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The Influence of Product's Use Conditions in Matching Advertising Appeals  
across Cultures: The case of the United States and South Korea

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브래이든선크

The Influence of Product's Use Conditions in Matching Advertising Appeals  
across Cultures: The case of the United States and South Korea

A thesis presented

By

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To

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## **Abstract**

This paper is extending the findings of Yong Zhang and Betsy D. Gelb's "Matching Advertising Appeals to Culture: The Influence of Product's Use Conditions", by comparing The United States with South Korea, rather than with China. The research is intended to investigate the values expressed in advertising as well as within the cultures while also including product use condition (socially visible and private use). The results yield both Korean and American participants enjoy advertisement appeals that are congruent with the values of their respective countries. However, in the products' use condition both participants from the United States and South Korea showed a convergence towards appeals in certain contexts. The South Korean participants enjoyed the individualistic ads more when the product was privately used and the American participants enjoyed the collectivistic ads more when they were in a social context.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Cultural Roles in Advertisement**

Culture is the complex beliefs of human societies, their roles, their behavior, their values, traditions, and customs (Yakup, Mucahit, Reyhan2011). Cultures vary from country to country and may be the prerequisite for understanding the consumer. Therefore, the first step to successful cross-cultural marketing is to understand cultural differences (Briley and Aaker, 2006). Since people are raised with different cultural norms, they are more likely to respond positively to advertising messages that are in congruence with their own cultural values, thus as the market becomes increasingly international, companies should take note of these differences. Some researchers have even argued that cultural values are the core of advertising messages and typical advertisements endorse, glamorize, and inevitably reinforce cultural values (Emery, Tian, 2010) Therefore, it is crucial to have a deep understanding about a culture before entering their market, because without a well thought out strategy you may flop in your attempt to introduce your product across borders.

### **1.2 Marketing Strategies for International Firms**

This is important for companies who look to go abroad as they examine what type of advertising strategies to utilize and or can afford. Also, firms must

decide whether or not to adopt the standardization method of advertising opposed to adapting to the culture they are entering. International advertisers have become particularly interested in what circumstances require culturally congruent advertising (i.e. advertising that conforms to the norms of a particular culture) versus a more uniform global approach (Jain, 1989). Generally, heavy industry materials as well as high technology tend to work well with the standardized approach, however there must be more information collected on how consumer products should be handled. Also, some companies may struggle with the standardized approach more so than others, considering the weight of the company's brand equity. Established global firms such as Apple, McDonalds, or Samsung find the cross over from culture to culture much easier as they have strong brand recognition.

### **1.3 Goal of Research**

In this study, the goal of the research is gain knowledge into what ad appeals are preferable across two cultures, the United States and South Korea. To do this, an extension of the research of Yong Zhang and Betsy D. Gelb's "Matching Advertising Appeals to Culture: The Influence of Product's Use Conditions" will compare the U.S. with Korea, rather than with China as in the original study. This will provide a valuable insight into how each country interprets collectivistic vs. individualistic ad appeals, and more importantly the products' use condition. There has been extensive research between countries who score high in

individualism and collectivism showing the different preferences between the two types of cultures, however, the differences in “product use” between cultures hasn’t received much attention.

## **2. THE KOREAN LANDSCAPE**

### **2.1 Korea’s Financial Successes**

The “Miracle on the Han River,” the well-known miraculous turnaround in South Korea from a War torn country to having the 15<sup>th</sup> highest nominal GDP in the world has no doubt garnered much attention by fellow OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) member countries. As companies such as Samsung Corp., LG Corp., and Hyundai Motors, including many others continue to thrive the country will remain near top of the financial world. With all this new found money, Korea has become an attractive destination for foreign firms as their citizens have an increasing amount of disposable income. Furthermore, Korea currently has 8 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in effect, with 11 FTA’s under negotiation, thus multiple foreign products have hit the market and it should only continue to expand (mofa.go.kr). With such opportunities available, firms from these foreign countries will seek to break into the Korean market to expand operations. As globalization continues to become more prevalent, it isn’t uncommon to see a Korean individual walking down the street on their Apple iPhone, sporting a Gucci purse and Nike shoes while wearing a shirt they bought at

H&M. There are plenty of opportunities for companies who want to move to this region of the world.

