Advertising execution styles as a reflection of culture

Cross-cultural analysis of messaging app advertising preferences in South Korea and China

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Spring semester 2014
Master thesis, two-year, 30hp
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Vladimir Vanyushyn, research participants, and everyone who helped me during this thesis process. I could not have managed to do this without you.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my family and friends for their encouragements and support as well as my Umeå friends for the happy moments and great memories we shared.

*Sofia Kivinen, spring 2014*
Abstract

Increased globalization and the thought of converging values has lead marketing practitioners and academics to consider more standardized approaches to marketing and advertising strategies. Even though cultures seem to evolve closer to each other, cultural diversity still exists. Advertising reflects and influences our cultural values and therefore it cannot be ignored when building effective advertising. Results show that culture impacts execution more than creative strategy (Wei & Jiang, 2005) and therefore execution is seen as an important element of cross-cultural marketing and advertising. The emergence of new social media channels is raising the question whether previous execution styles are suitable for these marketing channels and whether similar connection with the culture exists. This thesis examines how cultural characteristics are reflected in advertising execution and draws special attention to the marketing communication through mobile messaging applications. However, this study takes new approach for viewing culture’s influence on advertising executions by exploring the preferences of audience.

This research aims to shed light on the under researched area of cross-cultural advertising in Asian region in terms of two culturally similar countries. This study examines Chinese and South Korean preferences and perceptions of execution styles and explores to what extent similarities and differences occur. These similarities and differences are analyzed in terms of culture and whether these findings can be attributed to the nations' cultural characteristics. To address the topic holistically in its cultural context, a qualitative mixed-methods research approach was adopted for this research. This present study combines cultural and advertising theories to produce a theoretical frame for data collection and further analysis.

Findings indicate that culture does influence execution preferences even in rather similar cultures. Although advertising reflects nations’ cultural values, it does not directly translate into the preferences of that audience. This study indicated that the channel of marketing communication influences execution preferences. Mobile messaging application as a marketing channel was seen affecting the preferences of Chinese and Koreans towards more direct and informational communication which have been considered untypical for East Asian cultures. However, overall changes in the preferences appeared indicating value shift, changes in the expressions of culture, or paradoxical values. Results suggest that cross-cultural marketers and advertisers should recognize the importance of cultural characteristics when planning and designing execution strategies.

_Keywords:_ Marketing communication, advertising execution, culture, international marketing, advertising likability, perception, mobile messaging application, social media, China, South Korea
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1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM BACKGROUND

The globalization of today’s world is influencing the way we do business and especially the way we communicate. Markets vary according to different demographic, economic, technological, political and legal factors from which cultural differences are seen as one of the most important factor influencing international marketing communications today. Belch & Belch (2009, p. 678) notice the importance and effectiveness of advertising as a communication tool but consider it as one of the most difficult ones out of marketing programs. To succeed in marketing on international marketplace, marketers have to understand these cultural differences and take them into consideration when planning campaigns. Too often marketers are guided by their self-reference criterion or own cultural values, assuming target audience have similar values, attitudes, beliefs, symbols, needs and wants as themselves or see their own cultural background as a superior (De Pelsmacker et.al, 2013 p. 10-11).

The gaps between cultures, customs and habits are converging and affecting our way of interacting. This has also tricked the debate between standardized and localized marketing communication. Standardized marketing campaign is running in several countries using the same executional and creative concept, setting, theme, appeal and message only with possible translations. On the other hand, in localized marketing communication some or all elements are adopted to align with culture, behavior, attitudes, values etc. (De Pelsmacker et.al, 2013, p. 11). However, sometimes companies are forced to adopt a local strategy to cater culturally different markets. Whereas the global viewpoint focuses on the similarities, the local perspective is targeting differences such as language, traditions, habits, consumer perception, and attitudes which are influencing the marketing in various countries (De MoiL, 1998, p. 32). Previous studies have suggested that the globalizing consumer culture (GCC) is affecting the values identified in international advertising by bringing western and non-western cultural values manifested in advertising closer (Jiang & Wei, 2012). This would lead to westernizing cultural values. But marketers and academics have realized that it is not about an either-or strategy regarding standardization and localization but balancing between the two in advertising communication (Wei & Jiang 2005; La Ferle et. al, 2008).

Advertising strategies successful in one culture could be implemented in another culture with similar product relevant values, needs, motives, beliefs about advertising, and media preferences (De Mooij, 1998, p. 9). La Ferle et al (2008) suggests that strategic decisions become especially important when entering Asian regional markets where clusters of cultures are sharing similar core values. This may allow for higher degrees of standardization in Asia. However, they do note that consumers may differ on important factors such as cultural dimensions, attitudes toward advertising, and media preferences which are influencing the standardization of advertising and marketing decisions and therefore are a vital key to success in the Asian markets. Most resent note and call for papers came from Seo & Fam (2013) regarding the role of Asian business and consumer culture in the global marketplace. They noted the limited research on the inner differentiation and complexity of business, marketing, and consumer cultures in the Asian region. They identify the need of exploring the subject of inter-regional and cross-cultural differences in Asia. There are studies comparing Asian countries in the field of advertising research but have focused on the similarities and differences between mainland China,
Hong Kong, Taiwan or Macao (Tai, 2007). Most of the research conducted has been comparing distinctively culturally different countries mainly U.S and a foreign country (Hong et al., 1987; Mueller, 1987, 1992; Cho et al., 1999; Taylor et al., 1997), but recent insight shows the comparison of culturally relatively similar countries is needed. In addition, the categorization to Western culture and non-Western culture does not prove useful for marketers. So far differences between European cultures have been acknowledged but still current research often addresses Eastern/Asian cultures as one.

The concept of culture is broad and complex. There are variation of definitions and models to understand these underlying patterns influencing our behavior. Marketing and advertising researchers seem to agree on the usefulness of two concepts and studies regarding the differences in cultural values; Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1997). Cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede are used to some extent in almost all cross-cultural marketing research, often together with Hall’s high- and low-context communication systems. Okazaki & Mueller (2007) viewed the previous research conducted in the field of cross-cultural advertising and noted that researchers also employed Schwartz’s cultural values but to a lesser extent. However, in recent years new theoretical models and concepts have appeared, one being GLOBE study which offers a new framework of nine cultural dimensions. Even though the traditional framework of Hofstede is adopted and validated in advertising field by many researchers (e.g. Hatzithomas et al., 2011) there is still need to develop and adopt new aspects for future research since the cultural, not to mention economical, demographical, and technological environment is constantly changing.

Technology is taking huge steps of development every year and internet is used in today’s global marketplace. The amount of internet connections around the world is high and constantly growing and more and more people have daily online presence. These technical developments allow us to access internet through our mobile phones and therefore it is not surprising that standardization of international marketing communication is seen more advantageous. For example, the use of social media marketing is constantly growing and so is the number of official corporate accounts. Ganim Barnes et al. (2013) have been studying the social media use of Forbes 500 corporations; America’s largest companies listed by Forbes magazine, and noticed an increase in new accounts as well as in the use of social media channels. Social media allows companies around the world to reach customers with their marketing communication more efficiently and with fewer boundaries. However, this new medium brings new challenges for marketers. Marketers are facing the question of how to communicate with this diverse group of people with different backgrounds and cultures. The new Web 2.0 also brings the balancing of two contradictory traits into marketing in internet medium; personalization and global reach of communication (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013).

Evidence seem to show that standardized advertising has become more feasible than before (Ford et al., 2011) and several companies utilize international standardized marketing strategies (Ko et al., 2005). Some researchers believe that social media allow marketers to utilize internationally standardized aspects of marketing executions (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013) but there is a group of academics and professionals believing that culture affects the use and content of social media marketing. Berthon et al., (2012) see that the standardization of social media component in the company’s communication might be risky
and note that “[…] firms cannot follow a one-size-fits-all or standardized approach when it comes to social media usage. A company will need to customize the social media aspects of its global marketing strategy to fit and accommodate national differences” (Berthon et al., 2012). As we can see, the previous debate of marketing standardization has evolved due to the changes in our environment. Even though most marketers and academics agree that some degree of local adaptation is needed in creative and executional strategies this new channel of communication and GCC reemerge the question of global vs. local.

To bring this topic to the table, Okazaki & Taylor (2013) identified theoretical foundations that can be used in research on social media in the context of international advertising research and gave ideas for future research directions. They notice the rather low amount of research on social media in the field of international advertising and due to this only a very limited number of cross-national or cross-cultural studies have been conducted so far. They also identify that previous research has been focusing on internal aspects within a medium (e.g. network formation, information exchange), neglecting the importance of external aspects (e.g. the similarities and differences in the medium across cultures). (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013)

Another point to bring up regarding social media marketing is the fact that there are extremely little research conducted on mobile marketing and advertising. Until today, Okazaki & Taylor (2008) and Liu et al. (2012) have examined the mobile advertising adoption but in SMS context. In addition, m-commerce has not received the same amount of interest as e-commerce among the researchers. According to Tripathi & Siddiqui (2013, p.79) this may be due to the uncertainties involved in mobile research one being the lack of standards in terms, concepts and theories. Currently there is variety of applications for mobile social media and one of the new marketing channels for companies seems to be messaging applications which allow companies to set up company/brand profiles or pages. Through these company or brand profiles relationships are maintained and information is provided. This trend is very popular especially in Asian based messaging apps such as WeChat, KakaoTalk, and Line.

“Nowhere is research more important than in multicultural and cross-cultural communication” (Macnamara, 2004, p. 322). In this kind of communication, some relevant experiential knowledge could be limited or unavailable when communicators and their audience have major cultural differences. In addition, intuitive decisions made in a foreign culture can be misdirected (Macnamara, 2004). Ford et al., (2011) calls for more work to identify and understand differences across cultural units of analysis and how to best tailor advertising strategies to answer the perception of the consumers. The paper by Okazaki & Mueller (2007) examined recent patterns and developments in the literature on cross-cultural advertising research. They noticed that none of the 106 articles examined utilized a qualitative method. Thus, there is large research gap in the international marketing research conducted qualitatively especially in the area of cross-cultural studies.

Wei & Jiang (2005) have proposed that cultural cues; information containing images, values, customs, icons, symbols, idioms, and characteristics of a culture, are embedded in the advertising messages. This reflects to the execution elements such as the theme, model, background, language, symbols etc. Building their study on Duncan and Ramaprasad's, Wei & Jiang (2005) created a model of international advertising strategies, focusing on
standardization on creative strategy and execution of advertising. Their study showed that culture had greater impact on the executional factors than on the creative strategy of an advertisement (Wei & Jiang, 2005).

