SEEING THE SMALL PICTURE: AD-SELF VERSUS AD-CULTURE CONGRUENCY IN INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING

Chingching Chang

National Chengchi University

ABSTRACT: Participants in a cross-cultural study in the United States and Taiwan indicated no preference for ads depicting values (individualist or collectivist) consistent with those of their culture. Congruency between personal and ad-portrayed values, however, significantly affected responses. The higher the congruency between ad and self, the more participants related personally to the ad. In addition, affective response, ad liking, perceived ad believability, and brand attitudes were all positively associated with ad-self congruency, but not with ad-culture congruency. Implications for international advertising and cross-cultural research are discussed.

Segmentation of a mass market is believed to be an effective marketing communication strategy (Weinstein, 1987)—the assumption being that, within the same culture or market, consumers vary in values and traits and therefore respond to the same advertising appeals or marketing communication tactics in divergent ways. Personality differences, for example, have been found to influence which type of ad appeal is favored (e.g., Snyder & DeBono, 1985). Similarly, consumers have been found to favor ad messages that portray values congruent with their own (e.g., Wang & Mowen, 1997). Thus, there appears to be sufficient variation among consumers within the same culture to justify the use of segmentation strategies.

Despite evidence that individual differences influence ad effectiveness, cross-culture advertising research has traditionally examined only the overall impact of cultural value orientation without taking individual differences into account (e.g., Zhang & Neelankavil, 1997). For example, the findings of studies in this tradition suggest that when marketing

Address correspondence to Chingching Chang, Department of advertising, National Chengchi University, 64, Sect., 2, Chi-nan Rd., 116, Wenshan, Taipei, Taiwan. E-mail: shenc@nccu.edu.tw

products in an individualist culture, it is better to adopt individualist ad appeals, while marketing products in a collectivist culture necessitates employing collectivist ad appeals. However, these conclusions may be too broadly drawn to benefit many international advertising campaigns.

For instance, when marketing a designer outfit in a collectivist culture, ad strategies that stress how others will relate to the potential purchaser when he or she wears the outfit may not work as effectively as those emphasizing how outstanding the he or she will appear in it. Those receptive to wearing designer outfits likely have certain psychographic profiles (personality traits, values, and lifestyles) that differentiate them from other consumers within the same culture. Consumers of designer outfits in collectivist cultures may hold values closer to those of designer outfit consumers in individualist cultures than to those of consumers in general in their own culture. Disentangling the influences of cultural values and individual values is a theme that thus deserves more research attention, especially in an age when national boundaries are blurring. Therefore, one aim of this study is to understand the influence of individual differences when cultural values are accounted for, in the hope of painting a more accurate picture of how ad perceivers across cultures respond to advertising appeals and thus providing advertisers with a more solid foundation for strategy development.

Individualism/collectivism is the most widely discussed dimension of culture in the social sciences. It has been invoked to help understand cross-culture differences in such areas as work-related values (Hofstede, 1980), product evaluation strategies (e.g., Aaker & Sengupta, 2000), and effectiveness of ad appeals (e.g., Zhang & Gelb, 1996). In advertising research, advertising messages depicting values consistent with cultural individualism/collectivism have been found to be more persuasive than those featuring inconsistent values (e.g., Han & Shavitt, 1994).

In contrast, other research suggests that, within the same culture, advertising messages portraying self-congruent values with regard to individualism/collectivism are more effective than those portraying self-incongruent values (e.g., Chang, 2002). The terms idiocentric and the allocentric are used to describe individualism/collectivism at the individual level. People who display individualistic tendencies are said to be idiocentric, while those displaying collectivistic tendencies are referred to as allocentric (Bontempo, Lobel, & Triandis, 1990; Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985). If it is naïve to assume that individuals within the same culture are homogeneous in their idiocentricity/allocentricity, then it is worth asking what determines the effectiveness of ads when individual and cultural values do not completely converge.

In this study, the position is taken that cultures differ from each other mainly in the distribution of idiocentric and allocentric people, not in the blanket categorization of all people within them as either idiocentric or

allocentric. Therefore, when exploring the effectiveness of advertising appeals in different cultures, treating the people in each culture as if they were homogeneous seems to overlook the diversity of that population. Gudykunst et al. (1996), for instance, found that cultural individualism/ collectivism did not systematically predict individual behavior. Although culture does strongly impact the formation of self-concepts (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991), it is not necessarily true that all individuals are equally subject to cultural influences (Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994). Because some are less likely than others to accept the predominant values of their culture, individual differences can sometimes lead to a circumvention of cultural influence. Therefore, congruency with the individualism/collectivism of a particular culture may be too general a criterion to rely on in creating effective ad appeals.

It is surely important that idiocentricity/allocentricity be taken into account when examining the effectiveness of ads portraying individualist and collectivist values. Specifically, it is proposed that ad liking and believability, as well as brand attitudes, will vary as a function of ad-self congruency even when the influence of ad-culture congruency is accounted for. Other important ad responses will also be examined, including cognition-related responses and emotional responses.

INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING

The effectiveness of advertising appeals or strategies may vary as a function of product, individual, and situation (e.g., Muehling & McCann, 1993), as well as across cultural contexts (e.g. Han & Shavitt, 1994), which has intensified the debate regarding the use of standardized versus localized advertising strategies among those concerned with international advertising (de Mooij, 1994). While standardized strategies are cost efficient and can develop a uniform brand image, localized strategies take into account the heterogeneity of different cultures and may lead to more effective communication with consumers.

Of the two paradigms used for research on international advertising, one focuses on content analysis of messages to understand the values depicted or the prevalence of different appeals and tactics across different cultures (e.g., Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, & Kropp, 1999; Zandpour et al., 1994; Zandpour & Harich, 1996). The second and more recently developed paradigm holds that cultural factors influence individual self-construals, resulting in processing differences (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). One salient research topic within this paradigm is how self-construals influence the effects of culture-congruent appeals (e.g., Han & Shavitt, 1994). The approach of this study falls within the purview of the second paradigm, examining ad-culture and self-culture congruency effects in two cultures.

Most studies following these two paradigms are set within the theoretical framework of individualism/collectivism. In order to relate any findings to this prior research, the same approach is used in the present study. Specifically, responses of those from an individualist culture, the United States, will be compared with those from a collectivist culture, Taiwan.

INDIVIDUALISM/COLLECTIVISM

General Tenets

There are important differences between individualist and collectivist cultures (Triandis, 1995). In individualist cultures, people cherish autonomy, freedom, and intrinsic values (Triandis, 1995), while also holding an independent view of the self as it relates to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and giving priority to personal achievements over group goals (Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). Behavior is regulated by personal preferences or interests, rather than group norms. Self-reliance and independence are regarded highly and expressing oneself and realizing internal attributes are encouraged. Individualist cultures can be found in most northern and western regions of Europe and in North America (Hofstede, 1991), one example of which is the United States.

The behaviors and emotions of members of a collectivist culture, on the other hand, are governed by group concerns (Triandis, 1995). People usually hold an interdependent view of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and tend to subordinate personal goals to the goals of the group to which they belong (Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1995; Triandis et al., 1990). Feeling emotionally attached to or integrated into a group is important (Hofstede, 1991) and in-group harmony is highly expected in collectivist cultures, while confrontation is likely to be avoided. Taiwan, China, Japan, and Korea fall into this category (Hofstede, 1980, 1991).

Individual Differences within Individualist/Collectivist Cultures

Individualism/collectivism is also relevant at the individual level (Kagitcibasi, 1994), and some researchers explore its effects at both the cultural and individual level (Gudykunst et al., 1996). Kim and colleagues (1994) have argued that cultures model values and emotions for people but do not absolutely determine them; people may accept or reject cultural influence based on their own personal characteristics. The relationship between cultural norms and individual compliance may well be modified by individual differences, such as those between idiocentrics (concerned with personal achievement) and allocentrics (concerned with

receiving social support) within an individualist culture such as the U.S. (Triandis et al., 1985).

Therefore, to generate effective international advertising materials, it is important to take both cultural and individual factors into account. Common gauges of the future effectiveness of an advertisement are congruency between the values portrayed in the advertising materials and those of the culture and congruency between the ad values and the values of the ad viewer. The efficacy of congruency on both fronts has been well documented and will be reviewed in the following sections.

AD-CULTURE CONGRUENCY EFFECTS ON AD EFFECTIVENESS

Traditionally, research on cross-culture differences in advertising has used content analyses of ad messages to explore how advertising in different countries mirrors cultural differences. Some findings suggest that advertising in individualist and collectivist cultures portrays culturally congruent values. For example, Han and Shavitt (1994) found that advertising in the U.S. usually addresses the individual benefits of a product, whereas advertising in Korea is more likely to emphasize in-group harmony. In addition, Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) found that television commercials in China emphasize the importance of tradition and patriotism, while those in the United States tend to focus on competitiveness and enjoyment.

Other studies, however, suggest that cultural individualism/collectivism does not predict ad content across cultures with absolute certainty. For example, an examination of 11 countries revealed no significant correlation between cultural individualism and the use of appeals to independence, distinctiveness, or other values thought to be strongly associated with individualist cultures (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996). Cutler, Erdem, and Javalgi (1997) also found no relationship between cultural individualism and the use of culture-congruent ad appeals. It appears that cultural differences are far more complex than a simple dichotomized category can describe.

Advertising promoting culturally congruent values has been found more effective than advertising depicting culturally incongruent values. For instance, in South Korea messages reflecting in-group concerns generated more favorable attitudes toward ads and advertised products than messages emphasizing individual differences, while the opposite was true in the US (Han & Shavitt, 1994). Zhang and Neelankavil (1997) found advertising emphasizing collectivistic benefits to be more persuasive in China and advertising featuring individualistic benefits to be more persuasive in the US.

In contrast, however, Zhang and Gelb (1996) found advertising appeals incongruent with prevailing cultural values to be more persuasive than congruent appeals in certain situations. For instance, individualist appeals worked better for Chinese participants than collectivist appeals when the featured product was used in private, while collectivist appeals were more effective when the featured product was socially visible. Furthermore, Gregory and Munch (1997) found norm congruent information to be effective only for low decision risk products and role congruent information effective only for high decision risk products.