## **2.2 Marketing Customization for Korea**

Each year billions of dollars are spent on marketing as companies try to find creative ways to attract new customers and marketing across cultures can present new challenges as those firms venture across borders. Of the aforementioned FTAs, there are quite a few countries who are considered individualistic, especially when being compared to South Korea's highly collectivistic society. The United States (FTA in effect) is the highest in individuality with a score of 91, followed by Australia (negotiating FTA) 90, Canada (negotiating FTA) 80, New Zealand (negotiating FTA) 79, as well as highly individualistic countries from the European Union, such as the United Kingdom (FTA in effect) 89, France (FTA in effect) 71, and Switzerland (FTA in effect) 70, which are all high relative to South Korea's score of 18. Thus, with such a high disparity between scores, there may be some disconnect between South Korea and the more individualistic Western cultures as was seen in "Matching Advertising Appeals to Culture: The Influence of Product's Use Conditions" between the United States and China. Continuing the study to incorporate South Korea is important considering the growth of their economy as well as being careful to not assume all collectivistic countries will share the same sentiments over individualistic versus collectivistic ads. Since the United States

already has a FTA in place, has the largest GDP worldwide, and scores highest in individualism, they are an optimal comparison to Korea.

### **3. THEROETICAL REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Cultural Dimensions**

Advertising has been long viewed as a mirror to reflect the values of certain cultures and previous studies have reported that advertising content differs across cultures (Emory, Tian, 2010) Each culture has distinct differences that characterize them on several dimensions. Hofstede(1980, pg.19) has defined culture as “the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influences a group’s response to its environment,” and has referred to culture as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people of those of another” (1991, page 5, Young Zhang and Betsy D. Gelb, 1996) However, even though there are several dimensions to culture such as power distance index, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, pragmatic versus normative, indulgence versus restraint, collectivism vs. individualism has probably been researched the most. Individualism-collectivism is perhaps the most central dimension of culture variability identified in cross-cultural research and have received considerable attention in the cultural psychology literature. (Jennifer Aaker, DurairajMaheswaran, 1997)

### **3.2 Collectivism vs. Individualism**

Probably, the most influential culture dimension overtime has been individualism vs. collectivism in regards to cross-cultural studies. The individualism-collectivism cultural syndrome (Triandis, 1996) appears to be the most significant cultural difference among cultures. Greenfield (2000) calls it the “deep structure” of cultural differences, this one seems to be important both historically and cross-culturally. Almost 100 publications per year now use this dimension in discussing cultural differences (Suh, 1999)

Generally, members of individualistic cultures (e.g. United States, UK) tend to emphasize themselves as independent and emphasize uniqueness and focus on internal attributes. However, members of collectivistic cultures (e.g. China, Korea) tend to see themselves in terms of their relationships and in social context, interdependent with others. In individualist cultures, the development of cognitions that involve the traits, states, or behaviors of the person (i.e. private self) is encouraged (Wang, Bristol, Chakrabort, Mowen, 2000 ). In contrast, in collectivistic cultures, the development of cognitions refer to a group (i.e. collective self) is encouraged, thereby increasing the chance that these cognitions will be sampled by the individuals. (Wang, et. al, 2000)

### **3.3 Cultural Dimensions: United States vs. South Korea**

Researchers have found that there is a large distinction between the United States and South Korea in terms of being individualistic or collectivistic. Cultural

differences arising from traditions and religions (e.g. Buddhism versus Christianity), life philosophies (e.g. Confucianism versus the Enlightenment), and the socialization process (e.g. child-rearing practices that encourage differentiation versus assimilation) tend to foster the asymmetric development of the independent or interdependent self. (Aaker, Schmidt 2001) According to Hofstede, the United States has an individualistic rating of 91, whereas Korea is far lower at 18. With such a large gap it is important for advertisers to take note of these differences as they may need to adjust their advertising appeals to be more effective. Individualists and people with a self-construal are orientated toward products and experiences that promote achievement and autonomy, offer personal benefits, and enable expression of distinctiveness (Shavitt, Lee, Torrelli, 2008) Thus, it is more likely that members of the United States and other countries with high individualistic ratings would prefer products that aim to provoke these feelings. In contrast, collectivists and people with an interdependent self-construal are orientated towards products and experiences that allow one to avoid negative outcomes and aspirations (Shavitt, Lee, Torrelli, 2008). Therefore, it would be more likely that Korea and other collectivistic cultures would find products with these types of appeals.

In a journal published on cultural values in American and Korean television shows, Cho et.al (1999) observed that individualism was more often used in US commercials rather than in Korean commercials, however, they failed to find a significant difference in the amount of what they called 'predominantly collectivist'

themes between the countries. The study did, however, find support for a more individualist execution in the US, and a more collectivist execution in Korea.