This study addresses marketing communications and specific advertising execution elements. The starting point of this thesis derives from Wei & Jiang’s (2005) study concerning the importance of execution elements in cross-cultural communication. Previous research have been focusing different aspects of advertising design; soft-sell versus hard-sell (e.g. Okazaki et al., 2010), appeals (e.g. Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999; Jeon et al., 1999), and information level (e.g. Taylor et al., 1997). There are findings which relate certain styles and strategies to different cultural dimension, mainly using framework of Hofstede and Hall. However, these studies are focusing on the traditional advertising channels of television and print media. The emergence of new ways to reach consumers is raising the question whether similar the connections between execution styles and cultural dimension occur when marketing through more conventional channels.

1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to explore the advertising execution style preferences deriving from cultural background of the audience. This thesis aims to explore an under-researched areas identified by the previously discussed research gaps in the international marketing and therefore brings topical advancement. In addition this study has methodological advancement aspects. The empirical study strives to enhance the holistic perception of advertising execution in cultural context by using rather conventional qualitative mixed method. This present research aims to investigate advertising execution styles preferred in contemporary marketing channel of mobile messaging applications. Study is basing on the previous research on traditional media, such as printed ads and television advertising, and how different cultures perceive these execution styles.

The study strives to examine two relatively similar countries in their cultural context. Also the marketing channel of mobile messaging application and possible functions of these apps directed the focus on two countries in Asia. Deriving from the researcher’s own experiences regarding locally used messaging application as well as knowledge and experience concerning the cultures, South Korea (hereafter referred also as Korea) and China formed to be the comparative cultures. These are the basis for and lead to following research questions:

Research Question 1;

A. How advertising execution styles are perceived and identified by Chinese and South Koreans?
B. How do these appear in mobile messaging app advertising?

Research Question 2;

What kind of similarities and differences appear in execution style preferences between Chinese and Koreans in relation to their cultures?
2 LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

The theoretical chapter consists of four sections building the frame for the empirical study. The first section introduces the concepts of advertising and reflects some of the problems with the traditional definitions. Then, social media marketing with a focus on the new channel of marketing communication is discussed. In addition, the second main section includes the communication process which is leading towards the advertising message strategies. Message development and execution styles are explored further. The final, fourth section discusses the receiver of the message in a context of culture and how culture is studied.

2.1 MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING

Organizations operate in different markets communicating their offers and ideas to their various audiences. There are several marketing communication tools, channels, and messages that can be utilized when communicating with the audiences. Fill (2011) notes that there is no universally agreed definition of marketing communication but several interpretations of the concept. However, he identifies the origin of various definitions resting on a promotional outlook; communication is used to persuade people to purchase the product or service. On top of the traditional goals of awareness and persuasion, new communication objectives, such as developing understanding or preference and reminding the audience, were seen as important goals. Blythe (2000) notes that the field of marketing communication is constantly changing and new theories and techniques, cultural changes and technological advancements creates a dynamic environment for marketers. Communication essentially is exchange of thoughts which can be carried out by conversation, written words and pictures (Blythe, 2000, p. 1). Fill (2011, p. 5) defines marketing communication as “an audience centred activity which attempts to encourage engagement between participants and provoke conversations”. The definition emphasizes the audience-centricity where needs and environment of the audience are the basis for the communicated messages. Today, marketing communication has become more integrated and thus become more strategic and long-term oriented (Fill, 2011, p. 5). However, these two basic parts of marketing and communication are examined separately in order to understand the meaning of marketing communications.

Defining marketing can be challenging and often answers regarding what marketing is are varying greatly. Often marketing is thought as a synonym for promotion or selling but the basic point of marketing is in the actions taken to create and exchange value with customers. One of the simplest definitions states that “marketing is the study of exchange processes especially those associated with the provision of goods and services” (Addock et al., 2001, p. 2). To better understand the importance of customer and user needs Kotler’s definition addresses these aspects. He sees marketing as “a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others” (Addock et al., 2001, p. 3). Two of the most quoted marketing definitions come from Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and American Marketing Association (AMA) (Masterson & Pickton, 2010, p. 4). Several
textbooks and authors are basing their definitions on the view of AMA which currently defines marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (AMA, 2013). CIM on the other hand define marketing as “the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably” (CIM, 2009). These definitions are focusing on the exchange and value aspects of marketing. Another commonality is customer-centric approach which as the philosophy of marketing can be seen as the first level of marketing. How marketing is executed can be considered as the second level of marketing. Often these techniques or activities are called marketing mix or Ps (product, price, place, and promotion) of marketing. These marketing mix strategies are developed for conducting the previously mentioned exchange, transferring value to the customers. Thus, marketing includes much more than only promotional activities. (Addock et al., 2001, p. 2-8; Chitty et al., 2011, p. 3; Palmer, 2012, p. 5-6; Masterson & Pickton, 2010, p. 3-12)

Exchange requires at least two parties with something of value to one another but to know the needs and wants an exchange of information is needed. Communication is not only required to inform marketers about customer needs and wants but also to let the customers know about the marketed offerings. Communication can be seen as the process where shared meanings are conveyed to others (Chitty et al, 2011, p. 3). Engel et al. (1994, p. 31) defines communication as “a transactional process between two or more parties whereby meaning is exchanged through the intentional use of symbols”. This definition identifies intentional, transactional, and symbolic as three elements of communication. Deliberate effort is made to exchange information consisting of symbols in order to cause another party to focus on the object or person. Even though marketing and communication are examined separately, they can be seen almost inseparable. Communication is essential component of the marketing communications process which also includes forms of unsystematic communication. However, planned promotional strategies are often seen as the most important part of marketing communication (Tyagi & Kumar, 2004, p. 104).

As discussed earlier, marketing consists of several marketing mix elements of which promotion is often considered the most important and visible form of intentional marketing communication. Even within marketing communication, several types of communication such as advertising, sales promotion, displays, sponsorship, direct marketing, and public relations exist. Though, advertising with its wide scope is perhaps the first element when people think about marketing and is often seen almost synonymous to marketing communication. (Adcock et al., 2001, p. 294) Advertising like any other promotional activity is a mean of implementing marketing communications strategy (Tyagi & Kumar, 2004, p. 1). Advertising can be defined as any paid, non-personal communication through several media channels which can promote products, services or ideas (Alexander, 1965, p. 9; De Pelsmacker, 2013, p. 5, Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 454). However, the new environment of advertising as explored in this study requires different approach due to the different functions, capabilities, and characteristics of new media. Tuten (2008) notes that the mass media aspect of these traditional definitions often is not valid in online advertising context since currently they cover traditional forms as television, print, radio, and outdoor advertising. Therefore, when describing advertising for the new media context the size of the audience should not be seen as defining factor since it allows more targeted, permission
or, interactive forms of advertising. Another major difference is the assumption of advertisement being a paid form. Tuten (2008) identifies some of the non-paid advertising or indirectly-paid such as social-network advertising and viral spread brand messages are potentially most valuable forms of advertising. Deriving from Tuten’s remarks advertising in this research is defined as “two-way or interactive form of non-personal communication for promotional purposes”.

However, there are no common ground among academics and researchers concerning how advertising works. There are several theoretical models developed by academics and practitioners concerning this question. Most common theoretical approaches include sequential models such as Hierarchy of effects model, Means-ends theory, Aida, and Information processing model (Fill, 1999, p. 266-268; Clow & Baack, 2001, p. 298-300). It is important for the marketers to know how consumers acquire, select, and interpret information in order to formulate effective marketing strategies. This is all part of perception process in which “individual receives, selects, organizes, and interprets information to create meaningful picture of the world” (Belch & Belch, 2009, p. 119).

Advertising is considered as an important part of organizations’ marketing programs. Advertising still is one of the most cost-efficient way of reaching the audience and build brand awareness or brand equity. (Belch & Belch, 2009, p. 19) Therefore, advertisement to be efficient and effective, it needs to be likable, interesting, meaningful and relevant. Advertisement message should be contextually compatible with both the target audience and the brand. (Fill, 1999, p. 279) Different components of culture are affecting how advertising is perceived and thus framing for the culture is needed. Cultural values and beliefs need to be understood in order to tailor suitable advertising execution for a specific market. Even when environments could look similar in terms of economic development, legal restrictions, technology etc. differences in culture lead to different type of advertising appeals (De Pelsmacker et al., 2013, p. 232-235). Previous research has favoured the assumption that match between advertising and cultural values, cultural congruence, leads to more favourable attitudes (Zhang & Gelb, 1996). This chapter will continue by first exploring the new channels of mobile marketing and continuing with the central process of marketing communication with its linkages to the context and environment.

### 2.2 Mobile Marketing

Mobile phone today is much more than its original role as a phone, a tool for verbal communication. It still is a communication device but new functions and meanings are constantly being constructed. Now phone is seen as not only a communication device but also as a mini-computer, medium, interaction device, source of entertainment and information etc. (Hartmann, 2008, p. 7-8). The first breakthrough was when phones turned mobile. In the beginning mobile phones were carried by cars but advances in battery technology enabled phones to be carried in our pockets and purses. The powerful and portable batteries turned the phone into a mobile phone. Another advancement of display technology led the path to our current smartphones. From your screen you were able to read SMS messages, the number or name of the caller, and not only talk. (Agar, 2013)
It is hard to imagine the current aspects of mobile phone without the existence of a screen. First generation cell phones were focused on making phone calls and could barely offer any other functions. Analog mobile systems were turned to digital for second generation (2G) mobile phones. It introduced the short message service (SMS) to the users followed by data connections to the Internet. Any remarkable changes to the previous system were not brought by the third generation (3G) mobile phone. However, new applications and functions such as camera started to emerge. (Fitzek & Reichert, 2007, p. 3) The final turn from a merely communication handset to a truly multi-function device was the advancements on wireless networks. The fourth generation of mobile phones is often referred to as smartphones. Smartphones are cell phones that can facilitate data access, process with significant computing power, have wireless communication capabilities, and have personal information management applications. Today, mobile phone is not seen as phone per se but more as mobile computing device where communication, computing, and consumer electronics convergence. In addition to the traditional functions, smartphones often have high-resolution display touch screen, built-in personal information management programs typically found in a personal digital assistant (PDA), high-quality camera, and an operating system that allows other computer software to be installed for Internet browsing, e-mail, music player, audio/video, instant messaging, location-sensing capabilities such as GPS, and other applications. Thus, smartphone can be seen as networked computer in the form of a mobile phone. (Zheng & Ni, 2006, p. 1-15; Hosch, 2013)

Not only technological but also economic development has increased our mobile phone usage and availability around the world. There are over 5.9 billion mobile subscribers and this amount is growing constantly led by developing countries such as China and India (Schofield, 2013, p. 175). Not only the tradition use of mobile phones is growing but also mobile web usage is also increasing. Wireless broadband penetration has grown to 68.4% in the OECD area meaning there are now more than two wireless subscriptions for every three inhabitants (OECD, 2014). More than 1.2 billion active mobile web users exist worldwide, but Asia is the top region with active subscriptions (Schofield, 2013, p. 175). In addition, two Asian countries, South Korea and Japan, currently hold over 100% penetrations (OECD, 2014). As a matter of fact, through the development of mobile phones, wireless access and mobile applications new channels and ways of marketing occur.