The inconsistent findings suggest that ad-culture congruency cannot predict ad effectiveness in all contexts. Here, it is argued that some of the inconsistency may be explained by individual variation. Therefore, it is important to understand how ad-culture congruency influences ad effectiveness when consumer values are not congruent with cultural values, since prior research has consistently shown that the congruency between ad values and personal values can enhance ad effectiveness.

AD-SELF CONGRUENCY EFFECTS ON AD EFFECTIVENESS

Advertising messages congruent with consumer self-concepts have been found more effective than incongruent messages. For example, Brock, Brannon, and Bridgwater (1990) found that ad-self congruency effects increased agreement with advertising messages. Moreover, Hong and Zinkhan (1995) found that self-congruent ad messages generated better ad attitudes and brand evaluations, as well as greater purchase intentions. In another study, the greater the convergence of self-concept and brand image delineated in ads, the stronger the purchase intentions (Mehta, 1999).

Self-concept includes multiple dimensions (e.g., Markus & Wurf, 1987), several of which have been examined in relation to advertising. These include extroversion/introversion (e.g., Chang, 2000; Hong & Zinkhan, 1995) and femininity/masculinity (e.g., Chang, 2005), as well as idiocentricity/allocentricity (Chang, 2002; Wang & Mowen, 1997). In these studies, participants consistently preferred ads employing appeals congruent with their self-concepts, supporting the idea that idiocentricity/allocentricity may indeed explain responses to ads portraying values of individualism or collectivism.

CULTURAL VERSUS INDIVIDUAL VALUES

Increasing cultural complexity argues for greater consideration of individual differences. In Taiwan, Western television shows and films

are readily available, and increase the influence individualism has on the values and behavior of Taiwanese people. As a result of this and other influences, the self-concepts of individuals in Taiwan may eventually approach those of individuals in the United States. Accordingly, although cultural values may still serve as powerful parameters for guiding behavior, personal values may now be just as important in cultures highly integrated into the international community.

Effects on Cognition

According to Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984), the more complex a given aspect of the self is, the more likely it is to be activated. Culture helps determine the complexity and accessibility of different aspects of the self, influencing the likelihood of their activation (Triandis, 1989). Building on these theories, Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto (1991) found that those holding independent views of themselves accessed more self-related cognitions, while those with interdependent self-concepts activated more other-related cognitions.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that the accessibility of different self-construals influences what information people attend to and how it is processed. Their work and that of others suggests that people are more attentive to and are able to recall more self-congruent information than self-incongruent information and that self-congruent information is processed more efficiently than self-incongruent information (e.g., Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Based on these two lines of research, it is predicted that, even after cultural factors are taken into consideration, the idiocentricity/allocentricity of the individual will influence the amount of knowledge stored regarding congruent and incongruent aspects of the self, as well as the accessibility of this aspect of the self. The complexity and the accessibility of a well-developed self-defining structure such as idiocentricity/allocentricity increases the degree to which individuals relate to ad messages when the ads portray similar self-concepts, thus resulting in higher levels of self-referencing. As Chang's (2005) work suggests, one reason for the effectiveness of self-congruent messages is that people are more likely to relate to ad messages or empathize with ad characters when processing self-congruent messages.

> *Hypothesis 1*: Ad-self congruency (in terms of individualism/collectivism) will significantly influence the amount of self-referencing even when the effects of ad-culture congruency are taken into account.

Effects on Emotion

Self-construals play a crucial role in regulating not only cognition but also emotion (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Attraction to self-congruent ad messages is thought to be due to the desire to regulate affect (Chang, 2005; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Zinkhan & Hong, 1991) and attending to such messages may function as a way to symbolically achieve self-completion and self-consistency (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Moreover, processing messages containing self-congruent information can also lead to positive emotional responses (Chang, 2005). Therefore, the effects of ad-culture congruency and ad-self congruency on emotional response will also be examined in this study.

> *Hypothesis 2*: Ad-self congruency (in terms of individualism/collectivism) will significantly increase positive emotions even after the influence of ad-culture congruency is accounted for.

Effects on Ad and Brand Evaluations

As discussed earlier, there is considerable evidence that ad-self and ad-culture congruency favorably affect ad and brand evaluations. For this reason, both of these outcome variables will be examined in this study. With regard to ad evaluations, as ad liking and perceived ad believability are common ways for consumers to assess ads (Chang, 2003), both will be explored here. In addition, both ad-culture and ad-self congruency have been shown to influence brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Gregory & Munch, 1997; Hong & Zinkhan, 1995).

> *Hypothesis 3–6*: Ad-self congruency (in terms of individualism/collectivism) will significantly influence ad liking (H3), perceived ad believability (H4), brand attitudes (H5), and purchase intentions (H6), even when the effects of ad-culture congruency are taken into account.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The experimental design featured two factors: culture (collectivist versus individualist) and ad user profile (collectivist versus individualist). Since all scales employed in this study were adopted from English publications, the translation and back-translation procedure suggested by Brislin (1987) was used to develop Chinese versions.

Stimulus Ads

Instant coffee was chosen as the stimulus product, because it can be consumed in private or shared with friends. First, bilingual writers and designers at Ogilvy & Mather Ad Agency in Taiwan created the Chinese stimulus ads. Then English versions were developed by an American copywriter at Saatchi & Saatchi in Taiwan. The visuals of the Chinese- and English-language ads were identical. To improve external validity, the ads were inserted between two real filler ads.

