is important, because some scales have been shown to be more effective than others in various countries (Craig and Douglas, 2005). For example, some countries tend to be more comfortable with five- or seven-point scales, while others prefer four- or six-point scales. Further, as the norms of each society reinforce desirable behaviours in that culture, rather than some universal mandate, culturally-bounded response set characteristics are likely to influence response scores.

Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998) proposed a systematic procedure to examine configural, scalar, and metric measurement invariance, by performing multi-group confirmatory factor analysis. Their procedure helps to clarify the conditions under which meaningful comparisons of construct conceptualizations, construct means, and relationships between constructs may be possible. Specifically, they propose that researchers investigate factor covariance invariance, factor variance invariance, and error

**Table VI.**  
Cross-cultural data  
equivalence

Equivalence type		Definition	Example
Construct equivalence	Functional equivalence	At a societal level, the concepts, objects or behaviours studied must serve the same function across cultures	Bicycles are considered as a recreational tool in the USA, but as a basic mode of transportation in China
	Conceptual equivalence	At an individual level, the interpretation of objects, stimuli or behaviour must be the same across cultures	Funerals are perceived differently in India (large and public rites) and France (private, family affairs)
	Category equivalence	A given concept must belong to the same class of objects or activities across cultures	The social prestige attached to university professors varies from country to country
Measure equivalence	Calibration equivalence	Monetary and physical measurement units must be the same across cultures	Measures of weight, distance, volume, and perceptual cues, such as colour, shape, or form
	Translation equivalence	The translated research instrument is correctly understood by respondents in different countries, and has equivalent meaning	Translation of verbal and nonverbal stimuli plays a key role in the establishment of equivalence
	Metric equivalence	1. The scoring procedure used to establish the measure is the same  2. The response to a given measure in different countries is the same	A five- or seven-point scale is common in the USA, while a four-point scale is common in Japan Spanish respondents tend to give significantly higher ratings on a purchase intention scale than respondents in other countries

**Source:** Craig and Douglas (2005)

variance invariance in their analysis of the data, before drawing any conclusions. Myers *et al.* (2000) proposed an extension of Steenkamp and Baumgartner's (1998) procedure, by demonstrating the use of formal tests that help to identify some specific sources of inequivalence.

In a recent article, Ewing *et al.* (2005) proposed an alternative approach called the Rasch model. The authors urge rethinking construct and cross-cultural validity, as the meaning of questionnaire items is much more interrelated because:

- different groups of respondents are not the sole source of measurement variance; and
- measures of a construct based on a particular object may not represent the same meaning across groups.

Cross-cultural advertising researchers are urged to apply one of these methods to ensure measure equivalence.

#### *Measurement assessment method*

The quality of cross-cultural advertising data can be verified in terms of two qualitative criteria: practical considerations (data collection process and completeness of the data), and psychometric standards (reliability and validity). To meet the first criterion, the data collection process must be reasonably rapid and efficient, and the data must be free of missing values. To meet the second criterion, it has been suggested that structural equation modeling (SEM) is one of the most useful statistical methods for diagnosing random error in research. This approach is consistent with the widely adopted psychometric method advocated by Churchill (1979). This method consists of:

- concept definition and domain specification;
- item generation;
- extensive validation, using correlations for respondent samples to provide evidence of reliability and construct validity;
- purification of the original set of items; and
- determination of the convergent, discriminant, and construct validity of the purified measure.

Churchill's (1979) procedure has undoubtedly been influential because of the inherent appeal of a step-by-step method for defining and empirically validating constructs. However, it appears that, over time, researchers' focus has shifted from the accurate conceptualization of constructs to the appropriate numbers that maximize reliability or validity (Finn and Kayande, 2005).

Rossiter (2002) proposed what has been termed the "C-OAR-SE approach" which provides an alternative to Churchill's procedure. The C-OAR-SE approach consists of:

- construct definition;
- object classification through open-ended interviews with a sample of target raters;
- attribute classification through open-ended interviews with a sample of target raters;

- rater identification as an individual, a set of expert judges, or a sample of consumers;
- scale formation; and
- enumeration.

Rossiter’s approach severely criticizes the almost blind adherence of marketing academics to Churchill’s scale development approach, because it overly emphasizes such practices as the computation of construct validity, notably multi-trait-multi-method analysis, and reliability (specifically, exploratory factor analysis and coefficient  $\alpha$ ), all of which presume domain sampling theory. In contrast, the C-OAR-SE approach focuses on rational, logical arguments, and the evaluation by experts, typically based on open-ended input from pre-interviews with raters. Therefore, in C-OAR-SE, only one type of validity is essential: content validity. Table VII summarizes the major differences between Churchill’s (1979) and Rossiter’s (2002) procedures.

Perhaps, one of the most important implications of the C-OAR-SE approach involves the argument about reflective versus formative measures. Rossiter (2002) points out that many reflective measures used in past marketing studies may have been formative in nature:

There are many examples of marketing constructs whose attribute is a formed attribute but which, due to the emphasis in traditional scale development on factor analysis and  $\alpha$ , have attribute scales that are wrongly constituted. These include among the classic scales as should now be evident, SERVQUAL, MARKET ORIENTATION, CUSTOMER ORIENTATION, and the VIEWER RESPONSE PROFILE.

