

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL CONSUMER CULTURE ON CULTURAL VALUES
PORTRAYED IN PRINT ADVERTISING IN JAPANESE AND AMERICAN
MAGAZINES

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Abstract

The increase of globalization has prompted questions about the shift in local values and customs in countries around the globe, possibly creating a global consumer culture. This study investigated the degree of change between the advertising themes and cultural values that were portrayed in Japanese and American print advertisements in the 1970s and the current advertising themes in these countries. By continuing a study on data from the 1970s, this investigation analyzed the current advertising for similar cultural value themes and compared the results with the original study. The results of the Japanese advertising sample do not show the effects of globalization as the current results reflect consistent cultural values with the 1970s. The traditional cultural values in Japanese advertisements remain consistent over the decades, particularly with the status appeal, which remains a dominant cultural value portrayed in their advertising. The American advertising appeals changed considerably over the decades. The practical appeal surpassed the luxury appeal as a dominant theme. Furthermore, the themes of “being” and “doing” drastically decreased in American advertising, while the materialistic theme of “having” remained consistent. Common cultural values across borders that would be expected in a global consumer culture were not apparent in this study; instead, the differences were more evident between the Japanese and American advertising in the 2000s than the 1970s.

Keywords: cross-cultural advertising, global consumer culture

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Introduction

Within the past three decades globalization has been rapidly increasing in many countries throughout the world. Globalization has created new markets, enlarged present markets, and increased the amount of wealth in many countries. However, many researchers are concerned with the consequences of globalization (Featherstone, 1990), fearing that globalization weakens cultural values and norms.

The United States and Japan are both economic powerhouses in the global market, but the two countries have drastically different cultural values and norms. With the proliferation of globalization, researchers have found shifts in both countries' cultural values.

It has been argued that cultural values are displayed and reflected in a country's advertisements. Beginning in the 1970s, researchers studied cultural themes found in advertisements in countries all over the globe (Caballero, Madden, & Matsukubo, 1986; Belk & Pollay, 1985). Most of the research found cultural values displayed in the advertisements and supported the need to portray culturally specific themes for effective advertisements. However, more recent studies have shown a shift in the traditional cultural values portrayed in advertisements (Mueller, 2008). This study examined value themes in advertisements from the United States and Japan and compared them with the themes found by Belk, Bryce, and Pollay (1985) in the 1970s. The results demonstrated that the cultural values displayed in advertising were not noticeably affected by the globalization and the common cultural values that would be present in a global consumer culture were not apparent in the advertising from these countries.

Literature Review

Culture

“Culture is a pervasive influence which underlies all facets of social behavior and interaction. It is evident in the values and norms that govern society. It is embodied in the objects used in everyday life and in modes of communication in society” (Craig & Douglas, 2006, p. 323). The complexity of the term “culture” has sparked a debate since the 1800s. A well-known definition was given by Tylor in 1881, who explained culture as a complex whole that consists of an individual’s knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, customs and habits that are obtained by being a member within a society (Craig & Douglas, 2006). It was further defined as a “shared set of meanings” within a group of people that “dictates what we pay attention to, how we act, and what we value” (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 13).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) explained culture by dividing the different aspects into layers. The outer layer is the explicit culture that includes the language, food, buildings, houses, monuments, agriculture, shrines, markets, fashion and art (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The middle layer consists of values and norms that are shared and understood within the group. Norms are the shared understanding of what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ within the society whereas values shape the definitions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and are influenced by the ideals shared by a group (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Milton Rokeach (1968) further explained values as enduring beliefs, behaviors or outcomes that are personally or socially preferred by an individual. As the value became internalized, whether consciously or unconsciously to the individual, it became a standard for personal action,

justifying and developing attitudes toward objects and situations, judging self and others, and for comparing one's self with others (Rokeach, 1973).

The final layer of culture, the core, is the basic assumptions and beliefs about existence that are unconsciously held in individuals in the culture (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The implicit layers are often manifested in the explicit culture, as cultural beliefs shape the values and norms in the culture, which in turn directs the actions and behaviors of the individuals in a culture. Geertz (1973) summarizes culture as the means by which people “communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about attitudes toward life. Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action” (p. 145).

Cultures exist so that people within a group can adapt to their environment (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2007). Triandis (1994) further explained culture as a set of essential and basic fundamentals that have increased the probability of survival and have been satisfactory for individuals in the past and are therefore passed on to following generations and others that share a common language and environment. These values and ideas of a culture are transmitted to the new generations and others by a variety of forms such as proverbs, stories, art and through many diverse carriers such as family, peers, media, schools, church (Samovar *et al.*, 2007).

Luckmann (1999) pointed out that culture provides stability and strength to a society; however, it is never static. Every society encounters challenges that result from disturbances in the environment, political turmoil, population changes, and the influx of new technologies. Therefore, cultures have to change and evolve over time to adapt to the changing surroundings.

Values Portrayed in Advertising

Scholars have debated whether advertising reflects and influences cultural values (Albers-Miller, 1997). Abrams (1953) has suggested that written communication is reflective of values and cultural norms (as cited in Albers-Miller, 1997). Because advertising is a form of social communication, it is considered particularly reflective of culture (Hong, 1987). Holbrook (1987) explained that “advertising appears to mirror or reflect rather than mold or shape the values of its target audience” (p. 100). Pollay and Gallagher (1990) agreed that values are the core of the advertising message. “Typical advertisements endorse, glamorize and inevitably reinforce values” (Pollay & Gallagher, 1990, p. 364). However, the mirror is distorted because advertisements only reflect certain attitudes, behaviors, and values; also, the values tend to be reproduced in an idealized form in the advertisements to attract the audience by attempting to cause the audience to identify closely with the subject of the advertisement (Hong, 1987).

Values are considered one of the most powerful explanations and influences on consumer behavior because an individual’s values help determine an individual’s decisions (Mueller, 2008). Although individuals have their own unique set of values, there are also a set of values that tend to exist within a culture (Mueller, 2008). Theoretically, “all cultures face similar problems and challenges, which can be dealt with in a variety of ways. Exactly how they are dealt with reflects the particular culture’s value system... [which] allows for the comparison of similarities and differences between various cultures” (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007, p. 504).

Over the past few decades, a multitude of studies have examined the role of values in advertising and found cultural values reflected in advertising content in different countries

across the globe. The majority of the research on cross-cultural advertising has been conducted between the United States and Asian societies because of the evident cultural differences. However, researchers have also compared advertising in similar cultures to examine the values portrayed. Through their studies, researchers have classified many cultural dimensions to explain the cultural values in international marketing and advertising research. Among these key dimensions, researchers have defined and explained the following dimensions:

High and Low-Context Cultures. According to Hall and Hall (1987), the level of context, whether high or low, explains how communication is expressed. Low-context cultures, such as the United States and Germany place high value on words allowing direct and concise communication. In contrast, high-context cultures like some Arab and Asian societies relied on contextual cues rather than words to convey a message (Hall & Hall, 1987). Because the contextual cues depend on tradition and history and are passed down through the generations, these cultures changed very little over time (Samovar *et al.*, 2007, p. 159).

South Korea is also recognized as a high-context culture, whereas the majority of communication in the United States is low-context (Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, & Kropp, 1999). In a study comparing Korean and American advertising, Taylor, Miracle, and Wilson (1997) found that Koreans preferred more contextual elements (e.g. mood and tone) in the commercials, whereas the Americans were more responsive to information-oriented advertisements. In a similar study, Cho *et al.* (1999) found more direct approaches, such as comparative appeals and emphasis on product features, in American advertising compared to

the Korean television commercials. The Korean commercials used metaphors and artistic expressions, stressing emotions and moods (Cho *et al.*, 1999).