Participants

Two hundred and seventy-three participants were recruited for this study, 199 in Taiwan and 74 in the United States. Participants in Taiwan came from the campus of a national university in Taipei and were given small gifts for their participation; 49% were male. One recent survey found that 70% of college students in Taiwan had drunk coffee in the last 3 months (Eastern Integrated Consumer Profile, 2001), suggesting that coffee is popular among this population. Participants in the United States came from the campus of a state university in the Midwest and were given extra credit for their participation; 42% were male. The two samples did not differ on how attentive they were to the ad, $F(1, 272) = .84$, $p = .36$ ($M_{U.S.} = 4.65$, SD = 1.55, $M_{Taiwan} = 4.83$, SD = 1.44), or on the interest they expressed in ground coffee, $F(1, 272) = 1.14$, $p = .29$ ($M_{U.S.} = 3.89$, SD = 1.93, $M_{Taiwan} = 4.16$, SD = 1.85). These results justified the use of coffee as the target product.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two ad user profile conditions. After being seated in a classroom, they were told that the study was designed to examine the effects of visual layout and format on information processing, in order to discourage them from guessing the true purpose and thus skewing results. They were then instructed to read the ads in order without turning back to previously viewed pages. They then read in order a filler ad, a stimulus ad, and another filler ad. After reading each stimulus ad, as a manipulation check, participants rated the product users portrayed in the ad on Yamaguchi's (1994) collectivism scale. After reading all the ads, they reported their ad liking, perceived ad credibility, and attitudes toward the product on other scales.

Participants were next asked to do a favor for a professor in the psychology department, who was said to be interested in exploring personality differences and social values among college students. They were asked to rate themselves on Yamaguchi's (1994) collectivism scale and

filler scales such as Snyder's (1974) self-monitoring scale, Bem's Sex Role inventory (1974), and an introversion/extroversion scale (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985). They were also asked to rate the degree they felt that society as a whole values the items in these scales. All participants complied with these request. The filler scales were introduced to reduce sensitivity to rating product users in the ad, themselves, and society on the collectivism scale. Upon completion of the study, a short debriefing was conducted.

Independent Variables

Ad User Profile: Collectivist Versuss Individualist

Half of the participants were exposed to ads portraying product users with collectivist values, and half to ads portraying those with individualist values. Yamaguchi's (1994) collectivism scale was employed as a manipulation check. The scale contained ten items. Factor analysis with varimax rotation generated two factors with eigenvalues greater than one. The first factor included five items, was labeled "sacrifice for the group," and appeared to capture the more desirable side of collectivism. The second factor consisted of five items, was labeled "blind compliance," and seemed to capture the less desirable side of collectivism. The same scale was employed to measure allocentricity (see below), and in that case it is conceivable that social desirability may have biased self-ratings on the second factor. Therefore, only the first factor was employed for the manipulation check. Cronbach's reliability alpha for this subscale was satisfactory at .81. Users portrayed in the collectivist ad were rated significantly higher in collectivism than those portrayed in the individualist ad, $F(1, 272) = 12.28$, $p < .01$, $M_C = 5.19$, SD = .92, $M_I = 4.78$, SD = 1.03. Therefore, the result of the manipulation check was satisfactory.

Culture: Collectivist Versus Individualist

Taiwan, which is generally believed to be a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1980; 1991), was selected to be compared to the United States, an individualist culture. Of the 39 countries examined by Hofstede (1980), the U.S. ranked first on the country individualism index, while Taiwan was 35th.

Allocentricity

On 7-point Likert scales, participants rated how much they agreed that each of the 10 statements in Yamaguchi's (1994) scale was ideal and important to them. Factor analyses of responses on yielded the same two-factor result as for product user ratings. Once again, only the first factor, "sacrifice for the group," was used; therefore, higher scores indicated

greater allocentricity, or individual-level collectivism. The reliability for this subscale was satisfactory at .72.

Ad-Self Congruency

The Sirgy and Danes (1981) procedure for calculating congruency between self values and ad portrayed values was followed. Ad-self congruency was calculated by subtracting mean ratings of ad-portrayed users on the sacrifice-for-the-group subscale from mean self-ratings on the same subscale. Given that the study was concerned with the degree, and not the direction, of the congruency, the sum was then squared. Therefore, larger numbers indicated lower congruency (greater discrepancy).

Ad-Culture Congruency

In the same way, ad-culture congruency was calculated by subtracting mean ratings of ad-portrayed users on the sacrifice-for-the group subscale from mean ratings of how society as a whole values those items. The sum was squared, with larger numbers indicating lower congruency.

Dependent Measures

Since all the dependent measures were adopted from English-language publications, confirmatory factor analyses for all dependent measures except self-referencing (because there were only two items) were conducted on the data collected in Taiwan. The results were satisfactory, all GFIs > .90, all CFIs > .90.

Self-Referencing

Two items scored on 7-point Likert scales were employed to assess how participants related to the ad. The items, adopted from Debevec and Iyer (1988), were: "When I read the ad, I pictured myself in the setting" and "When I read the ad, I pictured myself in the position of the ad character." The items were significantly correlated, $r = .79$, $p = .01$.

