

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS FROM THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARAB WORLD

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, a wealth of literature has increased our understanding of cross-cultural differences in advertising content. Abernethy and Franke (1996) point out a gap in literature and state that "no study has examined the advertising information in any African nation, any part of the Middle East other than Saudi Arabia, or any of the 'economies in transition' associated with the former USSR." The current study, therefore, investigates differences in content of magazine advertisements from the United States and the Arab world comprising eleven countries in the Middle East and eleven countries in North Africa. Differences in the depiction of women, the extent of comparative advertising, the extent of information provided, and the extent of price information are hypothesized, based on the role of religion in forming

values, the level of individualism (Hofstede 1980), and whether the culture is high-context or low-context (Hall 1976). Three hundred ninety-eight ads from three Arabic general interest, family, and women's magazines, and 540 ads from three U.S. general interest, family, and women's magazines were content analyzed. It is found that women are pictured more frequently in U.S. magazines. Women tend to be depicted wearing long dresses more in Arabic magazines than in U.S. magazines. Also, women tend to be pictured in ads for products relevant to women more in Arabic magazines than in U.S. magazines. U.S. ads have more information content, provide more price information, and use more comparative advertising than Arabic ads. Implications for international marketers wanting to advertise in Arab magazines are offered. Limitations and extensions are also discussed.

REFERENCES

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