Researchers have also investigated advertising from countries that have less obvious cultural differences. Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet (1992) compared French and American advertising in a study. Both countries are western cultures and have similar socioeconomics (Biswas *et al.*, 1992). However, the two countries differ in their form of communication. The purpose of communication for the French is to create and modify the shared culture, whereas Americans have very direct communication for the purpose of transmitting a message for a purpose (Biswas *et al.*, 1992). Therefore, the French people tend to have higher context communication compared to the United States. These differences in cultural values were portrayed in their respective countries' advertisements. The French advertisements had higher emotional content, which illustrates their communication patterns and high context language, while the American advertisements used more information cues which demonstrates a lower context society.

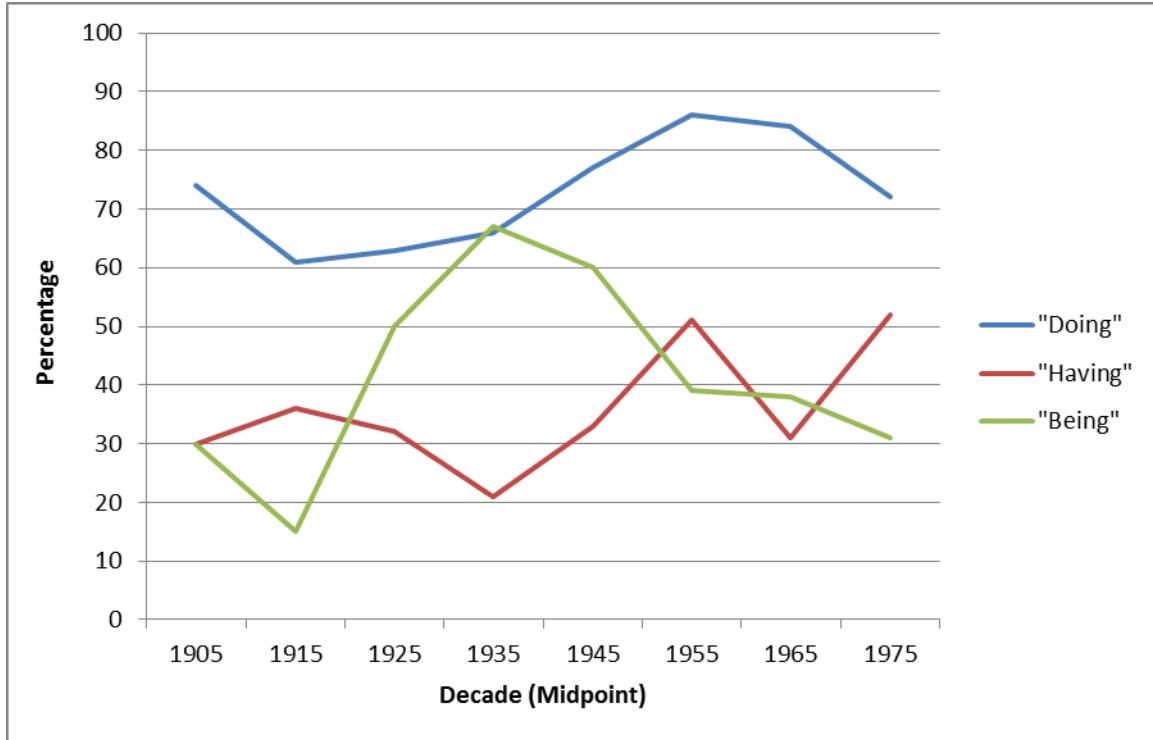
Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures. According to Hofstede (2009), countries that are individualistic focus on the individual rather than the society as a whole. Most western cultures, such as the United States and Great Britain, are considered individualistic cultures because people are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families. On the other hand, people from collectivistic cultures like Eastern and Latin American cultures, are integrated into specific groups or organizations from a young age. The individual decisions and actions are made to benefit and maintain the harmony of the group.

Cho *et al.* (1999) clarified that advertising in collectivistic countries emphasizes belonging to a family or a group and stresses conformity and harmony. Advertisements portrayed these themes by showing people conversing or working together. On the other hand, individualistic themes feature uniqueness and independence through a person being unique or doing something by oneself (Cho *et al.*, 1999). In their research, they discovered more individualistic themes in American television commercials, whereas less individualistic themes were apparent in the Korean advertising. In a related study, Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) examined Chinese and American advertising because of the large cultural differences between the two countries. China, one of the major socialist countries with a developing, low-income economy, is classified as a highly collectivistic culture (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996). The United States' economy is well-developed and on a high-income level and is a leading capitalist country with a high level of individualism (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996). Their research found that the dominant theme in Chinese advertisements was family. In China, families are considered the societal cells and must maintain harmony within the cell for stability (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996). On the other hand, individualism was the prominent theme in the American advertisements which emphasized self-sufficiency and being distinct (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996).

Level of Materialism in Cultures. Materialism has been defined as “the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction” (Belk, 1984, p. 291). Materialism is broken down into different themes and shown through different advertising appeals:

“Having,” “Doing”, and “Being.” Researchers Csikszentmihaly and Rochberg-Halton (1981) have further defined materialism by dividing it into different themes. Instrumental materialism is the theme of “doing” which is displayed by presenting the value of the object by showing its ability to assist the doing of an activity (Belk & Pollay, 1985). However, when the value portrayed is “having” or displays a person possessing the object, this level of materialism, described as terminal materialism, has evolved into a potentially dangerous form (Csikszentmihaly & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). The fear with terminal materialism is that product consumption to gain the satisfaction of the “good life” will potentially lead to disappointment, whereas, with instrumental materialism, using products to enable them to obtain the “good life” can be rewarding (Belk & Pollay, 1985). The final theme, “being,” is considered non-materialistic as the value of the object is in its ability to enhance the consumer’s sense of being (Belk & Pollay, 1985). Belk and Pollay (1985) studied the historic trends of these themes in American advertising. As shown in Figure 1, their findings indicated that the theme of “being” increased during the beginning of the twentieth century. However, towards the end of the century, the theme of “having” grew as both “doing” and “being” decreased.

Figure 1. Percentages of Themes by Decade (Belk & Pollay, 1985).