Positive Emotion

On 7-point Likert scales, participants reported the degree to which they felt each of the following seven emotions selected from Edell and Burke (1987): "happy," "joyful," "cheerful," "delighted," "satisfied," "interested," and "care-free." Scores were summed and averaged, and Cronbach's reliability alpha for this scale was satisfactory at .88.

Ad Liking

On 7-point Likert scales, participants indicated the degree to which they agreed that the ads were each of the following: "interesting," "good," "likable," and "pleasant." Scores were summed and averaged, and

Cronbach's alpha for the scale, adopted from Madden, Allen, and Twible (1988), was deemed satisfactory at .81.

Ad Believability

Four items, scored on 7-point scales and adopted from Beltramini's (1982) advertising believability scale, were used to assess ad believability. The items were: "believable," "convincing," "reasonable," and "authentic." Scores were summed and averaged, and the reliability of this scale was deemed satisfactory at .82.

Brand Attitudes

On 7-point Likert scales, participants rated the degree to which they felt the ads were "good," "favorable," "pleasant," "positive," and "high-quality." These items, adopted from Mitchell and Olson (1981) and Holbrook and Batra (1987), had a reliability alpha of .91, which was deemed satisfactory. Scores were summed and averaged.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Bivariate correlations among the dependent variables are reported in Table 1. Multiple regression was used to test all hypotheses. In each case, the dependent variable was regressed on ad user profile, culture, allocentricity, ad-self congruency, and ad-culture congruency. For ad user profile, collectivist was dummy coded as -1 and individualist was dummy coded as 1. For culture, Taiwan was dummy coded as -1 and the U.S. was dummy coded as 1. Since ad-culture congruency may explain the same variance as the interaction between ad user profile and culture, this interaction term was not included in these analyses, the results of which are reported in Table 2. For comparison, in a second set of regression analyses, each dependent measure was regressed only on ad

Table 1
Bivariate Correlations among Dependent Measures

	Self Referencing	Positive Emotions	Ad Liking	Ad Believability	Brand Attitudes	Purchase Intentions
Self Referencing						
Positive Emotions	.48**					
Ad Liking	.52**	.63**				
Ad Believability	.53**	.40**	.67**			
Brand Attitudes	.38**	.45**	.64**	.56**		
Purchase Intentions	.33**	.38**	.45**	.40**	.55**	

$N = 273$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 2
Results of Hierarchical Regression of Each Dependent Measure on all Predictors

	Self-referencing		Positive emotion		Ad liking		Ad Believability		Brand attitudes		Purchase intentions	
	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value
Ad user profile	.13	2.23*	-.12	-2.15*	-.09	-1.56	.09	1.48	-.06	-1.05	-.02	-.43
Culture	-.17	-2.86**	-.36	-6.51**	-.09	-1.63	-.10	-1.64	-.21	-3.61**	-.31	-5.40**
Allocentricity	.22	3.86**	.15	2.65**	.25	4.53**	.29	5.10**	.25	4.42**	.22	3.80**
Ad-self congruency	-.20	-3.08**	-.18	-2.88**	-.34	-5.35**	-.24	-3.75**	-.26	-4.06**	-.15	-2.29*
Ad-culture congruency	-.01	.15	-.02	-.32	.02	.32	.09	1.33	.07	1.09	.04	.65
R^2	.13**		.22**		.19**		.14*		.17**		.16**	

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

user profile, culture, and the interaction between them. These results are reported in Table 3.

For self-referencing, in the first regression equation (see Table 2), R^2 was estimated at .13, $F(5, 267) = 8.18$, $p < .01$. As expected, ad-self congruency was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.20$, $t = -3.08$, $p < .01$, supporting Hypothesis 1. However, ad-culture congruency was not a significant predictor, $\beta = -.01$, $t = -.15$, $p=.88$. In the second regression equation (see Table 3), moreover, the interaction between ad user profile and culture was not significant, $\beta = .01$, $t = .07$, $p = .95$.

For positive emotion, in the first regression analysis, R^2 was estimated at .22, $F(5, 267) = 14.96$, $p < .01$. Consistent with expectations, ad-self congruency was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.18$, $t = -2.88$, $p < .01$, supporting Hypothesis 2. On the other hand, ad-culture congruency was not a significant predictor, $\beta = -.02$, $t = -.32$, $p = .75$, and, in the second regression equation, the interaction between ad user profile and culture was not significant, $\beta = .08$, $t = 1.23$, $p = .22$.

For ad liking, as well, ad-self congruency was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.34$, $t = -5.35$, $p < .01$, supporting Hypothesis 3. Again, however, ad-culture congruency was not significant, $\beta = .02$, $t = .32$, $p = .75$. R^2 for this analysis was estimated at .19, $F(5, 267) = 12.43$, $p < .01$. In the second regression analysis, the interaction between ad user profile and culture was not a significant predictor, $\beta = -.06$, $t = -.84$, $p=.40$.

The same pattern held for the ad believability outcome variable. In the first regression equation, with an estimated R^2 of .14, $F(5, 267) = 8.97$, $p < .01$, ad-self congruency was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.24$, $t = -3.75$, $p < .01$, providing support for Hypothesis 4, but the ad-culture congruency term was not significant, $\beta = .09$, $t = 1.33$, $p = .18$. In the second analysis, the interaction between ad user profile and culture was not significant, $\beta = -.13$, $t = -1.87$, $p = .06$.