Criteria	Churchill’s procedure	Rossiter’s procedure
Conceptualization of construct	Concept definition step, but multiple objects of measurement never explicitly considered in the literature	Explicit consideration of multiple objects to define context in terms of a cross-classification of objects, attributes, and raters
Empirical validation	Extensive validation, using correlations for respondent samples to provide numbers as evidence of reliability and construct validity	Expert raters assess content validity, but generally no need for empirical validation by raters in the universe
Improvement over earlier procedures	Significant improvement in conceptualization and validation of scales relative to prior era	An increased emphasis on conceptualization of constructs, thus addresses a weakness of current practice
Negative consequences of and difficulties in using procedure	Step-by-step applications overemphasize validation numbers at the expense of conceptual rigour. Numbers often misleading due to misidentification of relevant objects of measurement	Scales are entirely content-dependent with the risk of a return to the pre-Churchill era. No scope for generalization primarily because there is no room for empirical validation

**Table VII.**  
Comparison of Churchill’s  
and Rossiter’s procedures

**Source:** Finn and Kayande (2005)



If the measures are indeed formative, factor analysis should not be used because “the perceived dimensionality of the components is not relevant; all that is needed is a set of distinct components as decided by expert judges” (Rossiter, 2002). Consequently, covariance-based SEM, such as LISREL or AMOS, is not appropriate. Alternatively, correlation-based partial least squares can be effectively implemented in scale validation based on formative measures (Chin, 1998).

Although, a detailed overview of the C-OAR-SE approach is beyond the scope of this paper, we encourage researchers to study this new paradigm and the related criticism of it by prominent researchers (Diamantopoulos, 2005; Finn and Kayande, 2005). In our opinion, Rossiter’s (2002) approach is particularly helpful in understanding the importance of construct definition, which appears to be closely related to construct equivalence in a cross-cultural research context (Ewing *et al.*, 2005).

### **Where we need to go: issues in country selection**

It has long been suggested that international marketing research efforts need to be more closely aligned with market growth opportunities outside the industrialized nations (Craig and Douglas, 2001). Contrary to this recommendation, Table III reveals the noteworthy paucity of research from outside developed regions.

Several Asian countries are undergoing profound cultural, technological, and strategic transformations, and these have significant ramifications for the global economy. The twenty-first century has been dubbed the “Chinese century” and much has been written about the “rise of India”. With 9.1 per cent growth in 2002, 10.4 per cent in 2005, and 10.7 per cent in 2006, China is the world’s fastest-growing major economy. Such impressive growth rates mean that China is close to overtaking Germany as the world’s third largest economy. Economic growth in India is currently averaging 5-6 per cent and there are strong signs that this is likely to continue in the future. Such growth is likely to soon make India the fifth largest economy in the world. In terms of purchasing power, the Indian economy already ranks as the world’s third largest economy. International advertising researchers are just beginning to focus on these two markets. Cross-cultural advertising investigations of China have been conducted by Lin (2001), Moon and Chan (2005), Samiee *et al.* (2003), Teng and Larouche (2006), Zhou *et al.* (2005), among others. India is also receiving increasing attention from international advertising researchers (Griffith *et al.*, 2003; Jo, 1998; Kitchen and Schultz, 1999; Pashupati and Lee, 2003).

The EU has increased its member states from 15 to 27 in the last three years: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined the EU in 2004, as did Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. As a result of low labour costs and appealing investment incentives (e.g. tax reductions, construction aid), many firms have moved their production facilities from other regions to these new member states. For example, Sheram and Soubbotina (2000) report that those “countries seen as more advanced in market reforms – the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, and Poland – attracted almost three-quarters of the foreign investment” in transition economies. However, this drastic expansion has not been reflected in cross-cultural advertising research. To date, only a limited number of academic studies have focused on these countries (Koudelova and Whitelock, 2001; van Repe *et al.*, 2000; West and Paliwoda, 1996).



Given the increasing significance of *Mercosur* as a potentially integrated economic region, Latin America deserves a great deal more attention in terms of cross-cultural advertising research. Comprising Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Brazil, *Mercosur* has a total population of over 190 million individuals living in an area larger than the surface of the European continent. To date, only a few researchers have undertaken cross-cultural investigations of these markets (Murray and Murray, 1996). Finally, the Middle East and Africa have been all but ignored by the research community. Investigations in these regions are few and far between (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000).

## Conclusion

In summarizing where cross-cultural advertising research has been, we present the findings of a longitudinal citation analysis covering the period 1995-2006. The analysis revealed that cultural values were the most studied topic area. In terms of methodology, content analysis was the most widely employed approach, followed by surveys. North America and the “original” EU member countries were most frequently investigated. In contrast, research focusing on newer EU member countries is limited, and there appears to be a real paucity of research on Latin America, the Middle East, and, most of all, Africa. For theoretical grounding, marketing and advertising research has traditionally turned to the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. We summarized the major cultural theories that have dominated cross-cultural advertising research to date, including Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions. Increasingly, however, researchers are turning to other disciplines for new insights. We introduce a new research paradigm from organizational and management sciences, entitled the GLOBE Project (House *et al.*, 2004), which is proving fruitful for international marketing and advertising researchers. We encourage investigators to look to even more diverse disciplines for potentially useful typologies. Given that content analysis has dominated cross-cultural research, we provide an overview of recommendations for improving on this methodology. Because the bulk of cross-cultural advertising research has focused on developed markets, we applaud those who have examined two of the major players in the twenty-first century – China and India – and we implore investigators to consider exploring central European markets, as well as Latin America, the Middle East, and, in particular, Africa.

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