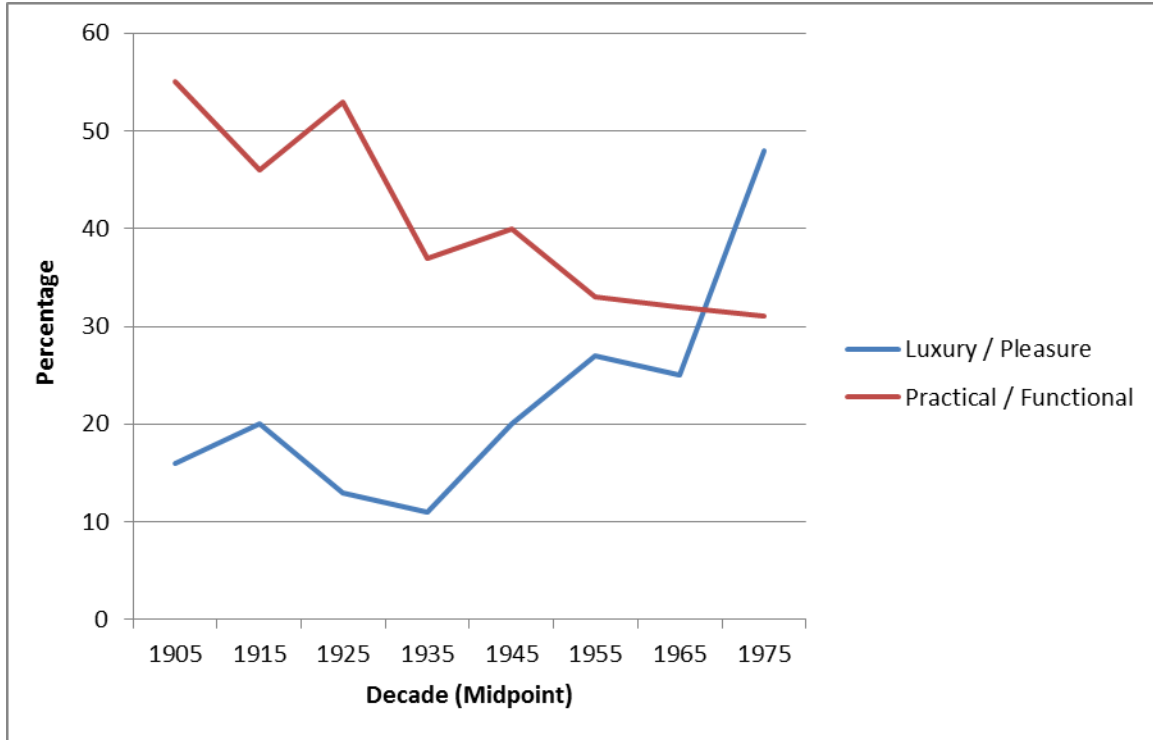
Luxury / pleasure vs. Practical / Functional appeals. Belk, Bryce, and Pollay (1985) identified different appeals displayed in advertising that determined the potential level of materialism. The appeal of luxury or pleasure is portrayed in an advertisement by illustrations that display lavish settings or by headlines clearly stating “luxury” or associated words such as “leisure”, “pleasure” or “pampered” (Belk *et al.*, 1985). In the 1980s, Belk and Pollay (1985) examined American advertisements for luxury themes within each decade from 1900 to the 1970s for historical trends. Studies showed that the percentage of family income spent on essentials such as food, clothing and shelter, had decreased from 94 percent in 1875 to 62 percent in 1973, allowing people to spend more money on non-essential products to achieve what was characterized as the “good life” (Belk & Pollay, 1985). The “good life” is defined as “a life abounding in material comforts and luxuries” (Belk & Pollay,

1985, p. 887). Their research coincided with the century's financial trends and showed that the theme of luxury increased in frequency in each subsequent decade.

Another similar study was conducted by Tansey, Hyman, and Zinkhan (1990) which examined the American and Brazilian cultures and the value of luxury portrayed in advertisements from their respective countries. Both countries are the largest consumer market within their respective continents; however, the two countries differ on values concerning work, leisure, and urban life. Historically, the Brazilian culture comes from rural backgrounds and they disdained most hard work, while the United States had a very strong work ethic (Tansey *et al.*, 1990). Within the last couple of decades there has been a shift in both countries. A large portion of Americans viewed urban life as chaos and stressed the need for leisure time, while Brazilians have increased their work ethic and desired urbanization (Tansey *et al.*, 1990). These culture values were apparent in their advertisements, as urban-related themes were used more frequently in the Brazilian advertisements, whereas leisure themes were used more frequently in American advertisements (Tansey *et al.*, 1990).

On the other hand, the appeal for practicality in an advertisement stresses the functional benefits of the product or service; therefore, it is classified as a non-materialistic value (Belk & Pollay, 1985). Although the practical appeal was the dominant theme during the first seven decades in American advertising, it was surpassed by the theme of luxury in the 1970s. As shown in Figure 2, advertisements that focused on functional appeals with headlines such as "KitchenAid Disposers Can Get You out Of This Jam" were replaced with headlines that portrayed luxury themes like "A Diamond Is Forever" (Belk & Pollay, 1985, p. 893).

Figure 2. Percentages of Appeals by Decade (Belk & Pollay, 1985).



Power Distance Index and the Use of Status Appeals. Hofstede (2009) used the power distance index to explain how different countries address human inequalities in regards to social status, wealth, and power. “People in societies exhibiting a large degree of power distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. In societies with low power distance, people strive to equalise the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power” (Hofstede, 2009). Hofstede (1980) explained that powerful people from countries that have a high power distance index are considered to be good, need to appear powerful and are expected to have privileges. Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) research concluded that countries with a high power distance index would use more status appeals in their advertising. This appeal would

highlight the social standing or the prestige association of the product(s) or individual(s) selling the product (Belk *et al.*, 1985).

To investigate social status more closely, Lee, Kim, and Han (2006) studied South Korea and American advertising. South Korea has stresses the power distance index and gives a great deal of importance to social status (Hofstede, 2009). Their research found the cultural value of status was displayed in Korean advertisements because they were more likely to use older people to represent major roles and the elderly were more positively depicted in comparison to American advertisements.

These studies conducted throughout different areas of the world over the last couple of decades have found a variety of cultural values portrayed in the countries' advertisements. As Marshall McLuhan (1964) concluded about cultural values in advertising: "the historians and archeologists will one day discover that the ads of our time are the richest and faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities" (p. 232).

Japanese and American Cultures and Advertising

United States and Japanese Economies. The United States and Japan are "economically interconnected, yet culturally very different countries" (Mueller, 2008, p. 773). According to the World Trade Organization, currently both countries are leading exporters and importers of merchandise and services in the world, contributing to nearly 20 percent of the world's exports combined. Following World War II, the United States and Japan both experienced expansive economic growth and became super powers of the globe.

Entering the 1970s, the United States was in a state of prosperity from the economic growth during the 1960s, while Japan's economy was deteriorating due to the revaluation of the yen and social problems due to high economic growth (Conte & Karr, 2012 & Statistical

Handbook, 2011). The 1973 oil crisis further weakened Japan's economy and raised energy prices in the United States which increased inflation and unemployment growth (Conte & Karr, 2012 & Statistical Handbook, 2011). "Following the second oil crisis in 1978, efforts were made to change Japan's industrial structure from 'energy-dependent' to 'energy-saving,' enabling Japan to successfully overcome inflation" which allowed Japan to surpass the growth of the United States in the 1980s (Statistical Handbook, 2011, p. 28). By 1987, Japan's GDP per capita (US \$20,056.14) exceeded the GDP per capita of the United States (US \$19,393.78) for the first time (WorldBank, 2012).

In the 1990s, a major recession in Japan started as the stock market prices plummeted and land prices declined (Statistical Handbook, 2011). On the other hand new trade opportunities and technological developments in the 1990s improved the economy in the United States. By 2001, the United States (GDP per capita: US \$35,912.33) exceeded the growth of Japan (GDP per capita: US \$32,210.12) (WorldBank, 2012). However, growth in Japan steadily improved throughout the decade, while the United States saw a rise in gas prices and the cost of homes peaked, causing inflation. By mid-2008, the United States economy's deterioration led to a major recession (World Factbook, 2009). Amidst the constant flux in their economies, both countries have remained dominant financial forces in the world.

United States and Japanese Cultures. Although both countries have similar economies, the countries have drastically different cultures. In the 1980s, Hofstede's research revealed that the Japanese tend to be collectivistic rather than individualistic (Mueller, 2008). The collectivistic culture within Japan pressures the Japanese people to know their place, behave like their neighbors, not to shame their families, and to avoid

causing social conflicts or standing out (de Mooij, 1998). In contrast, Americans are more likely to rank high on individualism (Mueller, 2008). They are obsessed with change, the 'new' or 'better,' and the freedom of expression (de Mooij, 1998).