### **3.4 United States & South Korea: Prior Research**

In 1994 Han and Shavitt demonstrated that members of South Korea and the United States preferred different advertising appeals. Advertisement appeals that emphasize individualistic benefits are more persuasive in the United States than in Korea, while advertisements emphasizing family or in-group benefits are less persuasive in the United States than they are in Korea (Aaker, Maheswaran, 1997, Han Shavitt 1994). However, that study was conducted 20 years ago and attitudes may have changed in either of the two countries, especially South Korea as there have been significant socially and economically changes. Although by tradition the culture of South Korea is seen as collectivistic, some segments of society have recently experienced strong pressures to adopt more individualistic cultural values (Y.-S. Park & Kim, 2006) South Korea has had increased exposure to Western media and has adopted a more Western style system in both education and business, while the importance of the extended family has decreased. However, there should still be some significant differences between the American and South Korean participants as Korean participants may remain influenced by their collectivist roots, therefore preferring collectivistic appeals more.

## **Hypothesis 1**

H1a: In the United States, a culturally congruent individualistic appeal elicits more positive responses than a culturally incongruent collectivistic appeal.

H1b: In South Korea, a culturally congruent collectivistic appeal elicits more positive responses than a culturally incongruent individualistic appeal.

## **4. PRODUCTS' USE CONDITION USE AS A MODERATOR**

### **4.1 Advertisement Preference by Culture**

Though there is a probability that a South Korean participant, or any member of a collectivistic culture, will prefer advertisements with a collectivistic appeal, the strength may not be as prominent with all product types. In turn, an individualistic country, such as the United States, an independent themed advertisement may not always be the most appealing. Some researchers hold that for the individualism – collectivism dimension of culture, the difference between two cultures' orientation is a matter of degree rather than bipolar and dichotomous (e.g. Schwartz, 1990). Also, although the terms “individualism” and “collectivism” are used to characterize cultures and society, not everyone within a particular culture conforms to the culture norms. There may be people from collectivistic cultures that view themselves as more individualistic and those from individualistic cultures interdependent. Thus, not all ad appeals will necessarily work on the basis of being

congruent with the cultures ideals. The type of product will likely effect the approach the advertisers choose to utilize. According to Shavitt (1990), the purpose an object serves may substantially influence the functions of attitudes toward the object. Some objects may have private uses, whereas some are used in the public domain. Researchers have demonstrated that consumption visibility significantly influences consumers' expectations of social approval (e.g., Fisher and Price 1992) Therefore, participants from both countries may feel the need to conform to cultural values while choosing a product, especially a socially visible product.

#### **4.2 Private vs. Socially Used Products**

When a product is used in private, there is not a strong need to conform to what others may think. Products, such as a toothbrush, may not need an overtly collectivistic ad considering it is used in private where others won't see, so an advertisement with an individualistic appeal may work in a collectivistic culture. An appeal that emphasizes individual benefits (individualistic appeal) therefore may be effective in promoting toothbrush in a predominantly collectivistic culture (Zhang, Gelb, 1996). The opposite may be true for socially visible products, such as a camera, as a more collectivistic ad may work better since it is seen and used in a social context. An appeal that highlights the social benefits of the product (collectivistic appeal) may work well for such a product in a predominantly individualistic cultures (Zhang, Gelb, 1996).

H2: Product use condition moderates the effectiveness of culturally-incongruent advertising appeals

H2a: In the United States, a culturally incongruent collectivistic appeal elicits more positive responses for a socially visible product than used in private

H2b: In South Korea, a culturally incongruent individualistic appeals elicits more positive responses for a product used in private than for a socially visible product.

Table 1

Participant Profile

Sample Characteristics	United States	South Korea
Gender		
Male	53.6%	14.6%
Female	54.4%	85.4%
Age (Mean)	26.9	25.1

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### Design of Experiment

#### 5.1 Participants

A total of 82 participants were involved, 41 from each country; 54 were female and 28 were male. They came from all walks of life, however, the majority of the

Korean subjects were either undergraduate or graduate students. Though the Korean participants were concentrated to one central area, Seoul, the American respondents were spread out, with some residing in South Korea and different cities within the United States.

## **5.2 Variables**

There were three independent variables that were used in the pretest: 1) country (the United States and South Korea), 2) advertising appeals (collectivism versus individualism), and 3) product use conditions (socially visible versus privately used). Each participant would see one advertising design, either private or social and collectivistic or individualistic. Thus, it was a 2x2x2 design.

## **5.3 Advertising Products**

A 35mm camera was used as the social product, as in the original study. The logic behind choosing the product had to do with the familiarity between both cultures, which I feel is true in the case of the United States and South Korea. The camera was given a fictional name, as in the original study, to remove any bias that may result from prior knowledge of an existing product. The other product that was used in the pretest was a toothbrush, on the basis of its frequent use by both sexes in the private. Both products were portrayed as close as possible to a real advertisement. Each of the four ads had the same ad copy, design, and layout to control for potential confounds. Two of the ads had the identical product and brand name, split between the social and private products.

