

**CROSS-CULTURAL CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL
MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS**

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ABSTRACT

The standardization versus specialization of international advertising has been a subject of great controversy that has been debated for more than 50 years, which fuelled an increasing demand for more cross-cultural advertising research on advertising content. Applying cultural theory and Hofstede's and Hall's cultural frameworks, the current study investigated the cultural differences reflected in terms of information content, comparative advertising and the use of celebrity endorsement manifest in magazine advertising from China and the United States.

This study utilized the quantitative method of content analysis. Sample advertisements were selected from two magazines from each country (读者 for Chinese which is *Readers* in English, and *Reader's Digest* for the U.S.). The ads samples analyzed in this study were composed of 74 Chinese ads and 91 U.S. ads.

The author used SPSS 17 to analyze the research data. The results of this study are summarized as follows:

1. Null hypothesis 1 rejected that Chinese magazine ads contain more information cues than U.S. magazine ads, indicating that ads in low-context culture do not necessarily need more information than those in high context culture.

2. Null hypothesis 2 accepted that comparative advertising both explicit and implicit was used more frequently in U.S. magazine ads than in China's magazine ads. Culture differences in terms of competitiveness demonstrated that comparative advertising is more prevalent in individualistic cultures (the United States), but less common in collectivist culture (China).

3. Null hypothesis 3 also accepted that Chinese magazine ads contained more celebrity-endorsed advertising than U.S. Celebrity endorsement advertising is more credible and influential in high uncertainty avoidance and high power distance cultures which is the Chinese culture than in low uncertainty avoidance and low power distance cultures which is the American culture.