Another considerable difference between the two cultures is the level of context in their communication. Hall & Hall (1990) found that the Japanese ranked number one in high-context communication, whereas North Americans ranked higher in low-context communication. Hong, Muderriso, and Zinkhan (1987) examined the cultural differences in the American and Japanese communication by determining the degree of emotional appeal, informativeness, and comparativeness of their advertisements. The researchers explained that "emotional appeals in an advertisement are the extent to which the advertisement relies on building affective or subjective impressions of intangible aspects of a product" (Hong *et al.*, 1987). On the other hand, the informativeness of an advertisement is the use of product-related cues which provide useful information for the consumer to make intelligent decisions (Hong *et al.*, 1987). The American culture is viewed as in conflict with the external environment, which leads to a rational and abstract mode of thinking. Conversely, the Japanese culture is characterized as a society adapting to the environment, which has shaped Japanese thinking as idealistic and less concerned with factual information (Hong *et al.*, 1987). These different characteristics have created different forms of communication. The Japanese language is more sensitive, emotional, and vague compared the very direct, logical, and precise English language. As anticipated with the following cultural differences, the researchers found that Japanese ads had more emotional appeals that utilized image building, emotional elicitation, and status symbols (Hong *et al.*, 1987).

However, the unexpected results from Hong *et al.* research found that Japanese advertisements were more informative than American ads. These findings corresponded with another study by Caballero, Madden, and Matsukubo (1986), which also found that Japanese advertisements were more informative than U.S. advertisements and had a large number of informative cues (e.g. price). In contrast, American advertising utilized more comparative advertising because Americans are more individualistic and competition is encouraged (Hong *et al.*, 1987).

However, in the following decade, Lin (1993) found that Japanese advertising from the 1990s was less informative than American advertising. Instead, “Japanese advertisements revealed an indulgence with sensitive crafting of product image and appearance slated within a subtle frame of reference” (Lin, 1993, p. 44). Also, Japanese advertisements took a "softer sell" approach than their American counterparts, where they stressed company reputation and image. In addition, Japan is a high-context and collectivistic society that is concerned with achieving consensus and harmony, therefore, the use of familiar symbols can effectively convey product images. However, the U.S. is a low-context society, so the consumer relied on Western rhetoric and logical traditions to relate thoughts and actions, which resulted in more informative advertisements. Also, the “Chinese Confucian influence in the Japanese culture oriented its advertising toward respect for nature, tradition, and elders. By contrast the Western spirit of adventurism and conquest guided American advertising to express more challenges and confrontation to the status quo ” (Lin, 1993, p. 45). Therefore, Japanese advertising tended “to use a softly packaged direct sales approach that politely requests consumers to consider their products without stuffing them with hard-core product facts and merits” (Lin, 1993, p. 46).

Materialism and status appeals were also major distinctions between the two cultures. Belk and Bryce (1986) examined materialism and status in both countries' television advertising from 1984 and print advertisements from the 1940s to the 1970s. According to the researchers, the United States was known as a highly materialistic nation, whereas Japan was traditionally not as materialistic. However, Japan's economic gains after World War II have increased the level of materialistic values in the Japanese. Belk and Bryce's research found that materialistic themes were less frequent in Japan in the early years and became more frequent in the sixties or seventies, which coincide with the rapid growth in the Japan after World War II. Throughout the century, materialism themes in American advertising had steadily increased from each passing decade.

Table 1
Percentages of U.S. and Japanese Ads Using Various Themes (Belk & Pollay, 1985).

YEAR*	Luxury		Practical		Status		Having		Being		Doing	
	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN
1943-1947	21.0%		40.0%		4.5%		31.0%		58.0%		76.0%	
<u>1953-1957</u>	27.1	2.5	33.7	35	6.8	0.0	50.8	27.5	39.0	45.0	86.4	17.5
<u>1958</u>		0.0		34.5		0.0		24.1		37.9		10.3
<u>1963-1967</u>	25.0	25.0	32.3	37.5	4.2	20.0	31.3	45.0	37.5	22.5	84.4	12.5
<u>1968</u>		32.7		14.5		30.9		47.3		9.1		1.8
<u>1973-1977</u>	48.3	42.2	31	24.4	4.8	40.0	51.7	35.6	31.0	11.1	72.4	15.6
<u>1978</u>		52.0		26.7		36.0		25.3		22.7		6.7
<u>1983</u>		29.2		12.5		35.4		43.8		22.9		12.5

*Underlined years apply to Japan

As shown in *Table 1*, status symbolism was far more frequent in Japanese advertising. These results corresponded with the higher power distance index in Japan than the United States and that the Japanese paid close attention to one's social status since their language requires that they "specify whether one was the superior or subordinate in a conversation" (Belk *et al.*, 1985, p. 12). Japanese advertising was more likely to use high

status people from prominent occupations to convey high status to the product with 40.0 percent of Japanese advertising compared to the 4.8 percent of American advertising. The different research studies indicated the similarities and differences in cultural values portrayed in the United States and Japan.

Global Consumer Culture

Global culture has been emerging because of the increasing connections between various local cultures as well as the “development of cultures without a clear anchorage in any one territory” (Hannerz, 1990, p. 237). Featherstone (1990) explained that having one global cultural for the entire world is unlikely, but rather the globalization of different cultures. Globalization happens when the countries around the globe start making cultural integration processes which “sustain the exchange and flow of goods, people, information, knowledge, and images which give rise to communication processes which gain some autonomy of a global level” (Featherstone, 1990, p. 1). The technological advances within the last 20 years, such as the Internet, cell phones, and TV, have generated breakthroughs in the communication processes across the globe (Keillor, D’Amico & Horton, 2001). Historically, culture changes have been the effects of wars and colonization within a society (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007). A shift in the today’s cultures resulted from “immigration, international trade and finance, global media, and technological flow, and business travel and tourism. While history recorded many exchanges and instances of global cultural flows, never before had these occurred with the “...sheer speed, scale, and volume” of the present time” (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007, p. 250).

However, globalization is “a continuing and complex process, moving at different speeds in different parts of the world and in different sections of the population” (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007, p. 251). Within the last couple decades, researchers had studied the effects of globalization and a global culture on consumers’ behavior. Culture is the leading factor in determining consumers' attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles, and therefore, influences the way

consumers satisfied their needs and desires through acquisition and use of goods and services (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007, p. 250).

Aden, Steenkamp, & Batra explained that a global culture developed “a shared set of consumption-related symbols (product categories, brands, consumption activities, and so forth) that are meaningful to segment members” (Alden *et al.*, 1999, p. 75). Holt, Quelch, & Taylor (2004) further noted that “a global culture doesn’t mean that consumers share the same tastes or values. Rather, people in different nations, often with conflicting viewpoints, participate in a shared conversation, drawing upon shared symbols” (p. 2). Alden *et al.* (1999) suggested that the emergence of globally shared meanings or symbols has led to the development of a ‘global consumer culture.’ This culture consists of consumers that may “purchase certain brands to reinforce their membership in a specific global segment, such as teenagers, business, governmental/diplomatic, elite, and so forth” (Alden *et al.*, 1999, p. 75). The observed findings by Keillor *et al.* (2001) further indicated that the global consumer has emerged to some degree by the similarities in their psychological consumer tendencies which overshadow their social and cultural differences. The segment members view products in “essentially the same way, regardless of their country of residence” (Domzal & Kernan, 1993, p. 17).

Merz, He, & Alden (2008) illustrated the global consumer culture through a global brand, McDonalds and its variety of hamburgers. McDonald’s offers local beef in Russia and Germany, spicier hamburgers in Turkey, garlic and chili sauces to its hamburgers in India; however, the “burger, whether a “kimchee burger,” “teriyaki burger,” or “lamb burger” (i.e. the subordinate variety of the basic level category “burger”), constituted a fast food product that features a circular, raised wheat bun with a hot meat or vegetable patty in the

middle, and accompanying vegetables and sauces. It is consumed because it offers high levels of utility for a relatively low price for most urban consumers around the world” (Merz *et al.*, 2008, p. 175). Even with the local varieties of burgers, the meaning of the burger remained consistent throughout different countries around the globe (Merz *et al.*, 2008).