As mobile phones begin resemble networked computers the applications used on computers and in the Internet are transmitted to the mobile usage. When software developers and end-users started to call World Wide Web as Web 2.0 the new era of user participation and two-way communication began. Thus, Web 2.0 can be seen as the platform for the evolution of Social Media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 60-61). Social Media can be defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC)” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). It encompasses a wide range of online, word-of-mouth forums such as blogs, chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer e-mail, Internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs, and social networking websites, to name a few (Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p. 358). Even when several definitions and perspectives of Social Media emphasize the aspect of users as the content generators, organizations are realizing the importance of Social Media in their marketing strategies and efforts. The tools
and strategies for marketing communication have changed significantly by realizing the
opportunities of social media, even when referred to as consumer-generated media
(Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p. 357). Some of the most well-known Social Media sites such
as Facebook, Blogger, Twitter, and WordPress are leaders also in mobile usage but new
and upcoming social networks are appearing (Nielsen, 2012). A new form of Social
networks, instant-messaging (IM) or mobile messaging applications have appeared and
developed together with smartphones and becoming a threat to Facebook and Twitter
(Research and Markets, 2014). These new forms of mobile messaging apps are offering
free chat messaging as well as voice and video communications. In addition, some of the
messaging applications are offering mobile entertainment and commerce thus providing
wider range of services to the users.

Tripathi & Siddiqui (2013, p. 80) address the importance of mobile advertising as a part of
mobile commerce. Mobile social media belongs to the mobile marketing applications and
Kaplan (2012, p. 130) defines mobile marketing as “any marketing activity conducted
through a ubiquitous network to which consumers are constantly connected using a
personal mobile device”. In addition, he identifies three condition required for mobile
marketing; network, access to this network, and a personal mobile device. Different mobile
marketing applications can be identified by two variables of high-low knowledge (the
degree of knowledge concerning the network) and push-pull triggers (initiator of the
communication) (Kaplan, 2012). To differentiate between mobile social media applications
Kaplan (2012) has also created matrix (see table I) of four types of mobile social media
applications, depending on whether the message takes account of the specific location of
the user (location-sensitivity) and whether it is received and processed by the user
instantaneously or with a time delay (time-sensitivity).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location-sensitivity</th>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time-sensitivity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quick-timers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Space-timers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices to increase immediacy (e.g., posting Twitter messages or Facebook status updates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange of messages with relevance for one specific location at one specific point-in time (e.g., Facebook Places; Foursquare; Gowalla)</td>
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<td>Slow-timers</td>
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<td>Space-locators</td>
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<td>Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices (e.g., watching a YouTube video or reading a Wikipedia entry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exchange of messages, with relevance for one specific location, which are tagged to a certain place and read later by others (e.g., Yelp; Qype)</td>
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Table I Matrix of mobile social media applications by Kaplan (2012)
2.2.1 MOBILE MESSAGING APPLICATIONS

The usage of messaging applications instead of standard texting services among smartphone users is soaring (Einhorn & Frier, 2014). Understanding the nature of smartphone messaging applications and their usage is important but due to the short existence of smartphones and this type of applications there are extremely low amount of previous research. There are several mobile messaging applications available for consumers starting from straight-up texting tools such as WhatsApp, multi-communication platforms, all the way to dating apps such as Tinder (Adweek, 2014). One of the most well-known messaging applications is WhatsApp with 450 million users around the world and dominant position in Western countries. However, especially in Asian region local messaging apps are winning over users. In China, WeChat is the leading messaging service with 272 million users and growing constantly. KakaoTalk has grasped the status of the country’s top application in South Korea and has penetrated already 93 percent of the country's roughly 36 million smartphones. (Einhorn & Frier, 2014) Finally, Line has 370 million users worldwide (Einhorn & Frier, 2014) and is one of the most popular applications in Japan where it is based. In this study we are focusing on the multi-communication platforms which main function is personal or group messaging but has developed to include other elements such as sharing pictures and comments, play games, and follow friends, celebrities and brands. These smartphone applications such as KakaoTalk, WeChat, and Line have enabled marketers to utilize new marketing channels. By creating a company or brand page within these apps, users are able to add them as friends and follow their updates. This type of marketing communication through smartphone messaging apps fulfills Kaplan’s (2012) three conditions for mobile marketing. As noted before this type of channel has similarities with mobile social media marketing. Even though the studied mobile social media platforms are not identified as marketing application but their main function is to be a networking tool, they can be seen as relatively high of knowledge and pull initiation. This type of high/pull group is identified by situations where customers actively give permission to be contacted and provide personal information about them. Also with these messaging applications the customer can take the initiative to terminate the communication. Mobile messaging applications, the studied marketing channel of this research, are not location sensitive but can be seen as time-sensitive due to its creation and transmission of messages immediately that could be of relevance at a particular moment. Therefore, this communication is greatly dependent on the receiver. Application users may not have instant notifications of app advertisements but can access them whenever they prefer to do so. This new channel of communication provides both opportunities and challenges to the marketers.

2.3 COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Multiple forms of communication, through which we create and manage social realities, exist in our societies. Communication has several conceptualizations within different disciplines. Still there are elements that most definitions agree on relating to transmission of ideas, persuasiveness, and the process. In addition, communication always has a context such as cultural, developmental, or technological in which it is presented, received, reacted to, and acted upon. Thus, communication is seen context specific. (Narula, 2006, p. 2-7)
Based on the notes of Narula (2006) in this thesis communication is considered as the two-way process of transmitting ideas in a persuasive manner. This permits the study to consider the marketing perspective as well as the mode and channel of communication focus of this research.

The communication process is seen very complex and the success depends on various factors related to the different elements of the process (Belch & Belch, 2009, p. 145). The Basic Model of Communication has evolved throughout the years (Belch & Belch, 2009, p. 146; Narula, 2006, p. 11-25). However, there are various communication models that reflect the process of communication. Many of the newer models are based on empirical communication research and deliberations of scholars in the discipline. Some of the key issues include the interaction between the sender and the receiver as well as contextual approach to meaning and mutual understanding among the communication participants. (Narula, 2006, p. 23-24) To this day several models of communication starting from Aristotele’s and Laswell’s, to Shannon & Weaver’s and Gerbner’s models have been developed (Narula, 2006, p. 11-32). Within marketing context Wilbur Schramm’s model is accepted as the basic model of communication (Liu et al., 2011, p. 44). His interactive model took into consideration the two-way interchange of messages which is seen even in mass communication. For the purpose of this study and as strength of this model it includes the context where meanings assigned to the message can be different depending on the specific context.

![Figure 1 Basic Model of Communication by Belch & Belch (2009, p. 146)](image)

Effective marketing communication involves nine elements shown in figure 1. From these two elements, the sender and the receiver, form the parties between whom the marketing communication is conducted. Marketing communication is done through the communication tools of message and media, by encoding and decoding the message. Encoding means the process of forming advertising message by translating ideas, thoughts and information into symbolic form. When the receiver is decoding the sender’s communication, message is translated back into thought. Audience will have a response to
the communication which can vary from advertisement likability, positive attitude and purchasing behavior to no feelings or actions. In an interactive communication the receiver communicates his/her response to the sender, which is called feedback. There can be some unplanned static or distortion, noise, during the communication which can lead to different interpretation of the message than the one designed by the sender. In order to achieve the effectiveness of the communication the encoding and decoding of the message needs to be aligned. The symbols transmitted by the sender should be familiar to the receiver since overlapping experiences yield in more effective message. However, the cultural, socio-economical, etc. background of the marketer and the target audience does not always match. In order to effectively communicate the sender should understand the experiences of the receiver. (Belch & Belch, 2009, p. 146-154; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 432-433)

2.3.1 FROM IDEA AND STRATEGY TO EXECUTION STYLES

There are multiple ways of convey an advertising message. However, an advertising message design is not an isolated process. It derives from the creative brief but takes into account the media channel and its part in the wider integrated communications (Clow & Baack, 2001, p. 298). The nature and form of the advertisement message needs to be decided even if advertising is meant to persuade brand-loyal customers, or reassure current buyers, or just create awareness (Fill, 1999, p. 281-282). As in other communication tools, advertising campaigns needs to be translated from the creative idea and strategy to advertising execution. This translation needs to convince the customer and thus not focus only the on the seller objectives. Knowing the target audience is essential for encoding and decoding the message. (De Pelsmacker et al., 2013, p. 203-213)

However, the concepts of advertising designing process are very vague and should be clarified for the purpose of this research. First, Sharma & Singh (2006, p. 255) see the creative strategy as the underlying guide of the creative tactics of how the message is being communicated. According to their view advertising appeals act as the basis for the execution and creative execution is seen as the way advertising appeal is communicated. Jiang & Wei (2012) refers to the selection of appeals, copy, and illustrations to execute the chosen creative strategy as the basis of execution of advertisement. In line with their approach is Shah & D’Souza (2009) who sees creative execution as the physical form of an advertisement. They list creative execution elements to be message appeals, message structure, execution styles, as well as tone and design. In addition, production details describing the look, feel and sound are considered as a part of creative execution of a final message form. Their perception of creative execution is more comprehensive and considers variety of marketing channels.

The most abstract conceptualization comes from Mueller (2011, p. 199) who describes advertising strategy as “what is said” in the advertising campaign whereas execution is “how it is said”. On the contrary, the most comprehensive process is seen in the work of Belch & Belch (2009) who identify the decisions of creative strategy, appeals and execution styles leading to determining the creative tactics. These tactics include verbal, visual and audio elements such as headlines, layout, video, and music. Finally, De Mooij (1998) identifies various aspects of advertising as the creative strategy, content, theme, and
form. These forms of advertising have similarities with the execution formats presented by Belch & Belch (2009). All these definitions and perspectives agree on the distinction between advertising strategy and execution, but some fine differences are found in the content of these aspects (see table II).

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<tr>
<td>Physical form of advertisement</td>
<td>Execution style is the way appeal is turned into an advertising message</td>
<td>Execution is how the advertising message is said</td>
<td>Execution is selection of appeals, copy, and illustration</td>
<td>Advertising forms</td>
<td>Execution is the way advertising appeal is communicated</td>
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<td>Appeals</td>
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<td>Structure</td>
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<td>Execution Styles</td>
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<td>Tone</td>
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Table II Concepts of advertising execution constructed by author

Creative idea is the first step in the process towards advertising strategy and execution. Creative idea is the original and imaginative concept designed for an advertisement. To translate this idea to the audience several appeals, formats, and execution strategies are utilized (De Pelsmacker et al., 2013, p. 203-213). The aim of execution is to enhance the creative idea. The idea can be executed in various ways that can be mutually compelling but occasionally execution can be the creative idea itself. Several brands use the same theme in their advertising campaign but utilize different execution tactics. In addition, different executional elements can affect how audience receives the message from the sender. The receiver can agree and respond positively to the advertising strategy and chosen appeals but dislike how it is executed. (Cooper, 1997, p. 83) This process is unified and explained in the figure 2 combining and clarifying the previously mentioned elements.