## 5.4 Advertising Appeals

As in the previous study the advertising appeals were manipulated by the headline copy of the ad. The two individualistic appeals were “Come and indulge in the joy of self-expression” for the camera ad and “Reach out for the pleasure of brushing” for the toothbrush ad. Both headlines illustrated direction and hedonism, values closely associated with individualistic cultures (Schwartz 1990; Triandis et. 1986). As for the collectivistic advertisements, “Share the moments of happiness with your friends and family” for the camera ad and “Everybody likes the brand name Flexbrush” for the toothbrush ad. Both headlines reflected family/in-group orientation and social conformity, value orientations predominant in collectivistic cultures. (Triandiset. Al 1986)

**Table 2**  
**Ad Copy Headlines**

Product Appeal	Individualistic Appeal	Collectivistic
Camera Joy of Self Expression! and Family!”	“Come and enjoy the Joy and Happiness with Friends	“Share in Moments of
Toothbrush Brand of Brushing!”	“Reach Out for the Pleasure Flexbrush!”	“Everybody Likes the

**Figure 1**  
**Experimental Stimuli: A Socially Visible Product with Collectivistic Appeal**



**Figure 2**  
**Experimental Stimuli: A Privately Used Product with Individualistic Appeal**



## **6. PROCEDURES AND DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

### **6.1 Participant Instructions**

The advertisements were given to participants via internet or in person. It was explained to the subjects that they were involved in a cross-cultural study and that each advertisement was made by a third party. As with the prior study between the United States and China, participants were instructed to be as natural as possible in reading the instructions that were given to them. (Yong Zhang, Betsy Gelb 1996). Once I explained how the study was to be conducted the participants were given an unlimited amount of time to review and analyze the advertisement and then were instructed to rate it. The participants rated the items by completing a questionnaire composed of several scales where they could express their feelings towards the advertisements and products. All dependent variables were measures from another study.

### **6.2 Attitude towards the Advertisement**

Ad. Attitude (Aad) was measured with a 4-item 9-point semantic differential scale (unpleasant-pleasant, unlikable-likable, not irritating-irritating, and interesting- not interesting (Yong Zhang, Betsy Gelb 1996). Semantic differential scales have been characterized as “pancultural” scales suitable for measuring similar traits in cross-cultural studies (Osgood, May, Miron, 1975) Such scales have been demonstrated to capture concepts and dimensions used to evaluate stuli-either objects or subjects – and to account for major proportions of the variation in responses. (Yong Zhang,

Betsy Gelb 1996). An average of the multiple ratings served as the measure of Aad (Yong Zhang, Betsy Gelb 1996).

### 6.3 Attitude towards the Brand

Brand attitude (Abr) was measured with a 3-item scale (bad-good, not nice – nice, and unlikable-likable). (Yong Zhang, Betsy Gelb 1996). As with the attitude towards the ad, the attitude towards the brand the mean score was used as the dependent measure of the construct. All semantic differential scales used for both Aad and Abr had a range from 4 to -4 with zero being the central point.

**Table 3 (Measures)**

Dependent Variables	
Ad attitude (semantic differential)	(Unpleasant – Pleasant) (Unlikable – Likable) (Irritating – Not Irritating) (Not Interesting – Interesting)
Brand Attitude (semantic differential)	(Bad-Good) (Not Nice – Nice) (Unlikable – Likable)
Ancillary Measures	
Demographics	Age Gender

## 7. RESULTS

The average of all the measures were recorded from the United States and South Korean participants. First, the averaged collectivistic and individualistic appeal scores from the U.S. and South Korean participants were compared with the attitude towards ad (Aad) and attitude towards brand (Abr) average scores to determine whether there was a preference between collectivistic or individualistic appeals. Next, the Aad between socially visible and privately used products were compared within each country to measure whether or not the second hypothesis was correct or not.

**Table 4**

**Means of Dependent Measure and Product Familiarity (United States)**

Measures	United States			
	Individualistic Appeal		Collectivistic Appeal	
	Social	Private	Social	Private
Ad Attitude	1.19	1.46	1.63	1.64
Brand At.	1.46	1.66	1.62	-.083

**Table 5**

**Means of Dependent Measure and Product Familiarity (South Korea)**

South Korea				
Measures	Individualistic Appeal		Collectivistic Appeal	
	Social	Private	Social	Private
Ad Attitude	.28	1.25	2.46	1.46
Brand At.	-.47	1.29	1.41	1.54

Prior to testing the specific hypothesis, I conducted a full-factor omnibus repeated-measures MANOVA with Aad measures on the two products as the dependent variable and country and appeal type as the independent variables. As noted previously, country and appeal type were between-subjects factors and product was a within-subject factor; significant interactions would suggest the presence of a potential moderation effect. The results revealed a significant between-subjects country by appeal interaction (see table 6 for a summary of the results). Similarly, we conducted a full-factor procedure with Abr as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant country by appeal, product by appeal, and product by country interaction. I further analyzed these results to test each specific hypothesis.