They also demonstrated the function of a shopping mall as a place to hang out, socialize, shop, and for entertainment, was a constant theme around the world even though the atmosphere changed within different countries. Merz *et al.* (2008) compared shopping malls in Egypt and the United States since the Egyptian shopping malls have belly dancers, tent restaurants and loud music. However, the overall function remained the same. These illustrations were used to validate the emergence of a global consumer culture.

Objective

The objective for the thesis was to determine the degree to which cultural values portrayed in current advertising in the United States and Japan reflect the same values portrayed in the past and if the difference could show indications of globalization. Specifically, the researcher explored the differences in American and Japanese advertising over time by focusing on the following research questions (RQ):

RQ #1:

To what extent do Japanese print advertisements today reflect the same cultural values found in the 1970s?

Research Question #2:

To what extent do American print advertisements today reflect the same cultural values found in the 1970s?

Research Question #3:

What is the degree of change between the American and Japanese advertising portrayal of cultural values?

Many scholars have argued that successful advertising reflects cultural values. With that in mind, the researcher expected that the global consumer culture would impact the cultural values within the United States and Japan resulting in similar themes portrayed in the advertising between the two countries.

Methodology

To determine the extent that current Japanese and American print advertisements mirror the same cultural values from past decades, this study utilized a methodology based on an investigation conducted by Belk *et al.* (1985). The original study was conducted in 1984 and focused on print advertisements from the early 1940's until the late 1970s. The current study evaluated print advertisements from 2000 to 2009 and compared those results with the original study.

Sample

In the original study, the researchers randomly selected print advertisements from the ten largest circulation magazines in the United States for a five-year range within each decade. One issue from each of the leading magazines for every decade was randomly chosen by selecting one magazine out of the yearly assortment. Within each issue, the researcher skimmed through the magazine and randomly selected the first five advertisements encountered. With a total sample of 2000 advertisements, the advertisements that were retained for analysis featured the interior or exterior of a house to allow comparable settings for value analysis (Belk *et al.*, 1985). The final sample of the original study consisted of 411 advertisements and was split between the following years:

1943-1947	100 advertisements
1953-1957	59 advertisements
1963-1967	32 advertisements
1973-1977	29 advertisements

During the 1970s, the largest circulation magazines were *TV Guide*, *Parade*, *Reader's Digest*, *Family Weekly*, *National Geographic*, *Family Circle*, *Women's Day*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *McCalls*, and *Ladies Home Journal* (Belk *et al.*, 1985). To maintain the consistency in the current study, the sample of advertisements was collected from the highest

circulating magazines in the United States during a five-year range from 2003 to 2007. According to the MPA (2012), the ten largest circulating magazines during the 2000's were *AARP Bulletin*, *Reader's Digest*, *TV Guide*, *National Geographic*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Family Circle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Women's Day*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Time*. The advertisements were sorted and selected for the final sample with the same process established by Belk *et al.* (1985).

Similar to the American sample, the sample of Japanese advertisements for the original study was selected from the three highest circulating magazines in Japan during this time period. These magazines were *Bungei Shunju*, *Chuo Koron*, and *Shukan Asahi*. The researchers selected all the advertisements that portrayed the interior or exterior of a house in every issue appearing every fifth year between 1953 and 1983. This selection in the original study resulted in 332 advertisements that were divided into the following years:

1953-40 advertisements
1958-29 advertisements
1963-40 advertisements
1968-55 advertisements
1973-45 advertisements
1978-75 advertisements
1983-48 advertisements

For the current study, the Japanese advertisements were selected from magazines that had the highest circulation in 2003 and 2008. These magazines were *Bungei Shunju*, *Chou Koron*, and *Shukan Asahi* (JMPA, 2012).

Coding

The advertisements were coded for value-related themes for the entire advertisement: the illustrations, the headings, the text, and the interaction between these elements. The dominant themes were the key elements that were the first impression of the advertising

content and were usually manifested in the illustrations, headings, and major captions (Pollay, 1983). Subsidiary themes were the additional themes that were found in the illustrations and the fine print in the body of the advertisement. The value-related themes developed by Belk *et al.* (1985) were:

Luxury/ Pleasure- Explicitly mentions luxury (or related terms such as leisure, pleasure, regal, or pampered) or else depicts such pleasures visually.

Practical/Functional- Shows or discusses pragmatic product or service benefits such as practicality, efficiency, cleanliness, or hygiene.

Status/Prestige- Shows or discusses prestige or social standing relative to others or uses high prestige source or association.

Having- Either a person is displaying or referring to owned object(s) or a room of a house is shown from eye level into which the viewer seems to be invited.

Being- Shows or discusses what the reader can become or how people will treat the reader with the help of this product or service.

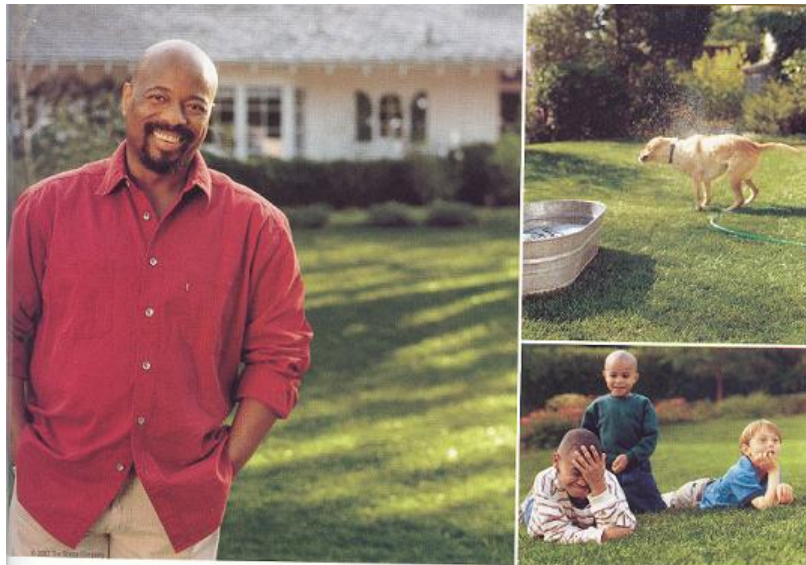
Doing- Shows or discusses a reader activity that is aided or provided by the product or service.

After a training period about the themes and a sample set of advertisements, the three graduate students coded the advertisements indicating a “yes” or “no” answer for the thematic categories (Belk *et al.*, 1985).

For the current study, the same coding methods and instructions were used on a recent sample of magazine print advertisements. The advertisements were coded by three students from their respective countries to insure proper understanding of the content and values portrayed. The coders received extensive training on the operational definitions of thematic categories and the coding methods. The American group coded 10 practice advertisements that were not used in the study to ensure a shared understanding of the themes. Conflicting evaluations of the practice advertisements were discussed among the

group in depth. The same 10 practice advertisements were also coded and discussed by the Japanese group to validate a mutual agreement of thematic categories between the American and Japanese coders. The following advertisements in Figures 1-3 were used as training modules to provide examples of the value-related themes.

Figure 3. Scotts Turf Builder advertisement in *National Geographic* (2003).




Green is part of the dream.
Bordered by a hedge, a white fence,
Or reaching uninterrupted to our neighbor's house.
We can see green, bright in the hot sun.
We can hear green,
chattering with crickets at night.
We can smell green, wet from the sprinkler.
Sweet, fresh, rich with all the possibilities of life.

For 75 years, Scotts® Turf Builder® has helped make American dreams greener. Helped lawns do the amazing things they do: generate oxygen, cool the air and reduce noise levels. All the while, providing a pretty nice carpet for bare feet.