Figure 2 Creative Process constructed by author
### 2.3.2 Execution Styles and Strategies

A number of execution strategies exist in the world of advertising. In order to compare advertising across cultures several classification systems have been developed varying from covering all aspects of advertising style to including one few elements. Also the previously noticed obscurity and incoherence in the definition and concept leads to variety of categorizations.

The general advertising execution appeal can be divided into rational or emotional categories (Murthy & Bhojanna, 2007, p. 165-167). Sharma & Singh (2006, p. 235-238) identify a third type of moral execution appeal. They consider rational execution appeal as informative or logical where the content of the ad emphasize facts and learning where as emotional execution appeal does not focus on the functions and features but more on the feelings about the brand. The style of moral execution appeal is drawing the audiences focus on what is right. Moral is often used to support or draw attention to social issues. These executional appeals can be carried out with different executional tactics and therefore are underlying the executional styles. However, in this study we examine whether the preferences are towards more factual presentation where information is presented or towards entertainment where ad is rather entertaining than informative.

Sharma & Singh (2006, p.243) presents 11 ways of execute advertising message: (1) straight-sell or factual message, (2) animation, (3) scientific technical evidence, (4) Personality symbol, (5) demonstration, (6) fantasy, (7) testimonial, (8) dramatization, (9) Slice of life, (10) humor, (11) combinations. This categorization is congruent with the identification of Belch & Belch (2009, p.291) regarding how advertising message can be presented. They introduces 12 formats of executing advertising message: (1) Straight sell or factual message, (2) scientific/technical evidence, (3) demonstrations, (4) comparison, (5) testimonial, (6) slice of life, (7) animation, (8) personality symbol, (9) imagery, (10) dramatization, (11) humor, (12) combinations.

Some compatible forms were distinguished by Appelbaum & Halliburton (1993) who categorized 10 forms of advertising in addition to five dimensions of advertising tones. They define advertising forms as the way advertisement is presented, structured and delivered. These forms are (1) Slice of life, (2) little story around the product, (3) testimonial, (4) talking heads, (5) characters associated with the product, (6) demonstration, (7) product in action, (8) cartoon, (9) international/national, (10) all other formats. However, the most extensive categorization is presented by De Mooij (1998) who analyzed more than 5000 television commercials in 13 different countries and print advertisements from over 20 countries basing her study on adaptation of Franzen’s model of basic advertising forms. She sees these execution styles universal after appearing throughout cultures. However, different cultures use and prefer certain styles over others. These categorizations of execution forms (in table III) present elements that can be used in advertising through different advertising channels.
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<td>Theater</td>
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<td>Humor</td>
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<td>Little story around the product</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
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<td>Play or act around product</td>
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<td>Straight sell or factual message</td>
<td>Straight sell or factual message</td>
<td>Announcement</td>
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<td>Pure presentation</td>
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<td>Product message</td>
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<td>Corporate presentation, documentary</td>
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<td>Combinations</td>
<td>Combinations</td>
<td>International/national</td>
<td>Combining previous styles</td>
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Table III Categorizations of execution forms constructed by author

By analyzing and comparing before mentioned categorizations and advertising forms numerous congruent elements were found. Execution styles reflected similar elements which could be grouped together and form a coherent categorization. Since these categorizations derive from the traditional advertising media such as commercials and print ads, some aspects and elements are not applicable or suitable in the mobile application.
advertising context. The following elements (see figure 3) were found to appear within different categorization and provide potential execution in mobile marketing.

**Figure 3 Execution styles constructed by author**

All of the categorizations identify that these forms are not the only possible execution styles but these can be combined or new forms can be found within different cultures. In addition, there are other execution elements that are not included in these categorizations but could be incorporated to explore the likability and preference of advertising across cultures. However, most of the previous research (e.g. Hong, et al., 1987; Hsu & and Barker, 2013; Zhang & Gelb, 1996) in international advertising focuses on the appeals underlining the advertising execution. In addition to before mentioned advertising forms, this research
assumes that the new mobile advertising channel brings verbal elements into the execution and therefore should be incorporated as execution styles. Therefore, certain styles of interpersonal communication are adapted to the framework.

Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey (1988) identified four verbal communication styles; direct versus indirect, elaborative versus succinct, personal versus contextual, and instrumental versus affective. Marketing communication can be identified to be direct or indirect in nature. In direct style of communication intentions are explicitly expressed whereas in indirect style intentions and meanings are embedded in message. Elaborative versus succinct verbal style includes three verbal styles; elaborative (use of rich expressive language), exacting (only required information is given), and succinct (use of understatements, pauses, and silences). They identify verbal personal style as the individual-centered language and enhance the personal identity and orientation whereas contextual style is the role-centered language emphasizing the context-related identity. Finally, sender-oriented instrumental style is seen as goal oriented approach. On the contrary affective verbal style is receiver and process oriented.

Often when discussing marketing communication we think information or verbal communication of the advertising. However, the visual elements of the communication are also an important aspect of advertising execution. Advertisement can be relying heavily on visual elements instead of verbal clues or use visual portion to reinforce the verbal message. Thus, I believe exploring the verbal versus visual likability should be incorporated into the framework. Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey’s (1988) communication styles can also be reflected in the visual context. Therefore, this study modifies and applies the Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey’s communication styles in the context of advertising execution. Figure 4 presents the advertising execution styles selected to the framework for this research. It combines elements from previous research, theories and interpersonal communication suitable to the context of mobile messaging application as the marketing channel.

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**Figure 4 Theoretical frame constructed by author**
2.4 CULTURE OF THE RECEIVER

As discussed earlier, culture seems to have great influence on marketing communication. In today’s global marketplace marketers have to be aware of the cultural influences of their own as well as influence of the foreign market. It has been noted that advertising needs to reflect people’s values since not all consumer values are similar. Thus, it is difficult to harmonize advertising communication among the global market. This is difficult to grasp especially by marketers who tend to wish that all people are the same. Idea that there would be cultural universals, behavioral aspects that exist in all cultures, is interesting and tempting since it would lead to fewer costs and more standardized marketing communication. (De Mooij, 1998, p. 42-44)

One of the most difficult concepts is culture and how it is defined across nations, disciplines and practitioners. The concept of culture includes both abstract and concrete elements and is a multifaceted phenomenon (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 9). In English language and several others the word culture is describing art such as classical music, theatre, and paintings. Kroeberg & Kluckhohn identified 164 definitions of culture proposed by practitioners of different disciplines and presumably this number has grown over the years (Boyd, 1985, p. 33; Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 9). This wide range of definitions partly derives from the variety of disciplines studying culture and their perception of how culture should be viewed at. However, in marketing and advertising context culture and cultural differences mostly refer to the expression of culture (De Mooij, 1998, p. 42).

Another problem regarding the definitions of culture is the unclear distinction between culture and civilization which are often these used as synonyms. Taylor sees culture or civilization as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquire by a man as a member of a society” (Zhang, 2009, p. 12). There are several definitions of culture emphasizing different aspects of the concept. The definition of culture by Kluckhohn (1962, p. 56) is more concrete than several other concepts of culture. He sees the concept of culture as “historically derived system of explicit and implicit design for living that tends to be shared by all or specially designed members of the group” (Kluckhohn, 1962, p. 56).

One of the most widely cited and accepted view is Hofstede’s perception of culture. Hofstede’s definition of culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” reflects the same content than Kluckhohn’s more extensive perception of culture (Hofstede, 2010, p. 9). He identifies that “culture is not a characteristic of individuals; it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 5). His view distinguishes culture from personality, which is individual’s unique personal set of mental programs. Personality is not shared with any other human being but culture is common for society (De Mooij, 1998, p. 42).

To describe the concept of culture in an marketing context Rice (1997, p. 70) sees culture as "the values, attitudes, beliefs, ideas, artefacts and other meaningful symbols represented in the pattern of life adopted by people that help them interpret, evaluate and communicate
as members of a society”. According to this view culture is both affecting and describing our behavior. Rice (1997) notes that the definition is a wide-ranging but so is the concept. In this study culture is viewed similar to Rice (1997, p. 70). Culture is a social characteristic of people which is learned by the members of the society. Culture is cumulative passing from generation to generation. However, this does not mean culture is constant. Culture is seen as adaptive since most of the institutions and elements are changing according to the needs of the society. Thus embedded ideas, values and our acts as cultural products are guiding us. As discussed above, advertising can be considered as a mirror of our cultural values and it reflects our behavior and choices.

Culture can be viewed differently but most often it is realized as a concept of different layers or levels. The values, beliefs, needs or cognitive processing within the layers or under these levels are hidden from our consciousness and we are only able to experience the up most layers of cultural artefacts and symbols (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 10). Thus, culture is important and has great unconscious influence on how we behave, perceive and value things. Hofstede (1991) views these layers of a culture as an onion building from values in the core, towards rituals, heroes, and symbols. Here symbols represent the most visible and values the deepest manifestations of culture. Ting-Toomey (1999) on the other hand describes this as an iceberg where traditions, believes, and values are hidden under the sea and we are only able to see the symbols and cultural artefacts in the top of the iceberg. (See figure 5).

![Figure 5 Culture in layers by Hofstede (1991) and Ting-Toomey (1999)](image)

Hofstede et al. (2010) has noted that the layers of culture do not only limit to the expressions of culture but people belong to different groups or categories of people. Since each group carry a set of common mental program that constitutes its culture, people bear several layers of programming that in turn corresponds to different levels of culture (Hofstede et al. 2010, p. 17-18). He identifies the levels as national level (one’s country);
regional, ethnic, religious, or linguistic level; gender level; generation level; social class level (education and profession); organizational, departmental, or corporate level for those who are employed. These levels may not be in harmony and in our modern societies these mental programmes are often in conflict and thus it is difficult to predict people’s behavior particularly in new situations (Hofstede et al, 2010, p. 18). Different levels have different expressions of culture which may not be seen in other levels. Thus, when discussing about culture the level concerned needs to be specified (De Mooij, 1998, p. 43). Most commonly the term culture is used to distinguish between ethnic or national groups. They have gained interest through the research such as Hofstede (1991) which brought the great national cultural differences and similarities into light.