**Table 6**  
**Results of Initial Analyses Data**

Measures	Sources	f-value	p-value		
Ad attitude	Country (C)	5.70	.0197		
	Appeal (A)	.0001	.9616		
	Product (P)	7.85	.0066		
	C x A	19.84	.001		
	C x P	6.36	.0140		
	A x P	21.47	.001		
	C x A x P	2.03	.1582		
Brand attitude	Country (C)	.64	.4260		
	Appeal (A)	.25	.6195		
	Product (P)	.12	.7331		
	C x A	10.97	.0015		
	C x P	9.14	.0035		
	A x P		10.02	.0023	
	C x A x P		.06	.8074	

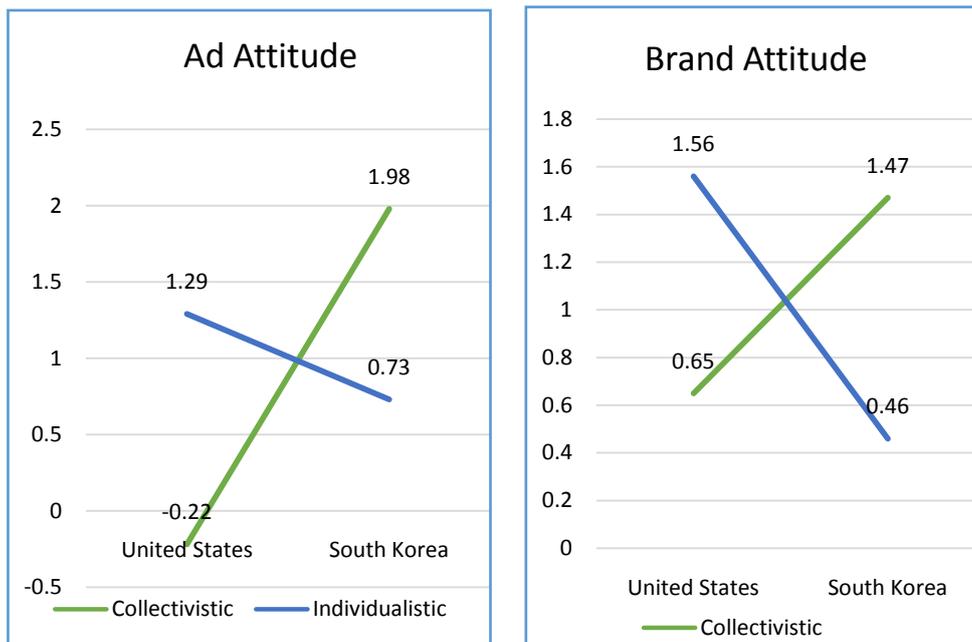
### **7.1 Test of H1a and H1b: Country by Appeal Interaction**

The significant country by appeal interaction in the overall analysis provided initial evidence that appeals differed in effectiveness between the two cultures. To test H1a and H1b, further analyses conducted on the between-subjects factor appeal type with average Aad scores across product as the dependent variable within the country factor. The results show a significant appeal main effect ( $F=3.20, p < .022$ ) among U.S. subjects. U.S. subjects preferred an individualistic appeal; the averaged scores across product for the U.S. respondents are  $-.22$  (collectivistic appeal) versus  $.198$  (individualistic appeal). Results from the Korean subjects show the opposite pattern ( $F= 5.03, p < .0039$ ) with a significantly higher score for the collectivistic appeal. The mean scores are  $1.98$  (collectivistic appeal) versus  $.73$  individualistic appeal. The country by appeal interaction with Aad in the initial and followup analyses is illustrated in figure 3.

Results on Abr scores also show a significant appeal effect ( $F=3.22, p < .0319$ ) among U.S. subjects. The averaged scores across products for the U.S. subjects are  $.65$  (collectivistic appeal) and  $1.56$  (individualistic appeal). Scores for the show are different pattern, however, they were not large enough to be significant ( $F= 2.09, p < 1.248$ ) with averages of  $1.47$  (collectivistic ads) compared with  $.46$  (individualistic ads).

The significant product by appeal interaction found the initial multivariate analysis provided preliminary evidence supporting H2, that product use condition moderates the effectiveness of advertising appeals. Further analyses were conducted with data from the respondents in each country; ANOVA's were carried out within each appeal type subsequently to test for the moderating effect of product use condition in each country. These analyses were conducted separately for Aad and Abr scores.