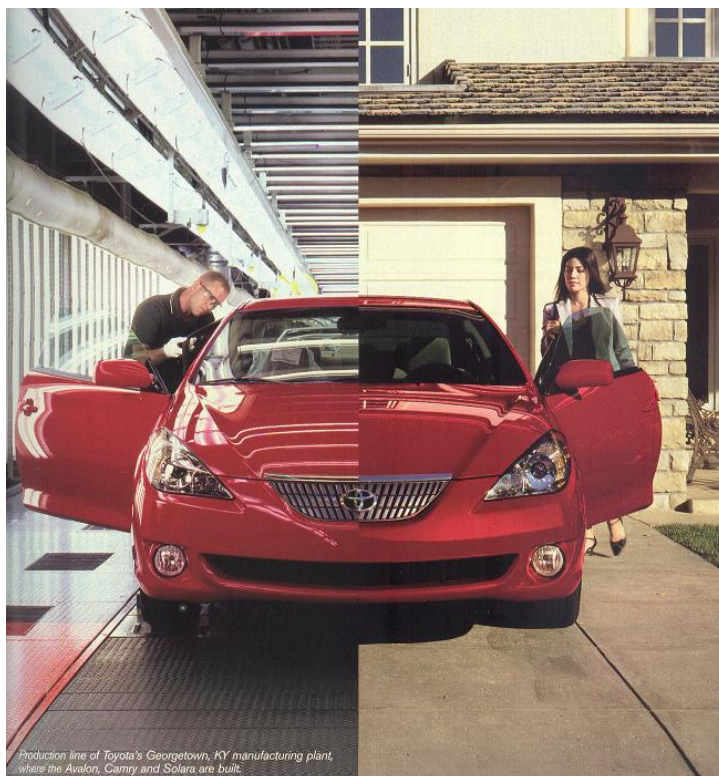
For help building your dream go to scotts.com

Green is part of the dream.™



In Figure 4, the dominant theme portrayed is the value-related theme of “doing”. The message portrayed is the desire to achieve the American dream; with the help of the product, the dream will be attainable and even more superior. In the fine print, there is also the subsidiary theme of “practicality” found in the listing of functions of a lawn that support our environment and lifestyle. After the coders evaluated the advertisement for each of the different themes, the coders selected the categories of “doing” and “practical”.

Figure 4. Toyota advertisement in *National Geographic* (2005).



Production line of Toyota's Georgetown, KY manufacturing plant, where the Avalon, Camry and Solara are built.

Our vehicles don't just take people to work, they put people to work. For many Americans, Toyota is more than just a source of transport, it's a source of income. With our eight manufacturing plants, sales and marketing operations, research and design facilities, and through our dealers and suppliers, Toyota's U.S. operations are responsible for more than 190,000 jobs. Last year, Toyota team members built more than one million vehicles in the U.S.* And with two new manufacturing plants on the way, we're working to create even more jobs and opportunities in the communities where we do business.

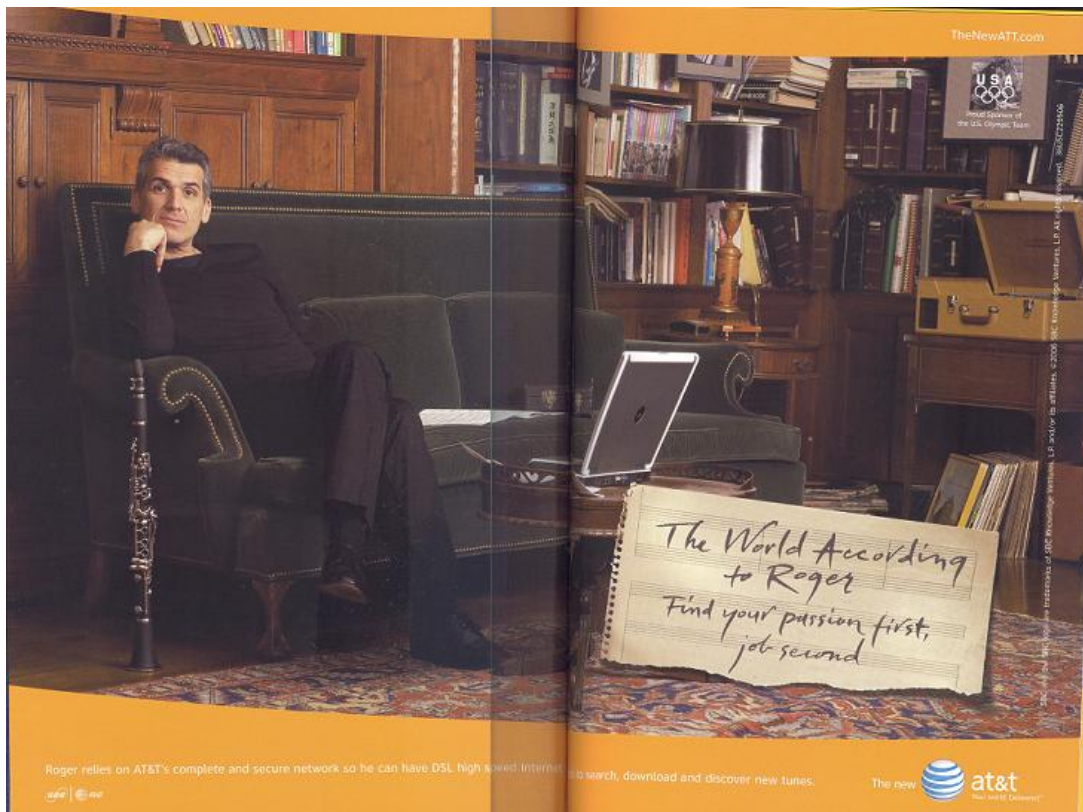
*Toyota components and vehicles are made using many U.S. sourced parts. ©2004

toyota.com/usa

TOYOTA

The heading “Our vehicles don’t just take people to work, they put people to work,” in Figure 4, demonstrates a strong sense of practicality of the advertised product, the vehicle, and the Toyota company. The heading clearly discusses the usefulness of the advertised product by highlighting the primary purpose of the vehicle, which is to transport people from one location to another, and the added benefit of stimulating the economy by creating more jobs. The illustration strengthens the practical theme by displaying necessary functions in everyday life: a man working in the factory and a woman getting into her car to go to work. The body of the advertisement further supports the theme by going into detail about their operation. An additional value-related theme, “having”, is found very subtly in the illustration. It is apparent that the woman owns the car that she is getting into. In this instance, the coders chose the themes of “practical” and “having” for this advertisement.

Figure 5. AT&T advertisement in *National Geographic* (2006).



For the advertisement in Figure 5, the theme “luxury” is portrayed by the lavish setting of the illustration. The idea of a luxurious life with ease and freedom is implied with in the heading “The World According to Roger. Find your passion first, job second.” Similar to the previous advertisement, the indirect theme of “having” is also portrayed in the advertisement as the reader seems to be invited into the man’s library. After carefully analyzing the advertisements, the coders selected the categories of “luxury” and “having”.

Figure 6. Canon advertisement in *Chuo Koron* (2012).

世界は、
もっと、
美しくなる。

感じるままに、こだわりの高画質を。
キヤノン独自の3つのテクノロジー

① F2.0の明るい「新開発レンズ」
② 1210万画素の高感度「CMOSセンサー」
③ 映像エンジン「DIGIC 5」が、
明るくても暗くても、自然な色あいとノイズの少ない美しさを実現。
あなたの感じるままに、こだわりの高画質で写しとります。

PowerShot S100
F2.0 キヤノンレンズ 高感度CMOSセンサー 映像エンジン「DIGIC 5」
PowerShot S100

Canon
make it possible with canon

キヤノン株式会社 〒146-8501 東京都大田区下丸子3-30-2 canon.jp

Figure 6 was discussed among the Japanese group for training purposes. According to the coders, the translation of the headline is “The World Will Be More Beautiful” and the following line states” As you feel, we provide the highest resolution with Canon’s exclusive 3 technology.” The following print lists the features and types of cameras available. The

group of coders chose the “doing” theme for the ability to view a prettier world through the camera lens and the practical appeal since the functional reasons are listed.