For brand attitudes, as well, ad-self congruency was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.26$, $t = -4.06$, $p < .01$, which, as expected, supported Hypothesis 5. The ad-culture congruency term, however, was not significant, $\beta = .07$, $t = 1.90$, $p = .28$. R^2 for this first equation was estimated at .17, $F(5, 267)=10.96$, $p < .01$. In the second regression analysis, the interaction between ad user profile and culture was not significant, $\beta = -.10$, $t = -1.51$, $p = .13$.

For purchase intention, in the first analysis, R^2 was estimated at .16, $F(5, 267) = 10.44$, $p < .01$. As expected, ad-self congruency was a significant predictor, $\beta = -.15$, $t = -2.29$, $p < .01$, supporting Hypothesis 6. Ad-culture congruency, however, was not a significant predictor, $\beta = .04$, $t = .65$, $p = .52$. In the second analysis, the interaction between ad user profile and culture was not significant, $\beta = -.05$, $t = -.79$, $p = .43$.

For each dependent measure, results indicated a pattern in which, as expected, ad-self congruency was a significant predictor, even with

Table 3
Results of Hierarchical Regression of Each Dependent Measure on Ad User Profile and Culture

	Self-referencing		Positive emotion		Ad liking		Ad believability		Brand attitudes		Purchase intentions	
	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value
Ad user profile	.12	1.78	-.10	-1.52	-.14	-2.05*	.01	.15	-.12	-1.88	-.06	-.86
Culture	-.19	-3.22**	-.39	-7.03**	-.13	-2.24*	-.11	-1.74	-.23	-3.81**	-.32	-5.44**
Interaction between ad and culture	.01	.07	.08	1.23	-.06	-.84	-.13	-1.87	-.10	-1.51	-.05	-.79
R^2	.05*		.17**		.03*		.03*		.07**		.10**	

$*p < .05;$ $**p < .01.$

ad-culture congruency in the equation. Although the ad-culture congruency term was significant in none of the analyses, the main effect of culture was significant in most cases (see Table 2). American participants generally scored lower than Taiwanese participants (see Tables 2 and 3). It may well be that individuals in collectivist cultures place more importance on maintaining interpersonal harmony and thus express more favorable responses than those in individualist cultures. Therefore, although cultural values were not associated with better responses to ads depicting congruent values, they did influence responses to the ads in general. On the individual level, as well, allocentricity was associated with more favorable responses across the board (see Table 2).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study strongly support the theory that the degree of congruence between ad-portrayed values and viewer self-concepts can significantly influence cognitive and affective responses to ads and brands. Specifically, self-congruent ad messages were associated with greater self-referencing and more positive emotions in relation to the ads. In addition, higher ad-self congruency was associated with greater ad liking, greater perceived ad believability, and better brand evaluations. Most importantly, purchase intentions were also positively predicted by ad-self congruency.

On the other hand, the influence of ad-culture congruency was not significant for any of the dependent variables. Even when dependent measures were regressed on only ad user profile, culture, and the interaction between them, the effect of the interaction term was insignificant in each case. It appears that Americans do not simply prefer individualist ad appeals to collectivist ad appeals and that Taiwanese do not simply prefer collectivist ad appeals to individualist ad appeals. McCarty (1994) has argued that individual value orientations, regardless of the extent to which they are driven by culture, should be clearly distinguished from culture level value orientations. This may be especially true when consumption experiences or advertising preferences are considered, as these fall heavily under the influence of Western individualist culture.

Triandis (1989, 1994) argued that as a collectivist culture gains affluence and complexity, individualist values may become more important. In Taiwan and other collectivist cultures along the Pacific Rim, economic development may be rendering interdependence less critical to survival, reducing reliance on in-groups. Therefore, the values held by people in these cultures are probably shifting toward individualism. This change may be more apparent with respect to product consumption,

which is a highly personal behavior. Indeed, there are signs that, in terms of consumption, Taiwan is being transformed into an individualist culture. For example, in a content analysis of advertising, Tse, Belk, and Zhou (1989) found that individualist appeals, such as to hedonistic values, were common in Taiwanese advertising. Wang, Jaw, Pinkleton, and Morton (1997) found that more Western appeals than Eastern appeals were employed in Taiwanese magazine ads. Interviews with managing directors of ad agencies in Taiwan suggested that these professionals believe Western values to be more dominant than Eastern values in their country (Shao, Raymond, & Taylor, 1999).

The argument is not that cultural differences do not exist or that they are somehow insignificant predictors of ad effectiveness. Indeed, in this study Taiwanese participants related more to ad messages and had more positive emotional responses to ads than did their American counterparts. They also viewed ads and brands more favorably and expressed stronger purchase intentions than did American participants. As discussed earlier, one plausible explanation for this is that Taiwanese participants may be less likely than American participants to respond negatively, because of a greater effect of social desirability in that culture. Therefore, these findings suggest that culture influences ad processing in a much more complicated way than a simple ad-culture congruency model can explain.