Figure 3



## 7.2 Ad Attitude

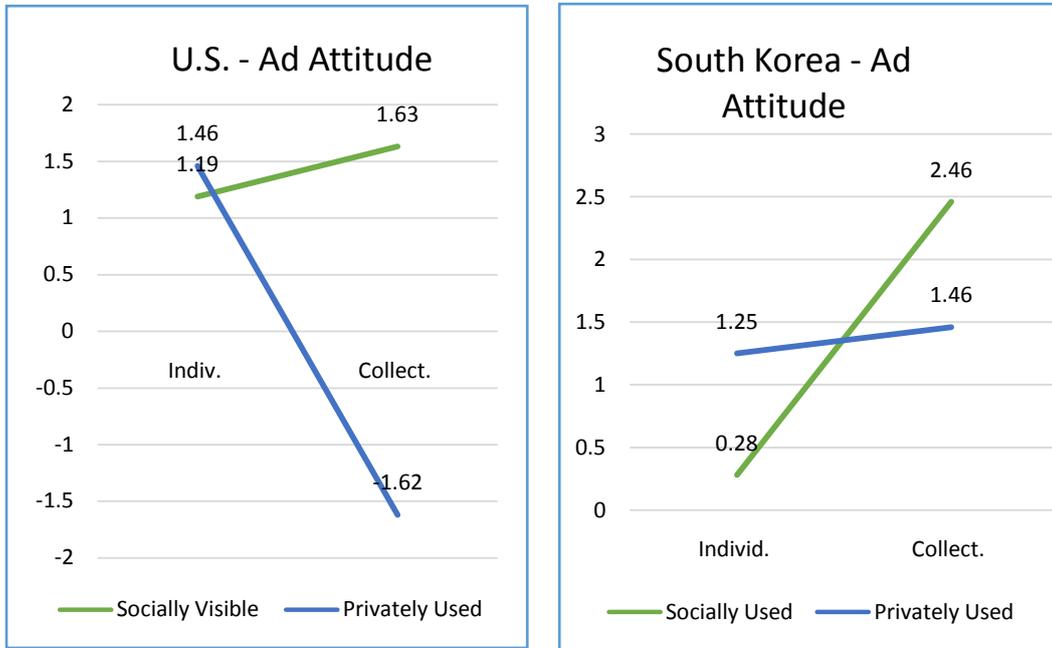
A repeated ANOVA was conducted within each appeal type. A product main effect is significant for culturally incongruent collectivistic appeal ( $F= 16.89, p < .0001$ ) with a mean Aad of  $-1.63$  for the toothbrush (privately used product) versus  $1.63$  camera (socially visible product). As expected, however, no significant Aad difference between the two products is found for the U.S. subjects exposed to culturally congruent ad. Therefore results support H2a. The moderation was salient with the culturally incongruent collectivistic appeal. When appeal matched product, the Aad score ( $1.63$ ) was higher than that observed for the double-mismatch case ( $-1.62$ ) a collectivistic appeal inappropriate for both a privately used toothbrush and the individualistic U.S. culture. The score in the double-mismatch case lowered the overall score of the collectivistic appeal, contributing to the appeal main effect. Analysis of the Korean responses, however, failed to show significance (means  $.28$  versus  $1.25$   $F= 2.34, p < .1194$ ) for the culturally incongruent collectivistic appeal, though there was a preference for the privately used products with the individualistic appeal, the gap was not significant enough.

### **7.3 Brand Attitude**

The results on Abr were not consistent with the results of Aad. For the U.S. subjects, although the combination of collectivistic appeal with privately used product lowered the score, the averages were not as I expected, with a 1.25 (socially visible) and -.083 (privately used) not being significant enough ( $F= 1.06$ ,  $p < .3857$ ).