According to Morgan (1997, p. 129) there is no fully homogeneous culture in this world. But even the different layers of Hofstede can be seen affecting to the national cultures of ours, since our education, language, religion, political system, nature etc. are influencing how our values and beliefs develop. Even though there is systematic lack of coherence in the concept of national culture and we often get trapped in stereotyping cultures, these “typical values” can help us to assess culture from the national level. We say that Germans are punctual, or that French are not willing to speak English, which is not to say that all Germans or French act this way. However, we can say that these values or behavior are more typical for these cultures. In addition, the basic characteristics of culture assume that culture is learned within a long period of time when a group of people have been interacting with each other. Culture is seen rather enduring and the mental programming is deeply embedded in us. Even if people move away from their cultural environment it is difficult to eject one’s culture and adapt a new one. (De Mooij, 1998, p. 49-50; Usunier, 1998, p. 25; Thomas & Inkson, 2003, p. 24-27)

In this research we discuss culture in the relation of distinguishing the cultures in terms of nations. Still, there are some approaches (e.g. Kluckholm’s value orientations and Murdocks’s cultural universals) which assume that some universal values reflected in the modes of behavior exist across cultures. However, these universal values can be reflected differently in the behavior of all cultures. Cooking and food taboos are universals and the need to eat exist among all humans, but how it reflects in our behavior differs across cultures; what we prefer to eat, how we cook and prepare the food and how we eat the food varies across cultures. (De Mooij, 1998, p. 44; Sandhusen, 2000, p. 126-128) This study considers this perspective of cultural universals as cultural blindness and assumes that culture is expressed different ways in this world.

Concerning the perception process in which stimuli is selected, organized and evaluated by individual was discussed as a part of effective advertising. However, people focus on different stimuli from the environment and exclude other. This is called selective perception which is even more vital context since commercial communication is increasing and people needs to become more and more selective concerning which information receives their attention. Culture influences the selective process through their individually learned views. These interests, values, and culture act as a filter of what we eventually choose to let to our attention. World and actions are seen from our own cultural frame of mind. To a certain sense we are chained to our own cultural prison from where it is hard to
both communicate and receive information effectively across cultures. (De Mooij, 1998, p. 47-49)

Values are the most central part of culture and thus culture is often studied in terms of values. Rokeach (1975, p. 5) defines a value as “an enduring belief that one mode of conduct or end-state of existence is preferable to an opposing mode of conduct or end-state of existence”. These values form a system which is learned formation of principles and rules guiding the life. Values are enduring and the change often noticed is in the expression of the value. However, some long-term change can affect the value system by shifting in certain values. (De Mooij, 1998, p. 98-99) An important category of cross-cultural research identifies sets of cultural values useful in describing cultures. The frameworks created by cross-cultural research describe different cultural dimensions that can help to explain the similarities and differences between countries (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). So far, large part of cross-cultural marketing and advertising research has relied on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions but to a lesser extent Schwartz’s cultural values and GLOBE study are employed by the researchers (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Next a closer look will be taken to some of the frameworks of cultural dimensions.

### 2.4.1 Dimensions of culture

There are several models and theories of cultural dimensions developed and applied to understand the cross-cultural differences faced by students and practitioners in the field of marketing (Brewer & Venaik, 2012). Culture can be observed and studied in variety of levels such as national, organizational, or individual. Even though culture can be viewed as unique for a specific organization it derives from a national culture which is deeply rooted in the individual. Models for understanding and classifying cultural differences and similarities can be used as an instrument of comparisons and clustering of cultures (De Mooij, 1998, p. 64-65). Culture models have variety of views concerning which values, norms or beliefs typify different cultures.

One of the earliest frameworks was Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck’s (1961) six dimensions to categorize society which derived from anthropological perspective (see table IV). They note that people are facing universal problems/questions that derive from the interaction with others, time, space and nature. After an extensive study they noted that everyone turned to their culture in order to answer the basic questions and saw that cultural assumptions were the responses to these universal problems. These dimensions or value orientations describe the cultural values that exist in our society. Relationships to nature takes upon the question whether people have a need or duty to control, submit to nature, or to work together with nature (Thomas, 2008, p. 48). Orientation concerning human nature addressed the question of what intrinsic character human nature is (Liu et al, 2011, p. 110). Society can also be categorized according to the relationships between people where the greatest concern and responsibility can be for one’s self and immediate family, own group that is defined in different ways, or for one’s groups that are arranged in a rigid hierarchy (Thomas, 2008, p. 48). Human activity refers to the nature of how cultures view activity; spontaneous, striving for goals and accomplishments, or has its goals in the development (Baldwin et al., p. 85-86). How space is conceived reflects where space is seen as
predominantly private, public of mixture of these two (Usunier, 1998, p. 27). Orientation to
time answers the question related to what temporal focus human life is and if people should
make decisions with respect to traditions of events in the past, events in the present or
events in the future (Thomas, 2008, p. 48).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Dimensions</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human nature</strong></td>
<td>Basically evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship with Nature</strong></td>
<td>Subjugation to nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship with people</strong></td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space</strong></td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table IV Value orientation dimensions by Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck adapted from Adler & Gundersen (2008)**

This model presents cultural variation along the society’s preferences. However, it does not assume that high preference in one part of the value orientation leads low preference in the other two but all preferences can appear in a culture. Though, these preferences are ranked in order. (Usunier, 1998, p. 26) In addition, even though society’s cultural orientation can be described in terms of these six cultural dimensions weaker orientations can still exist simultaneously (Gannon, 2013, p. 9).

Some of the most well-known cultural models include Hall’s (1976; 1984) elements; context, space, and time. The dimension of space (proxemics) reflects how space is viewed by individuals of a culture and the dimension of time distinguishes how people handle time between monochronic and polychronic cultures. From Hall’s dimension, high- and low-context dimension of culture which is focusing on the communication patterns within cultures has been most widely used in international marketing studies (Engelen & Brettel, 2011). In high-context cultures an extensive information network exists among the social relationships. However, in low-context cultures information needs to be searched for in every interaction with the social surroundings. The important aspect of Hall’s framework is the inclusion of both verbal and visual communication. He identifies that in low-context cultures words are carrying most of the information where as in high-context cultures less emphasis is put on the verbal aspects of the message. Classification is based on whether explicit or contextual messages are communicated in each culture. (De Mooij, 1998, p. 65-67) Even though wide use in the international marketing discipline, the classification has faced some critique since it only allows the classifications of cultures along only few dimensions (Soares et. al., 2007) and often only the dimension of context is viewed.

Another framework for understanding culture was developed by Gannon, whose study of culture uses metaphors as a method to compare the cultural mind-sets of nations (De Mooij, 1998, p. 64; Soares et. al., 2007). His framework derives from the work of cross-cultural psychologists and anthropologists emphasising limited number of factors and dimensions. Gannon identifies cultural metaphors as “any major phenomenon, activity, or institution
with which all or most of its members closely identify cognitively and/or emotionally” (Gannon et al., 2013, p. 1). Gannon’s framework involves identification of phenomenon, activity, or institution in a national culture which most of the members do perceive important and identify cognitively and/or emotionally. These metaphors then become the basis of understanding and describing the culture in hand. However, Gannon (2013) notes that these cultural metaphors cannot encompass all of the reality of a culture they are only a point of beginning and knowledge about culture will change these perceptions. Through Gannon’s cultural metaphors one can understand national cultures but also diversity within a nation and even continents. Gannon (2013) sees this approach to examining culture as a supplementing or enriching the dimensional approaches of Hofstede, Kluckhohn & Srodtbeck and Hall. Gannon (2013) describes certain nations through cultural metaphors of the

- Thai Kingdom
- Japanese Garden
- Bedouin Jewelery and Saudi Arabia
- Turkish Coffee House
- Dón Gánh: two sides of Vietnam
- Polish village church
- Kimchi and Korea
- Singapore Hawker Centers
- China’s great wall and cross-cultural paradox Chinese family altar
- India: dance of Shiva India: a kaleidoscope of diversity
- Swedish stuga
- Finnish sauna
- Danish Christmas luncheon
- German symphony
- Irish conversations
- Canadian backpack and flag
- French wine
- American football
- Traditional British house
- Malaysian Balik Kampung
- Nigerian marketplace
- Israeli kibbutzim and moshavim
- Italian opera
- Belgian lace
- Mexican fiesta
- Australian outdoor recreational activities
- Sub-Saharan African bush taxi
- Brazilian samba
- Argentine tango
- Spanish bullfight
- Portuguese bullfight
- Russian ballet

However, De Mooij (2010, p. 68) considers cultural metaphors as a great way of gathering insight of cultures but assesses that they would not be useful when comparing and analysing cultures.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) identified seven dimensions of culture after spending several years researching the preferences and values of people in 40 countries around the world. Their framework attempts to explain cultural differences in terms of fundamental challenges that humans face when organizing social communities. They see that different cultures have their own way of thinking, own values and own beliefs but people are not aware of their own socialization and value orientations. Three categories; relationships with people, perspectives on time, and the relationship with the environment group the cultural orientation dimensions which are presented as polarities of values (see table V).
Universalist cultures consider general rules and obligations as the source of reference whereas more particularist cultures see unique “particular” situations more important than rules (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2003, p. 33). The second dimension reflects the level of dependency of group in decision making and problem solving as well as how much importance is given to group interests. Affective cultures are showing their emotions whereas neutral cultures people control their feelings and perceive emotionality as embarrassing and impropriate. This dimension was later changed to equality vs hierarchy dimension after conducting research in Asia. The specific versus diffuse examines how and to what extent culture emphasizes privacy. Specific cultures tend to have large public space whereas diffuse cultures do not distinguish between private and public space. Ascription and achievement is concerned of how we are accord to our status. Among all age, social class, gender, and wealth are variables that build the status in ascriptive cultures whereas personal achievement attribute status in achievement-oriented cultures. The dimension of time divides cultures into sequential; linear or sequential where only one task is done at a time, and synchronic; where time is seen to be more flexible and multiple things are done at the same time. Finally, Trompenaars has identified two attitudes people have towards nature; people feel they have control over or feel they have impact on nature. This reflects how a culture considers being in control of their destiny or fate and their impact on the surroundings. (Hurn & Tomalin, p. 47-53) Trompenaars’ framework has similarities with both Hofstede’s (individualism/collectivism; masculinity/femininity) and Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck’s (time orientation; relationship with nature). However, his work has not received great empirical use and validations.