Finally, generalization of the results of this study to other population subgroups besides college students should be undertaken with caution. Students may differ from other groups in their emphasis on the self versus others. For instance, in Japan it appears that older adults see themselves as more similar to the members of their in-groups than do younger adults (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asia, & Lucca, 1988). In addition, university students may be more individualistic than the general public (Triandis et al., 1990). Therefore, replications with participants other than students are necessary before any solid conclusions can be made. Even so, because of the stimulus product used, the findings of this study are likely to have good external validity for a large segment of the present and future coffee-drinking population. Regardless of the study's limitations, however, its findings clearly underscore the dynamic nature of culture and its increasing diffusion across national borders, themes which surely deserve more attention from those interested in international advertising.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVERTISERS

In an age when market segmentation within cultures is emphasized, basing international advertising on dichotomous cultural classifications

(such as individualism/collectivism) may not be a fruitful approach. To maintain a competitive edge in culturally diverse international markets, advertisers should become more aware of the possible influence of individual differences beyond what can be predicted by simplistic cultural classifications. Ad appeals that look promising from the perspective of overall cultural characteristics may not work as expected within specific consumer markets.

A more effective strategy for advertisers may be to keep a general understanding of culture level differences in mind, while at the same time thoroughly examining the values, lifestyles, and personality traits of consumers within each target market. Cultural value orientations may help advertisers determine general principles for advertising strategies, such as not attacking competitors in collectivist cultures. In developing specific message strategies, however, regarding for instance what lifestyles to portray or what user images to depict, advertisers should instead rely on an exhaustive understanding of the unique psychological and demographic characteristics of the target segment. In an age of niche marketing, accomplishing this may be a major factor in determining the success or failure of advertising campaigns.

REFERENCES

Aaker, J. L. & Sengupta, J. (2000). Additivity versus attenuation: The role of culture in the resolution of information incongruity. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *9*, 67–82.

Albers-Miller, N. D. & Gelb, B. D. (1996). Business advertising appeals as a mirror of cultural dimensions: A study of eleven countries. *Journal of Advertising*, *25*(4), 57–70.

Beltramini, R. F. (1982). Advertising perceived believability scale. In D. R. Corrigan, F. B. Kraft & R. H. Ross (Eds.), *Proceedings of the southwestern marketing association* (pp. 1–3). Wichita, KS: Wichita State University.

Bem, S. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *42*, 155–163.

Bontempo, R., Lobel, S., & Triandis, H. (1990). Compliance and value internalization in Brazil and the US: Effects of allocentrism and anonymity. *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology*, *21*, 200–213.

Brislin, R. W. (1987). The wording of translation of research instruments. In W. J. Lonner & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *Field methods in cross-cultural research* (pp. 137–164). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Brock, T. C., Brannon, L. A., & Bridgwater, C. (1990). Message effectiveness can be increased by matching appeals to recipients' self-schemas: Laboratory demonstrations and a national field experiment. In S. J. Agres, J. A. Edell & T. M. Dubitsky (Eds.), *Emotion in advertising: Theoretical and practical exploration* (pp. 285–315). New York: Quorum Books.

Chang, C. (2000). The effects of personality differences on product evaluations. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *28*, 26–33.

Chang, C. (2005). Ad-self-congruency effects: Self-enhancing cognitive and affective mechanisms. *Psychology & Marketing*, *22*(11), 887–910.

Chang, C. (2002). Self-congruency as a cue in different advertising processing contexts. *Communication Research*, *29*, 503–536.

Chang, C. (2003). Relative judgments in competitive contexts. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *31*, 700–706.

Cheng, H. & Schweitzer, J. C. (1996). Cultural values reflected in Chinese and US television commercials. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *36*(3), 27–44.

Cho, B., Kwon, U., Gentry, J. W., Jun, S., & Kropp, F. (1999). Cultural values reflected in theme and execution: A comparative study of U. S. and Korean television commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, *28*(4), 59–73.

Cutler, B. D., Erdem, S. A., & Javalgi, R. G. (1997). Advertiser's relative reliance on collectivism–individualism appeals: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, *9*(3), 43–55.

Debevec, K. & Iyer, E. (1988). Self-referencing as a mediator of the effectiveness of sex-role portrayals in advertising. *Psychology & Marketing*, *5*, 71–84.

de Mooij, M. (1994). *Advertising worldwide*. (2nd edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Eastern Integrated Consumer Profile (2001). [Data file] Available from East Online Ltd., Taipei, Taiwan.

Edell, J. A. & Burke, M. C. (1987). The power of feelings in understanding advertising effects. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *14*, 421–434.

Eysenck, S. B., Eysenck, H. J., & Barrett, P. (1985). A revised version of the Psychoticism scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *6*(1), 21–29.

Fiske, S. T. & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social cognition*. 2New York: McGraw-Hill.

Greenwald, A. G. & Pratkanis, A. R. (1984). The self. In R. S. Wyer & T. K. Srull (Eds.), *Handbook of social cognition* (pp. 129–178). 3Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gregory, G. D. & Munch, J. M. (1997). Cultural values in international advertising: An examination of familial norms and roles in Mexico. *Psychology & Marketing*, *14*, 99–119.

Gudykunst, W. B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of cultural individualism–collectivism, self-construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research*, *22*, 510–543.