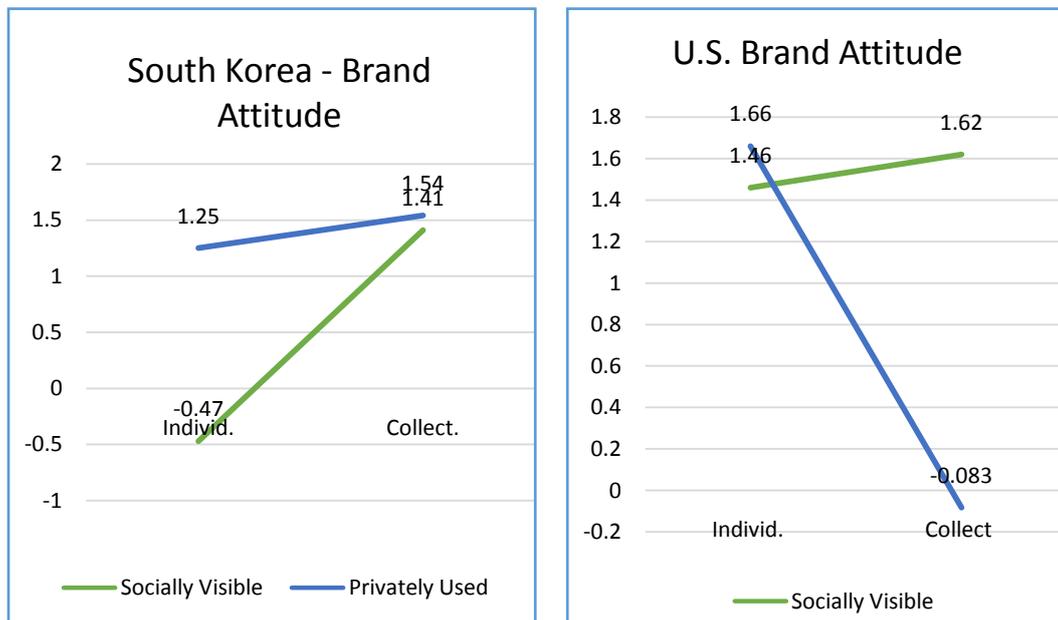
Results from the Korean subjects were as I expected, indicating a product by appeal interaction. Follow up analyses within appeal types show that the collectivistic appeal had a nonsignificant product effect, whereas the individualistic appeal had a significant product effect ( $F= 5.63$ ,  $p < .0138$ , 1.25 for toothbrush vs. -.47 for camera). The main effect appears to be caused mainly by the lower score for the camera ad with the individualistic appeal (-.47) as hypothesized.

Test of H2: Product by Appeal Interaction: Figure 4



## 7.4 Product Choice

In analyzing the choice data with logistic regression procedures, I used brand choice as the criterion variable and country, appeal type, product, and interactions between them as predictor variables. Examination of the cell frequencies indicates that choice probability for the advertised product was higher with the individualistic appeal than with the collectivistic appeal for both American subjects



(probability .77 vs. .25) but differed with Korea subjects (probability .37 vs. .50).

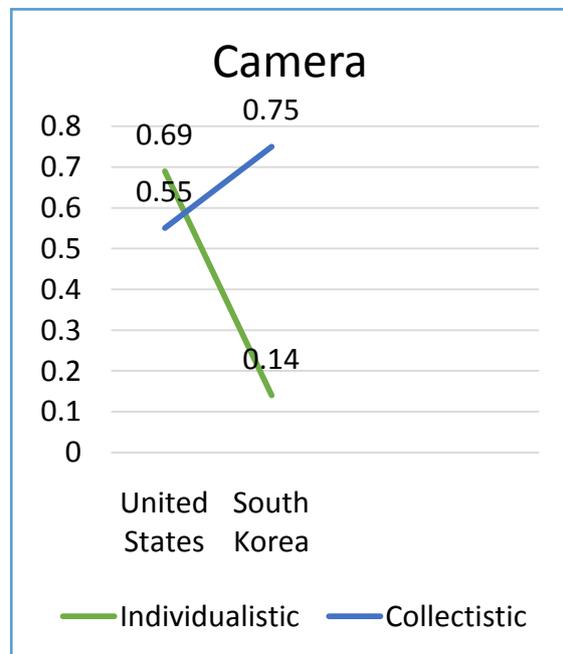
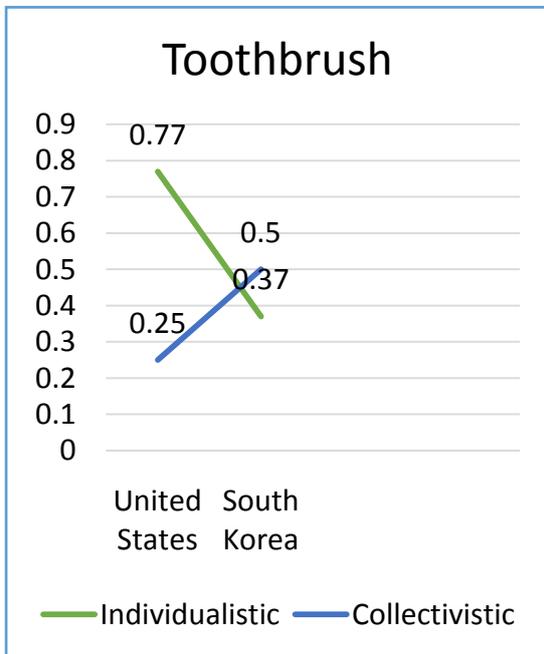
For U.S. respondents, individualistic appeals would be expected to trail

collectivistic appeals in effectiveness. However, the results show that individualistic appeals work better for the privately used product in both countries, thus supporting the notion that product use condition may influence advertising effectiveness.