For this quantitative study, the coders determined the frequencies of different themes found in the entire sample of advertisements from their respective countries. The results from the analysis determined the extent to which Japanese and American print advertisements today reflected the same cultural values found in the 1970s, answering research questions #1 and #2. Research question #3 was answered by comparing the extent that the advertisements reflected the same cultural values between the two countries.

Results

After compiling the magazines, the sample of advertisements consisted of 31 advertisements from American magazines from 2003-2007 and 35 advertisements from Japanese magazines in 2003 and 2008. The coders were asked to independently code the entire advertisement sample from their respective country. The final coding results were determined by the majority of theme(s) chosen by the group of coders. If at least two of the three coders chose the theme(s) for an advertisement, the theme was retained for analysis. However, the inconsistent themes chosen by only one coder was removed from the results.

The agreement level among the coders for the American advertisement sample was at .81 and the Japanese at .79. The practical appeal had the highest agreement level with both Japanese (.93) and American (.92) groups, with status appeal following at .83 for Japanese sample and .78 from the American sample. Both of these thematical categories are easily identifiable as the functional reasons were usually written in the text of the advertisement and the status appeals were frequently portrayed with high- status individuals in the illustration. The theme of “having” (.75 for both American and Japanese samples), “being” (.78 among American group and .73 among Japanese), and the luxury appeal (.80 for the American and .72 for the Japanese) were slightly lower since these categories were more likely to be portrayed subtly in the illustration. The theme of “doing” had the lowest agreement levels of .69 for the American sample and .67 for the Japanese samples, which could be attributed to lack of advertisements containing this theme and the difficulty the coders experienced in recognizing this theme in the advertisements. In the original study, the agreement levels for both the American and Japanese group of coders were over .85, and the Japanese group

achieved an agreement level of .84 with the American coders on a sample set of 10 American advertisements (Belk *et al.*, 1985).

After a satisfactory agreement level was obtained for the results, the researcher compiled the final responses and utilized the Chi Square statistical analysis to determine the significance of the frequencies of themes found in 1970s and 2000s advertisement samples. The results are displayed in *Tables 2 - 8* and are discussed within the research questions.

RQ #1:

To what extent do Japanese print advertisements today reflect the same cultural values found in the 1970s?

The researcher performed the Chi Square analysis to the results from the original study. The Japanese sample of advertisements from the 1970s consisted of 120 advertisements, with a total of 204 appeals portrayed in this sample. As shown in *Table 2*, the analysis compared the number of appeals per theme that were portrayed in the advertisement sample to the expected number of appeals if the sample had an uniform distribution. The Chi Square analysis determined the results were statistically significant ($X^2 = 39.059, df = 5, p < 0.0001$).

Table 2 <i>Chi Square Analysis of Japanese Ads Using Various Themes in the 1970s</i> (Belk <i>et al.</i> , 1985).		
Category	Observed	Expected #
Luxury	57	34
Practical	31	34
Status	46	34
Having	37	34
Being	20	34
Doing	13	34

The Chi Square analysis was also administered on the results from the current study. The Japanese's advertisement sample from the 2000s consisted of 35 advertisements with a total of 65 appeals. *Table 3* demonstrates the observed and expected values of the different themes and the Chi Square analysis indicated the results were statistically significant between the thematic categories ($X^2 = 11.540, df = 5, p < 0.05$).

Category	Observed	Expected #
Luxury	15	10.83
Practical	10	10.83
Status	18	10.83
Having	8	10.83
Being	10	10.84
Doing	4	10.84

The researcher combined the percentages of the themes portrayed in the advertisements from the 1970s and the 2000s to determine whether the percentage cultural values portrayed in Japanese' advertisements from the 2000 decade reflect similar values to those that were found in the 1970s. According to the Chi Square test of independence, there has not been a significant difference of the frequencies between 1970 and 2000 ($X^2 = 5.98, df = 5, p = 0.308$).

YEAR*	<u>Luxury</u>	<u>Practical</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Having</u>	<u>Being</u>	<u>Doing</u>
1973-1978	47.1%	25.5%	38.0%	30.5%	16.9%	11.2%
2003-2008	42.9	28.6	51.4	22.8	28.6	11.4

*Percentage is the average of both years in the decade for Japanese Advertising

As illustrated in *Table 4*, the materialistic themes of luxury and “having” have slightly decreased while non-materialistic themes have increased. The most noticeable change is the increase in the non-materialistic theme of “being” which increased 11.7 percent. During the analysis, the researcher found that the appeal of practicality was combined with the theme of “being” 60 percent of the time. The status appeal remains as a dominant appeal in Japanese advertising. The appeal of both luxury and status were apparent in 67 percent of the Japanese advertisements.

RQ #2:

To what extent do American print advertisements today reflect the same cultural values found in the 1970s?

The American sample of advertisements from the 1970s consisted of 29 advertisements, with a total of 70 appeals portrayed in this sample. As shown in *Table 5*, the Chi Square analysis determined the results were statistically significant ($X^2 = 18.109$, $df = 5$, $p < 0.003$).

Table 5 <i>Chi Square Analysis of American Ads Using Various Themes in the 1970s</i> (Belk et al., 1985).		
Category	Observed	Expected #
Luxury	14	11.66
Practical	9	11.66
Status	2	11.67
Having	15	11.67
Being	9	11.67
Doing	21	11.67

The Chi Square analysis was also administered on the results from the current study. The American advertisement sample from the 2000s consisted of 31 advertisements with a

total of 59 appeals. *Table 6* demonstrates the observed and expected values of the different themes and the Chi Square analysis indicated the results were statistically significant between the thematic categories ($X^2 = 27.773, df = 5, p < 0.0001$).

Category	Observed	Expected #
Luxury	15	10.83
Practical	10	10.83
Status	18	10.83
Having	8	10.83
Being	10	10.84
Doing	4	10.84

The Chi Square test of independence found that there was a significant difference between the frequencies of values in American advertising between 1970s and 2000s ($X^2 = 22.4, df = 5, p < 0.0001$). The percentages of cultural values in American advertising show some considerable changes with materialistic themes as shown in *Table 7*. The practical appeal replaced the luxury appeal as a dominant theme; however, the materialistic theme of “having” remained consistent between the two decades. The luxury appeal and the practical appeal appeared in the same advertisement 40 percent of the time. The non-materialistic theme “being” and the instrumental materialism theme “doing” drastically decreased.

YEAR	<u>Luxury</u>	<u>Practical</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Having</u>	<u>Being</u>	<u>Doing</u>
1973-1977	48.3%	31.0%	4.8%	51.7%	31.0%	72.4%
2003-2007	16.1	67.7	9.7	48.3	9.7	38.7

RQ #3:

What is the degree of change between the American and Japanese advertising portrayal of cultural values?

Table 8 shows the percentages of cultural values portrayed between the two countries between the 1970s and the 2000s. The Chi Square test of independence was applied to the frequencies of the advertising samples for two countries in the 1970s and again in the 2000s. The Chi Square analysis indicated a significant statistical difference in the frequencies of themes in the 1970 advertisement sample between the American and Japanese advertising ($X^2 = 37.2, df = 5, p < 0.0001$).