To understand cultural differences Schwartz created a conceptual framework (see figure 6) on cultural values on societal level by first studying individual values 38 nations and discovering three social requirements that every culture has of itself; the relationship between the individual and the group; assuring responsible social behavior; and the roles of humans in the natural and social world. (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007; Thomas & Inkson, 2009, p. 47-48) He sees values as desirable goals guiding our lives which are used to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalism vs Particularism</td>
<td>Social versus personal obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism vs Individualism</td>
<td>Individual versus group interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral vs Affective</td>
<td>Expression of emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific vs Diffuse relationships</td>
<td>Degree of separation of personal and public space and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement vs Ascription</td>
<td>Orientation to achievement and basis of determining status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential vs Synchronic</td>
<td>Attitude towards time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with environment</td>
<td>Control over destiny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V Cultural Dimensions adopted from Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1998)
evaluate events and courses of action. The model is structured according to the similarities and differences of these values. From the three universal requirements 56 values that satisfy these needs derived. Later, seven value types were formed after analyzing samples of 63 countries in order to define cultural dimensions at a national level. The result consisted of three contrasting cultural dimensions; conservatism versus autonomy, hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony. Even though all cultures face these universal issues, different cultures do it differently due to their different value perceptions.

**Figure 6 Schwartz’s cultural model adopted from Watson et al., (2002)**

Schwartz’s study is a large-scale empirical research which is improving the previous research of cultural dimensions. This study is one of the rare which notes the difference between individual and national cultural levels. Brett & Okumura (1998) claim this framework to be superior to Hofstede’s due to the systematic research techniques and more recent data. However, Okazaki & Mueller (2007) notes that Schwartz's typology has not been greatly applied by marketing or advertising research which might derive from the scattered presentation of results across different publications. Nonetheless, Schwartz’s framework can be useful for researches and notably have commonalities with Hofstede’s and Trompenaars’ work.

The two models most often cited and utilized cultural frameworks by students, academics, and practitioners are Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and GLOBE study conducted by House et al. Hofstede’s framework has been one of the most important and influential classifications in the past few decades. It is adopted and validated in advertising field by many researchers (e.g. Hatzithomas, Zotos & Boutsouki, 2011). Originally consisted of
four dimensions, the framework was created after extensive survey-research of the work-related behavior and values of people in IBM Corporation in over 50 countries. Hofstede formed four dimensions that showed significant differences between cultures in; power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance dimensions. Later, a fifth dimensions, long-term orientation, was discovered by Hofstede and Bond (1988) when working in the Republic of China. This fifth dimension is related to mainly Asian countries, since westerners may not necessarily perceive all these values important. Even Hofstede notices the selective perception of researches which lead to the late discovery of the fifth dimension. (Hofstede 1997; De Mooij, 1998; Okazaki & Mueller, 2007)

The added fifth dimension, long-term orientation (LTO), focuses on whether values focus on producing and achieving long term goals or valuing past and present. Long-term oriented cultures tend to value persistence and future oriented goals but short-term oriented cultures value traditions (Hofstede & Bond, 1988, p. 16). A later study by Michael Minkov generated two more dimensions of which other was near replication of LTO. Due to this study the number of country scores for the fifth dimension was extended to 93. Even though Bond and of Minkov’s dimensions correlate strongly they are not fully identical. (Hofstede, 2014)

One of the original dimensions, power distance (PDI), reflects the fact that some people have more power than others. It incorporates the social differences or inequality which is found in every society, but how it is handled varies across cultures. Cultures of high power distance do not question the inequality and see authority and hierarchy as natural whereas countries scoring low emphasize equality and see these differences negatively. (Hofstede, 2001, p. 79) Hofstede’s (2001, p. 209) dimension of individualism/collectivism describes the relationship of individuals to society and organizations. Individualistic cultures are emphasizing independence, self-realization, freedom, and high level of competition whereas collectivistic cultures value interdependence, harmony, family, security, group-oriented goals, social hierarchies, cooperation, and low level of competition (Choi, Lee & Kim, 2005). Uncertainty avoidance relates to person’s uncertainty about the future which we all try to control with different law and regulations, technology and developments as well as religions. These rules and formality is seen in cultures of strong uncertainty avoidance. (Hofstede, 2001, p. 145) Hofstede (2001) sees the duality of sexes as a fundamental fact. This is issued differently which different societies cope. The dimension of masculinity versus femininity tells us whether masculine values such as success, and achievement or feminine values like caring for others and relationships are prevailing.

The purpose of Hofstede’s model was to understand the differences in work motivations caused by the national cultural background of the employees. GLOBE study, on the other hand, was interested in the effectiveness of leadership styles (De Mooij, 2013, p. 256). As a relatively recent research project, GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) offers another alternative classification system to Hofstede’s framework. In this project over 160 researchers surveyed 17,000 subjects in 62 countries. The aim of GLOBE was to study the effectiveness of leadership behaviors in different cultural contexts. GLOBE study provides definition and focus on the societal level of culture, and explicitly differentiates between two distinct types of cultural manifestations; cultural
practices and cultural values. One of the yield outcomes of the GLOBE study was the formation of nine dimensions of cultural variation; Uncertainty Avoidance, Power distance, Institutional Collectivism (I), In-group Collectivism (II), Gender Egalitarianism, Assertiveness, Future Orientation, Performance Orientation, and Humane Orientation (See figure 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>the extent to which members of a society strive to avoid uncertainty, by relying on established social norms and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>the degree to which individuals in societies are assertive, confrontational, aggressive, and straightforward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power distance</td>
<td>the extent to which members of a society strive to avoid uncertainty, by relying on established social norms and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism I institutional collectivism</td>
<td>the degree to which societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action, as opposed to individual distribution and individual action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism II in-group collectivism</td>
<td>the extent to which members of a society express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their groups, organizations, or families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender egalitarianism</td>
<td>the degree to which a society minimizes gender role differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future orientation</td>
<td>the degree to which members of a society engage in future-oriented behaviors, such as planning, investing, and delaying gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance orientation</td>
<td>the degree to which a society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humane orientation</td>
<td>the extent to which a society encourages and rewards its members for being fair, altruistic, friendly, caring, and kind to others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7 GLOBE study by House (1998) adapted by the author

Some of the dimensions have a strong resemblance with Hofstede’s work and most of the dimensions derive from or are extensions of previous research (e.g. Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). GLOBE Study differs from other frameworks by incorporating two different levels of culture; artefacts and exposed values. Artefacts, the visible processes and behaviors of culture, can be described as the “as is” and thus are the cultural practices. On the other hand, the exposed values which are the perception of individual or society what ought to be reflect what “should be” and are seen as the cultural values (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Interestingly, these showed negative correlation in some of the dimensions meaning that there is a contradiction between these two levels (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). GLOBE study has challenged priori assumptions, deriving largely from the work of Hofstede, that majority of cross-cultural advertising research makes in theory development (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). First, GLOBE contradicts the prevalent perception that calculating the respondents’ individual values is a sufficient measure of the collective culture. Then, the study assumes “that the linkage between values and specific
perceptions of an ad can be generalized to the relationship between values and general perceptions of advertising in the culture” (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007).

### 2.4.2 Cultures of China and South Korea

All of these classifications reflect different aspects of culture and all of them have both merits and short comings. There are great resemblance between models and common focus can be seen in; relationships, power distribution, perception of time, and level of uncertainty. However, Hofstede’s framework together with Hall’s context dimension and Gannon’s cultural metaphors were selected as the frame of cultural comparison since these perspectives suits the research purpose. The wide use of Hofstede’s and Hall’s work leads to larger amount of results from previous studies which give basis for this frame. The usefulness of Hofstede's cultural model was noticed e.g. in Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996); Moon & Chang (2005). De Mooij’s (1998) extensive work on advertising styles and appeals in terms of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions describes advertising elements prevalent in certain dimensions. Hofstede’s framework together with De Mooij’s research can be used for anticipating differences in advertising content in terms of cultural values. This frame is fulfilled with Gannon’s cultural metaphors of China and South Korea to include some of the typical thinking patterns of these cultures that Hofstede’s framework does not include. Hofstede’s dimensions and Hall’s context dimension are helping in determining the advertising styles in South Korea and China filled with Gannon’s metaphors guiding the analysis. Gannon’s description gives more holistic picture of the culture including historical events which can help the researcher to understand these unique values and thinking patterns and customs of these national cultures. Figure 6 presents the placement of China and South Korea in Hofstede’s cultural dimensions.

Korea and China are relatively similar in terms of Hofstede’s dimensions. However, distinct difference comes from the uncertainty avoidance dimension South Korea being one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries in the world. China on the other hand scores low and is comfortable with ambiguity. Their language is full of ambiguous meanings which
make it hard for Western people to follow and understand. Regarding power distance, South Korea is a slightly hierarchical society whereas China is on the higher ranking of the dimension accepting the inequalities. Both China and South Korea are considered as collectivistic cultures where people act more in the interests of the group such as family and not necessarily of themselves. (Hofstede\textsuperscript{2} and Hofstede \textsuperscript{3}, 2014) This type of extensive networks of family and friends usually reflects as high-context communication (De Mooij, 2001, p. 17). Thus, both South Korea and China are seen as high-context cultures.

China is considered as success oriented and driven masculine society but Korea is ranking higher in the femininity emphasising caring and quality of life. With the score of 100, South Korea is one of the most pragmatic, long-term oriented societies in the world. Virtues and good examples guide Korean lives and societal and economic planning and steady growth reflect the long-term orientation of South Korea. In China is also seen as very pragmatic culture. China is viewed to have the ability to adapt traditions easily to changed conditions as well as a planning, saving and investing with the perseverance in achieving results. (Hofstede\textsuperscript{2} and \textsuperscript{3}, 2014)

To analyse the communication styles the distinction of high- versus low-context communication in China and South Korea is done. This is important in order to find out the right level contexting that needs to be achieved; too much could seem like talking down to but too little could mystify them. In an advertising sense, high-context communication cultures can be noticed by the indirect communication with symbols and less copy. Low-context, on the other hand, uses more copy, argumentation, facts and data. Low-context messages can be seen as explicit and direct information often in words where as in High-context messages the information is often part of the context making it fast and efficient. However, this requires familiarity with the system and the communication culture. (De Mooij 1998, p. 64-67, 156-159)

\section*{2.4.3 Kimchi of Korean and Chinese Great Wall & Family Altar}

In Gannon’s metaphors he reflects the culture of Korea to kimchi, fermented spicy cabbage which the most popular side dish of Korea with its hundreds of versions. Gannon describes the long history of Korea and its past in hands of other nations. Gannon as well as this study concerns only South Korea, which was separated from North Korea after the Korean War in 1957. Very unique to South Korea is its rapid development and economic growth since 1970 to its current position.