For the data on the camera, the model show a significant country by appeal interaction. Korean subjects were more likely to choose the advertised camera with the collectivistic appeal (choice probability .75) than choosing the same product with an individualistic appeal (choice possibility .14), as would be expected. The U.S. participants were also more likely to choose the advertisement with the culturally congruent ad (.69 vs. .55) however, the difference between the two was not as significant as with the Korean participants as seen in figure 4.

In sum, the product choice data did not exhibit a strong pattern as in the case of Aad, and Abr with respect to the interaction effect between country and advertising appeals. However, the results show an appeal main effect favoring the individualistic appeal for the privately used products in both countries. This findings consistent with my reasoning that product use condition does have some effect beyond cultural influence. The results also showed that U.S. subjects preferred the individualistic appeal however, it was much closer, showing a moderating effect.

### **Figure 5**



## 8. DISCUSSION

As expected the Korean participants enjoyed the collectivistic ads more than the American participants and vice versa, the United States participants enjoyed the individualistic ads more than the Korean participants. These results confirm that individuals from collectivistic or individualistic cultures will enjoy ads that have appeals that are congruent with their cultural values. As previously mentioned the United States is the most individualistic country in the world according to the

Hofstede report with an individualism score of 91, much higher than South Korea's score of 18. Thus, appeals that are congruent with the society will likely be used employed by advertisers. Han and Shavitt found that individualistic advertising appeals (similar to what we call separated themes) are more likely found in ads targeted toward Western audiences, such as the United States, whereas collectivistic appeals (similar to what we call term connected themes) are more likely found in ads targeted towards Eastern audiences, such as those found in Korea (Wang, et. al, 2000).

The results for the products' use condition were in line with the hypotheses though they came with mixed results. The Korean participants rated the individualistic socially visible product lower than the privately used individualistic product. These results signify that the manner in which a product is used may affect how consumers perceive it and even though some appeals may be incongruent with societal norms there still be a crossover effect. A convergence between products with the Korean participants was salient as the products' use did moderate the effect of the participants' ratings. The privately used product rating between the attitude collectivistic averages of 1.46 is much closer to the individualistic ad average of 1.25 than the socially visible ad appeals, which was more disparate with averages of .28 and 2.46. This is because products that are used in private will not be seen by others thus the only important factor in the consumers' decisions is how they feel about the product, so an individualistic ad works better for the privately used product rather than the socially visible alternative. The brand attitude ratings

yielded similar results showing a much closer convergence for the private collectivistic and individualistic ad, with a collectivistic ad appeal of an average of 1.54 and an individualistic average of 1.29. Also, the results of the socially visible product were much more divergent, with average of .47 and 1.41. These averages provide further proof that people who come from collectivistic societies will embrace an individualistic appeal that represents a privately used product.

The results with the United States participants showed more than a convergence as the collectivistic ad appeals for the social visible product actually was rated higher than the individualistic ad for the socially visible products. The average score for the collectivistic attitude ad and brand ad were 1.63 and 1.62 respectively, compared to the individualistic socially visible ad that yielded averages of 1.19 for ad attitude and 1.46 for brand attitude. Though we only expected there would be a convergence with the socially visible ads, we didn't expect the collectivistic ad would actually be rated higher than the individualistic ad.

The results show that having a culturally incongruent advertisement may not pose a threat to effectiveness. Firms who choose to have a standardized advertising approach may find this information helpful. Essentially, standardization of advertising is based on the premise that needs and wants of people are basically the same everywhere and that a carefully conceived and executed appeal can strike common responsive chords in consumers in different countries. (Peebles 1978) The

findings from the study elaborate on the fact that standardization may work when going abroad if you take into account the role of the product and what type of consumption situation is in the ad appeal.

## **9. Limitations and Future Research**

As previously mentioned, the American subjects were more diversified than Koreans, therefore the results may have been altered by those circumstances. Also, most of the Korean participants saw the ads in person, whereas the participants from the United States were given the ads via email. Almost every participant from the Korean study was currently attending graduate school, whereas the level of education from participants from the United States varied. The Korean participants were also predominantly female while the ratio of male to female participants from the United States was nearly equal. Women are reported to be higher in collectivism and lower in individualism than men across different cultures (Cho et al. 2010). Therefore, with a better ratio of males to females in Korea may have moderated the effects of hypothesis 1. The goal of the final study is to have more diverse demographics when conducting the exact same methods for each group. Future studies could use a different dimension such as “masculinity” or “power distance” for the measures between two countries.

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