YEAR*	Luxury		Practical		Status		Having		Being		Doing	
	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN	U. S.	JPAN
1973-1978	48.3	47.1	31	25.5	4.8	38	51.7	30.5	31	16.9	72.4	11.2
2003-2008	16.1	40	67.7	33.3	9.7	40	48.3	26.7	9.7	33.3	38.7	13.3

*Percentage is the average of both years in the decade for Japanese advertising

During this time period, the greater use of status appeals was evident in Japanese advertising showing it to be 33.2 percent higher than the American sample. According to Belk *et al.* (1985), the Japanese would occasionally use a person who was a descendent of the emperor, but more commonly would use a person prominent in education, show business, arts, business, or sports as the high-status spokesperson for the product. The other visible difference was the “doing” theme which was apparent in American advertising by 61.2 percent more than in the Japanese advertisements. The frequencies of themes in the advertising sample between the two countries was also statistically significant in the 2000s ($X^2 = 21.8, df = 5, p < 0.0001$). The status appeal remained a dominant theme in Japanese

advertising with a 30.3 percent difference compared to the American advertising. The non-materialistic appeals have surpassed the materialistic appeals in American advertising, resulting in evident differences in the Japanese and American advertising for luxury and practical appeals, with an approximately 30 percentage variation. The decrease of the “doing” theme in American advertising has created a less evident difference between the two countries. Throughout the decades, the terminal materialistic theme of “having” has remained constant within both cultures. Overall, the Japanese advertising remained consistent with the frequencies of appeals used, whereas there has been evident changes in American advertising.

Discussion

By comparing the percentages from Belk *et al.*'s original study in the 1970s and the current study of advertisements from the 2000s, the results suggest that the trends in Japanese advertising are similar to the 1970s, whereas the appeals in American advertising have shifted.

The current results from the materialism themes, luxury and "having," have slightly decreased while the non-materialistic theme of "being" almost double in the Japanese advertising since the 1970s. These results suggest a possible lower level of materialism within the Japanese society as the themes of being a better person are rising while the desire to accumulate products have declined. The materialistic themes in Japan were constantly increasing over the decades following WWII, which corresponded with the explosive economic growth during these decades (Belk & Bryce, 1986). Since the 1970s, the economy in Japan has suffered major recessions and was making a slow recovery through the 2000s. The lower level of materialism found in the nation's advertising could be associated with the unfavorable economic conditions of the previous decade and the slow recovery.

In the American advertising, the terminal materialistic theme of "having" remained the dominant theme as the themes "being" and "doing" drastically declined over the last 30 years. Although the terminal materialism did not increase, the decline of the non-materialistic themes and instrumental themes could signify an increase in the American level of materialism. However, the advertising appeal for materialism has noticeably changed between the two decades. The usage of practical appeals in American advertising has overtaken the previously dominant appeal of luxury. This surprising shift in appeals could possibly suggest that Americans want to know the practical reasons for why they need to

have that particular product. This shift could be the result of the economy crisis during the 2000s as the gas prices and cost of homes threatened inflation and the economy dipped into a recession, which could cause people to be more conscious about how they spend their money (World Factbook, 2011).

The frequency of status appeals remained consistent over the years for both countries. Japan continues to have a higher power distance index rating than the United States. According to Hofstede (2012), Japan has a mildly hierarchial society and the Japanese people are aware of their social status and act accordingly, while the American people focus on equality. The frequency of the status appeals in both countries corresponded with the power distance index from both countries and could imply that the Japanese culture continues to value and respond to social status.

The overall results for the Japanese advertising sample did not have a substantial percentage change and the lack of statistical significance between the Japanese advertising results from the 1970s to the 2000s could imply that similar cultural values are reflected between the decades. On the contrary, there was a significant difference in the American advertising over the years. Although the “having” theme was consistent, the current results found that different appeals are used to promote products than in the 1970s.

The results showed that current advertising in the United States is more likely to portray the need to have a product because of practical or functional reasons. However, in Japan, it is more common to use the luxury appeal and a person of high social status to sell a product. These results do not support the global consumer culture theory as the differences in the percentages of values portrayed in advertising seem to be more noticeable than in the 1970s. One might expect that the advertising themes in a global consumer culture would be

similar across cultural borders as the consumers would share a set of meanings for brands and products (Alden *et al.*, 1999). It would be anticipated that products within the same category would portray common themes to promote the product. However, when comparing advertisements with similar products from both American and Japanese magazines, the researcher found very different themes were portrayed. Advertisements for global brands of home theater systems were present in both advertising samples. The Japanese advertisement had an illustration of a woman of high social status with the appeal of beauty and luxury with a minimal amount of text and a small image of the product at the bottom of the page, whereas the American advertisement of a similar product featured a simple illustration of the product and utilized half the page to list the practical reasons to purchase it.

Researchers have stated that globalization and the emergence of a global consumer culture could possibly overshadow and weaken the consumers' social and cultural differences (Keillor *et al.*, 2001; Featherstone, 1990). However, the results of the Japanese advertising sample do not show effects of globalization as the current results reflect the same cultural values as the 1970s. The traditional cultural value of status remains a dominant cultural value portrayed in the Japan advertising. The appeals in American advertising have shifted since the 1970s but the materialistic themes continue to dominate American advertising. Furthermore, the significant difference between the two countries has increased between the results from the 1970s to the 2000s. This difference indicates that the culture values are not merging between the two countries, rather the percentages of the values from the countries are more pronounced. With the results of this study, one could argue that the global consumer culture is not affecting the core cultural values on either society and the lack

of change has produced, with some exceptions, largely consistent cultural values in advertising.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There were numerous limitations recognized when interpreting the results from this study. The conditions of the sampling procedure from the 1970s limited the amount of data acquired and the sample of advertisements may not adequately reflect the entire population within the country. The sample was limited to advertisements from the top circulating magazines in each country, which excludes a variety of advertisements from special-interest magazines, etc. In addition, this study only sampled advertisements from the print media which leaves out all other methods of advertising, such as television, internet, and radio. As one of the newest technological advancements, the internet would likely be an important medium for advertising to the global consumer culture as it reaches people all over the globe. Future research could extend this research by examining additional media vehicles that differ in editorial content and target audiences to deepen our understanding of the cultural values portrayed by advertising.

The original coding procedure from the 1970s of selecting advertisements that featured the setting of a house in the illustration further limited the results. Many advertisements were disqualified from the study which reduced the size of the sample. The researchers from the 1970s selected this setting to sample advertisements that featured similar products. It is possible that advertisers would use similar values to sell household products which could influence the nature of the findings. Furthermore, in the current study, the advertisements were promoting a variety of products and were not necessarily selling the same products as the 1970s. The difference of products featured in the samples between the two decades could affect the values portrayed. Further studies could expand on this research in different directions to clarify the possible changes in cultural values. Research could

examine advertising for a particular brand or product from the 1970s to the current advertising to examine the values portrayed to sell the same product over the years. One could also research random advertisements that presented a variety of products within these time periods to understand if the content of the advertisements impacted the results.

Another limiting factor is the coders from the current study were different from the original study in the 1980s. Each coder would have their own individual way of thinking based on current trends and lifestyles that could potentially impact the coding of cultural values in the study. It would be beneficial to have the same group of people code the advertisements from the 1970s and the 2000s to reduce the amount of error in interpretation of the thematic categories.

In addition, the materialistic coding schemes may only reflect a small part of a culture within a country. Future research could use different cultural dimensions, such as long term orientation, individualism, Confucian work dynamism, etc. which may provide a better reflection of the culture and changes in the culture.

Finally, the researcher only used a quantitative method to determine the cultural values within a society. A multi-method approach with other data collection methods such as interviews, surveys, and additional experiments would validate the results of this study and further explain the reflection of cultural values in advertisements. Future research should expand on this study and account for these limitations to increase our knowledge on the cultural values portrayed in advertisements.

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