South Korea is one of the purest and unified nations considered as the most Confucian cultures in the world. Much of Korea’s culture and values derive from Confucianism and especially hierarchical relationships with very high power distance can be seen in most activities in Korean society. Gannon identifies these as the relationships between; father and son, ruler and minister, husband and wife, old and young, friends. The authority-ranking culture of Korea extends to the family but due to the historical elements also equality is increasingly emphasized in social activities such as schools and workplaces. Age as a measure of rank is important in Korea and is often asked immediately in meeting to pursue suitable roles in the relationships. These roles affect so far that often people are not addressed by their names but rather their roles or titles.
The relationship between man and wife is often seen functional. Wives possess power at home which they run while their husbands are working. Koreans are known for their strong work ethic deriving from the Confucian culture which requires men to work long hours. Yet, this has a downside which is seen in the strong correlation to depression and the amount of suicides among OECD countries. At work Koreans avoid making individual decisions and taking risks.

As a high context society Koreans are often uncomfortable with the Western direct communication. Messages sent are in the implicit underlying message not in the said worlds. Gannon also notes that Koreans are more emotional that other Asian cultures. Collectivism and the expression of emotions are related to kibun which is closely related to the concept of face. Since preserving harmony is very important to Korean culture losing face is avoided. Compared to Western nations Koreans do not provide others with lot of personal space. This is not only due to the crowded living but also cultural values. Deriving from their collectivistic culture, Koreans have traditionally deemphasized individual stars under team effort, but indications of more individualistic characteristics have emerged.

The metaphor of Kimchi representing South Korea suggests that its preservative nature and historical role represent the Confucian collectivistic culture of the country. Koreans put the good of the family, friends and the country before their individual needs and wants. However, Gannon notes that Korea is experiencing conflict between values and practices when globalization has had its influence on the preserved Korean culture. Gannon suggests that Korean flag could become a better metaphor of South Korea. The symbol of the flag taeguh which as one represents unity and harmony but separately yin and yang are representing the opposites. This reflects the contrast and tension of the Korean culture today where traditional values and modern life are conflicting. (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 125-137)

Gannon reflects Chinese culture through the metaphor of Great Wall through which we can understand not only the visible but the invisible wall meaning the values, attitudes, and behavior. However, Gannon did not only create one metaphor to describe Chinese culture. In addition, he describes all Chinese and their culture around the world with a metaphor of Family Altar. Gannon describes the history and major changes that China has gone through to be the most populous country and second biggest economy at the moment. However, this rapid economic growth had its effects on increasing economic inequality and environmental issues. Consumerism is high in China and Chinese tend to satisfy their own needs and desires on the expenses of others. However, there Chinese culture still emphasize on past and traditions.

There are several stereotypes of China and Chinese and it is difficult for others to describe and explain them. Gannon says it is even hard for Chinese themselves to explain their culture partly due to their high-context communication style as well as their history of exclusion and discrimination. Chinese culture is closely linked to the language even though Chinese in different regions are a mix of different ethnical origins speaking mutually unintelligible dialects. However, all dialects of spoken Chinese can be written the same way with over 50 000 symbols standing for different words. Gannon suggests that due to the high context nature of Chinese language the words should be chosen carefully since the meaning is concluded from the context. Also deriving from the high-context nature of
Chinese culture, less emphasis is put on the written contract than on *guanxi*, the interconnected network of personal relationships.

China is full of paradoxes as is its language and living environments. Regardless of Mao Tse Tung’s efforts to stamp out Confucianism, it is difficult to understand Chinese culture without a Confucian though. While Taoism is considered as the primary religion in China, Confucianism is reflected in the way people behave in the society. Similar to Korea, Confucian five relationships are found in Chinese culture and encouraged to the creating of authority-ranking culture. The Chinese concept of face, the unwritten rules by which people in a society cooperate to cause no harm to others’ prestige and self-respect is still exciting in the culture. Though, Chinese add additional dimensional to the concept of face, by not only saving face but giving face.

Gannon reflects the metaphor of Great Wall representing China’s long history and development, thought systems and language. Chinese though is rather conservative but allows change. Chinese emphasize both sincerity and deception as seen in their negotiation style. The backbone of China can be seen in the *guanxi* and all its layers. These layers can be seen setting in from the relationship between people and ancestors, then people from the same village, continuing to connections between the family, and finally between family and close associates.

Family is the basic social unit in Chinese culture through which the relation-based system works. The family altar metaphor includes three concepts: roundness, harmony, and fluidity, which represent the major values of Chinese no matter where they reside. Even though the view of family altar can be seen as dated view of Chinese culture it still holds and important view on the Chinese values, attitudes and behavior today. Even though considered as collectivistic culture, China is rather focusing on the relationships and therefore Chinese can be individualistic as long as obligations to one’s family are fulfilled. (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 437-460)

Next, a closer look is taken into some previous research on advertising in China and South Korea and assumptions of advertising styles based on research using Hofstede’s model.

### 2.4.4 Advertising Styles of China and South Korea

Influenced by Confucianism the advertising styles of Eastern Asia are different from the Western cultures. Previous research utilizing content analysis has noticed a difference in cultural values that are conveyed through advertising. Often cultures are studied in the high-low context and individualism/collectivism dimension, but here a wider outlook is taken. (Xue, 2011, p. 155-156)

To put previous into a cultural frame, more homogeneous cultures have been showing high-context communication or messages than heterogeneous ones. Correlation has also been found between collectivism and high-context in cultures. (De Mooij 1998, p. 64-67, 156-159) Generally, most Asian cultures are viewed as high context but the aspect of heterogeneity-homogeneity of a culture suggests that in China more low-context communication would be used. So (2002, p. 41) recognizes that Chinese market cannot be
considered as a homogeneous group since there are many heterogeneous groups in China in terms of regional differences not only in economic development but also when it comes to local cultures.

Related to advertising both high-context cultures should reflect this indirect communication by using less copy and more symbols. One indicator of this reflection is the search of information form visual or verbal sources such as television or newspaper. High-context cultures tend to rely more on the visual such television advertisements as a useful source of information (De Mooij, 2001, p.17). We could assume that both Korea and China would prefer visual forms of advertisements over verbal ones.

The communication style of individualistic low-context cultures is direct and explicit where audience is addressed personalized way, whereas collectivistic high-context communication is indirect where symbols and entertainment play important role in advertising (De Mooij, 1998, p.188-189). Collectivistic cultures, as China and South Korea, are using more indirect modes of communication as well as trust-generating orientation and contextual (role-oriented) non-verbal acts. Together with high-context aspects these Asian countries should emphasize group value orientations, circular logic and indirect verbal communication. (De Mooij, 2001, p. 18; De Mooij, 1998, p. 283)

Also high-context cultures tend to rely more on the contextual elements and low level of information (Xue, 2011, p. 161-162). This was seen in a study by Taylor et al. (1997) which saw that Koreans prefer less-information oriented ads than do Americans. Chinese consumers prefer contextualized ads to non-contextualized ones according to a study by Liang et al. (2011). This is in line with the general perception of China being a high-context communication culture.

High-context cultures tend to avoid confrontations to maintain intimate bonds with people. They use soft-sell approach whereas low-context cultures are more direct and confrontational with comparative advertising and presentation of prices in advertising. In addition, collectivistic culture of East Asian countries suggests that in China and South Korea a relationship is formed between the company/brand and the consumer. East Asian advertising focuses on the brand image over the product features. (Xue, 2011, p.156-162)

In addition, the level of power distance is reflected in the advertising elements. Often authoritarian elements such as parody and humor are used in advertising of low power distance cultures (De Mooij, 1998, p.188). Earlier mentioned succinct style is often seen in high-context cultures of strong uncertainty avoidance such as South Korea. Due to the low uncertainty avoidance of Chinese society more humor should be used whereas being a culture of very high uncertainty avoidance, Korean advertising style should be more serious, visually detailed with added demonstrations. (De Mooij 2001, p.19-21) A study by Hatzithomas et al. (2011) examining the humor in UK and Greece advertising noticed that in collectivistic, strong uncertainty avoidance cultures more neutral humorous advertisements which is not seen as offensive would be more suitable. These ads are creative devices to provide information in contrary to individualistic cultures with low on the uncertainty avoidance where the preference is to entertain consumers. This was also indicated by a study of Jin (2010) which noticed use of humor factors was more frequently apparent in Chinese than Korean banner advertisements.
This strong uncertainty avoidance can be seen translating into need for explanations, structure, long copy, testing and testimonials (De Mooij, 1998, p.199) which should be more Korean style of marketing than Chinese where the end result is seen more important. Together the strong uncertainty avoidance combined with collectivism and large power distance leads to more indirect communication which tries not to offend and so upholds a public face. This communication style is subdued and works on likability. (De Mooij 2001, p.21)

The advertising style of China has short history, but the rapidly developing advertising industry is leading towards advertising style representative of Chinese culture. Generally, developing countries have been focusing more on the product features and attributes but as China has had rapid development and economic growth it is moving away towards more refined advertising styles (De Mooij, 1998, p.282). According to Tian Shuqian (De Mooij, 1998, p.222-223) due to the illiteracy of China at that time, visuals with vivid images and straightforward advertisements was preferred by the consumers.

The study of Jozsa et al. (2010) examined the likable advertising attributes in Shanghai and Hong Kong among generation X. They identified seven attributes; entertaining, warmth, soft sell, strong/distinctive/sexy, relevant to me, trendy/modernity/stylish, and status appeal which have been supported by several studies afterwards e.g. Fam & Waller (2004). Creative/clever ads were found to be the most important aspect of entertaining commercials. Feeling and emotion are also important attributes in Chinese advertisements where specifically cute and adorable execution was favored by respondents. In addition, their study suggests that Shanghainese disliked Scary/ not decent/ violent and exaggerated/unrealistic advertisements. Their research also found identified commercials depicting celebrity endorsed brands as the most preferred. (Jozsa et al., 2010)

A revised study of Chan’s previous research concerning information content of television commercials in China indicated that Chinese advertisements were becoming less informative (Chan & Chan, 2005). They suggest that advertising in China is moving away from product information stage where adverts are emphasizing the product characteristics towards more audience-centered themes emphasizing the lifestyle and ideal self-image.

A more contemporary study on internet banner advertisement showed that performance and special offers are key information cues in Chinese ads. The study noticed activeness, individualism, rational appeal, long-term orientation, and passiveness value items appearing broadly in Chinese banner ads. (Jin, 2010)

Korean advertising is reflection of the collectivistic culture where emphasis is on the indirect approach such as symbols. Advertisements avoid comparison due to the need for harmony in Korean culture. (De Mooij, 1998, p. 283) This importance of harmony was also noticed by more resent study on internet banner ads by Jin (2010) who identified group integrity as one of the cultural values in the Korean advertisements. However, the study showed that comparison was seen more often in Korean than e.g. in Japanese and Chinese ads but still less frequently than in America. Jin (2010) also noted that important creative factors in Korean ads were interactive communication and symbolic, visual metaphor-association, and curiosity arousal.
According to De Mooij (2001, p. 20), individualistic cultures with small power distance have direct and explicit style of advertising. This style emphasizes the uniqueness of a person or the brand showing the importance of a personality. For this type of advertising personalized “lecture” style is often used as well as well-known source such as presenter or celebrity endorses the product. However, for collectivistic cultures the use of well-known presenters or endorsers in the advertisements relies on the audiences association with the source (De Mooij, 1998, p.189). Choi, Lee & Kim (2005) also recognize that well-known celebrities representing the values of the culture could be seen more credible and influential in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures. This could derive from the individualistic view of celebrities only successful and unique in their own specific fields. Showing off is seen negative in feminine cultures and thus celebrity endorsements are seen less effective (De Mooij, 1998, p.193) indicating that celebrity advertising would be more preferred in masculine China than more feminine South Korea.