Han, S. & Shavitt, S. (1994). Persuasion and culture: Advertising appeals in individualistic and collectivistic societies. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *30*, 325–350.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G. (1991). *Culture and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Holbrook, M. B. & Batra, R. (1987). Assessing the role of emotions as mediators of consumer responses to advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *14*, 404–420.

Hong, J. W. & Zinkhan, G. M. (1995). Self-concept and advertising effectiveness: The influence of congruency, conspicuousness, and response mode. *Psychology & Marketing*, *12*, 53–77.

Kagitcibasi, C. (1994). A critical appraisal of individualism and collectivism: Toward a new formulation. In U. Kim, H. C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S. Choi & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and applications* (pp. 52–65). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kim U., Triandis H. C., Kagitcibasi C., Choi S., & Yoon G., (Eds.) (1994). *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

MacKenzie, S. E., Lutz, R. J., & Belch, G. E. (1986). The role of attitude toward the ad as a mediator of ad effectiveness: A test of competing explanations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *23*, 130–143.

Madden, T. J., Allen, C. T., & Twible, J. L. (1988). Attitude toward the ad: An assessment of diverse measurement indices under different processing "sets". *Journal of Marketing Research*, *25*, 242–252.

Markus, H. & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*, 224–253.

Markus, H. & Oyserman, D. (1988). Gender and thought: The role of the self-concept. In M. Crawford & M. Hamilton (Eds.), *Gender and thought: The role of the self-concept* (pp. 100–127). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Markus, H. & Wurf, E. (1987). The dynamic self-concept: A social psychological perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *38*, 299–337.

McCarty, J. A. (1994). The role of cultural value orientations in cross-cultural research and international marketing and advertising. In B. G. Englis (Eds.), *Global and multi-national advertising* (pp. 171–191). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence.

Mehta, A. (1999). Using self-concept to assess advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *39*(1), 81–89.

Mitchell, A. A. & Olson, J. C. (1981). Are product attribute beliefs the only mediator of advertising effects on brand attitudes?. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *18*, 318–332.

Muehling, D. D. & McCann, M. (1993). Attitude toward the ad: A review. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, *15*, 25–58.

Shao, A. T., Raymond, M. A., & Taylor, C. (1999). Shifting advertising appeals in Taiwan. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *39*(6), 61–69.

Sirgy, M. J. & Danes, J. (1981). Self-image/product-image congruency models: Testing selected mathematical models. In A. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in consumer research* (pp. 556–561). 9Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Snyder, M. (1974). Self-monitoring of expressive behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *30*, 526–537.

Snyder, M. & DeBono, K. G. (1985). Appeals to image and claims about quality: Understanding the psychology of advertising. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *49*, 586–597.

Trafimow, D., Triandis, H. C., & Goto, S. G. (1991). Some tests of the distinction between the private self and the collective self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *60*, 649–655.

Triandis, H. C. (1989). The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. *Psychological Review*, *96*, 506–520.

Triandis, H. C. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Triandis, H. C., Bontempo, R., Villareal, M. J., Asai, M., & Lucca, N. (1988). Individualism and collectivism: Cross-cultural perspectives on self-ingroup relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*, 323–338.

Triandis, H. C., Leung, K., Villareal, M., & Clack, F. L. (1985). Allocentric vs. idiocentric tendencies: Convergent and discriminant validation. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *19*, 395–415.

Triandis, H. C., McCusker, C., & Hui, C. H. (1990). Multimethod probes of individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *59*, 1006–1020.

Tse, D. K., Belk, R. W., & Zhou, N. (1989). Becoming a consumer society: A longitudinal and cross-cultural content analysis of print ads from Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China, and Taiwan. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *15*, 457–472.

Wang, C. L. & Mowen, J. C. (1997). The separateness–connectedness self-schema: Scale development and application to message construction. *Psychology & Marketing*, *14*, 185–207.

Wang, Y., Jaw, J., Pinkleton, B. E., & Morton, C. (1997). Toward the understanding of advertising appeals in Taiwanese magazine ads and its implications. *Competitiveness Review*, *7*(1), 46–57.

Weinstein, A. (1987). *Using niche marketing to exploit new markets*. Chicago: Probus.

Yamaguchi, S. (1994). Collectivism among the Japanese: A perspective from the self. In U. Kim, H. C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S. Choi & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and application* (pp. 175–188). Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.

Zandpour, F., Campos, V., Catalano, J., Chang, C., Cho, Y., Hoobyar, R., Jiang, S., Lin, M., Madrid, S., Scheideler, H., & Osborn, S. T. (1994). Global reach and local touch: Achieving cultural fitness in TV advertising. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *34*(5), 35–63.

Zandpour, F. & Harich, K. R. (1996). Think and feel country clusters: A new approach to international advertising standardization. *International Journal of Advertising*, *15*(4), 325–344.

Zhang, Y. & Gelb, B. D. (1996). Matching advertising appeals to culture: The influence of products' use conditions. *Journal of Advertising*, *25*, 29–46.

Zhang, Y. & Neelankavil, J. P. (1997). The influence of culture on advertising effectiveness in China and the USA. *European Journal of Marketing*, *31*(2), 134–149.

Zinkhan, G. M. & Hong, J. W. (1991). Self concept and advertising effectiveness: A conceptual model of congruency, conspicuousness, and response mode. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *18*, 348–354.