Previous studies have shown that there is a relatively high use of celebrity advertising in South Korean. Studies by Choi et al. (2005) and Um (2013) discovered that more than half of the Korean advertisements analyzed featured celebrities where as in U.S advertisement only 10 per cent or less employed celebrities. Similar findings were identified by Paek (2005) concerning Korea and its high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance culture. In addition, their studies noted that in South Korea a celebrity was seen promoting multiple products and that celebrities were domestic stars (Choi et al., 2005: Um, 2013). Korean television advertisements employed celebrities with low-involvement products and associated celebrities with thinking products more frequently than feeling products. However, Paek (2005) noticed rather high use of celebrity advertising in both low- and high-involvement products. The study of Choi et al. (2005) also showed that the function of the celebrities in the creative execution was mainly to play a role in the ad (62%) rather than be themselves (38%). In more than 90 percent of the cases they were not explicitly identified as celebrities by e.g. portraying their names or professions as tend to be in American adverts. (Choi et al., 2005: Um, 2013) The study by Um (2013) shows that multiple celebrity endorsements are the most popular form in Korea. Paek (2005) also noticed expert celebrities or product-related celebrities were used less than in US regardless of higher use of celebrity advertising in Korea.

Thus, Korean collectivistic cultural nature tends to lead to more group conformation and trend following than more individualistic societies. Celebrities embody the current meanings and therefore Koreans may want to associate themselves with these meanings. Use of celebrity advertising in Korea reflects the high-context communication style as they are already well known to the target audience and no credentials were presented. (Choi et al., 2005) Similar results have been found in Chinese celebrity advertising. A study by Sun (2013) showed that most celebrities were from mainland China followed by Hong Kongnese and Taiwanese celebrities. It also presented that modern values such as success/status, beauty/youth, and sexuality were seen significantly more often than utilitarian and traditional values in these celebrity advertisements. However, these more modern values were also seen in non-celebrity advertising.

A study of Nelson & Paek (2007) regarding advertising standardization identified differences in efforts across product categories regarding of standardized language and
model choice. The research revealed that beauty goods (e.g. cosmetics, fashion items) were more likely to use non-domestic copy elements and a global model than were other types of products (e.g. food, drink, home appliances), in Chinese and Korean ads.

The study of Taylor et al. (1997) studied level of information generally preferred by South Korea and the U.S. They noticed that Koreans respond differently to advertising execution based on information level. Their study supports the argument that Korean commercials containing low levels of information are more effective than those with high information levels. However, they noted that small differences in means suggest that Koreans did not show a great preference towards either low or high information commercials.

A study of Korean magazine ads by Jeon et al. (1999) showed a greater use of rational appeals overall and in the illustrations. This was suggested by the cultural emphasis on uncertainty avoidance and Korea’s advertising industry characteristics. However, emotional appeals are more common than rational appeals in headlines. This was seen deriving from the of high-context communications, harmony-seeking, collectivism, and high power distance of Korean culture.

In general, these East Asian countries have unique advertising styles which are emphasizing the values, group consensus, history and traditions (Xue, 2011, p.163). Differences between dimensions were seen which could lead to variety of execution styles. Even contradictory values and styles can be identified and therefore cultural metaphors, previous research and cultural dimensions together can be used for more coherent analysis.
3 SCIENTIFIC METHOD

This chapter describes and discusses the scientific approach of this research. First, this chapter addresses the ontological and epistemological fundamentals of the study. Then, methodological standpoints and research process is discussed. Finally, ethical considerations are examined.

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Paradigm includes four concepts; epistemology, ontology, methodology, and ethics (axiology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 245). Several researchers and academics have discussed the influence and importance of research paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2011). These beliefs determine how the researcher sees the world and behave accordingly. Each of these interpretive paradigms has demands on the researcher concerning questions and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 22). In order to secure the quality of this research, the different philosophical aspects and methodological developments linked to them are discussed and identified for the purpose of this research.

When studying the social world in the context of social research some philosophical issues related to ontology and epistemology occurs. Few of the biggest concerns deals with whether or not the social reality exists independently of human conceptions and interpretations, if generalized law-like results are the purpose of research, whether the social reality is common for all of many context-specific realities, and the commitment to held one’s own views (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 110; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 11; Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 22). Research philosophies raises the question of how the researcher knows and sees the nature of reality and how he/she gains knowledge about it, what is or should be considered acceptable knowledge and how these should be studied. These philosophical underpinnings thus affect the way research is done. (Byram & Bell, 2007, p. 16; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 245; Saunders et al., 2003, p. 83; Danermark et al., 2002, p. 18)

Daymon & Holloway (2002, p. 4) note that two paradigms, interpretive and realist, inform most of the research in public relations and marketing communication and thus influences the research questions and investigative methods. The research approach of this study is strongly determined by the philosophical standpoint. This study is basing on a critical realism stance which examines the topic through three concepts of marketing communication, execution styles, and culture. According to critical realism part of the reality exists independently of human consciousness but we are able to acquire socially determined knowledge about reality. The starting point of understanding critical realism is that world is structured, differentiated, stratified and changing. (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 5) This study emphasize the own interpretations of the respondents to shed light into the preferences and perceptions of the communication message receivers.

In addition, it occupies a middle position between positivism and postmodernism with a view of entity being able to exist independently of our knowledge. Critical realism allows
subjectivity though the mediated access to the social world (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 616). Researcher with positivist stance sees the researcher as independent from the subject studied and no affect occurs between the researcher and the phenomenon studied. This study sees reality as arranged in levels. Critical realism assumes that reality consists of several domains of which one is mechanisms. These mechanisms can create events which are observable empirical facts. (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 5) However, these mechanisms are not observable and can be discernible only through their effects (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 616). Communication is seen as a process which has certain structures and elements but also includes values, norms and behavior that do not exist on their own but as a part of the participants. This research studies advertising execution as a reflection of cultural values and therefore focuses on the reality as an outcome of its actors.

This study with its exploratory nature is seeking to increase the understanding of the field of international marketing communications. The aim of the research is not to find generalizable law-like results but to explore this gap and create the base for future research. The critical realist stance enables both empirical and theoretical research allowing the interaction between deduction and induction (Ackroyd, 2004, p. 216). As so often in social sciences research, this study starts with the key concepts that helps to orient to the research subject and after data collection and analysis these concepts may need to be renewed or new ones emerge (Bryman 2008, p. 9). Even though, ideas and previous findings inform the design and data collection, the process is interactive and iterative and revision should be conducted as the research proceeds and new ideas emerge (Ritchie & Lewis, 2012, p. 49). In this study the theoretical framework formed is providing structure and basis for the data collection of empirical research. However, the suggested framework should not be limiting the empirical data and thus methodological considerations need to be flexible and open.

### 3.2 Research Strategy and Design

Choosing the appropriate methodology to answer the research questions is important since the purpose of the research and underlying research philosophies are influencing these choices. Thus, research questions are the underlying guideline for the research design. (Bryman, 2012) In order to answer the explorative nature of this research qualitative comparative strategy is applied. This research will employ qualitative strategy to ensure the flexibility and openness of the study and to discover the underlying mechanisms and context of culture. In addition, the explorative nature of the study and the aim of social/cultural construction are not suitable for quantitative research which employ measurement with quantifiable hard data. (Bryman, 2012, p. 35; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 4) The data collection and analysis here is emphasizing words rather than quantification and numbers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The lack of consistent concept of advertising execution and the explorative nature of the study requires that the selected research methods enables creative and flexible way to study the selected phenomenon. Qualitative research strategy allows to capture the underlying mechanisms of culture and since the development of universalistic principles is not the concern of this study (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 12-13). In addition, this research tries to respond to the methodological research gap of qualitative studies in the international marketing research.
This study aims to understand the social phenomena of culture’s influence on execution preferences. When compared in relation to two or more contrasting cases the phenomena can be better understood. Cross-cultural or cross-national research is one of the most notable forms of comparative design (Bryman, 2012, p. 72). This study employs comparative research design with the aim of discovering similarities and differences and aims to gain understanding of the social reality in Asian cultural context. Qualitative comparative studies essentially line with multiple-case study design which improves the theory building (Bryman, 2012, p. 74). Critical realism stance perceives case studies important due to their intensive nature which enhances the sensitivity of the researcher towards the underlying factors of observed patterns within a specific context (Bryman, 2012). One of the most central features of case study research is the investigation of a case in relation to its historical, economical, technological, social and cultural context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 115). This context dependency of social phenomenon reflects the critical realist point of departure. Finally, case studies have long history across disciplines and in qualitative inquiry (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 107; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 115). Most commonly case is associated with the location such as an organization, community or geographical location (Bryman, 2012, p. 67). A case in this research follows this principle of national culture (location).

Sometimes research can have both case study and cross-sectional elements (Bryman, 2012, p. 69). Cross-sectional design is interested in variation for which more than one case is needed. Often researchers employ more than two cases in order to encounter more variation and discover finer distinctions between cases. Data collection is conducted relatively simultaneously in cross-sectional design. Cross-sectional design is often regarded as a survey design but it includes several methods such as structures observation, content analysis, diaries etc. (Bryman, 2012, p. 59). Current study has elements of cross-sectional design but due to the qualitative strategy the quantification and measurement element of cross-sectional design does not apply.

Qualitative comparative or case study tends to be ethnography or interviews in their methods, but there is no typical form in the qualitative research strategy (Bryman, 2012, p. 76-77). On the contrary cross-sectional design, often called survey research, frequently apply questionnaire or structured interviews on more than one case as a data collection method (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 53-54). As these previously noted methods are aligning with the philosophy, approach and design this research sees semi-structured questionnaires and group interviews as appropriate data collection methods. Therefore, in this study a more conventional mixed method approach is used. Mixed method is often viewed in the context of combining qualitative and quantitative methods but can also be applied using more than one qualitative insight (Ritchie, 2003, p. 37). Here mixed method is used by combining two qualitative methods; a semi-structured questionnaire and focus group or triad interviews.

Through semi-structured questionnaires a richer qualitative data can be acquired within relative short time period. On the other hand interviews can provide in-depth understanding especially in cultural context. Here the aim is to enable the respondents to express their views without restricting them with predetermined solutions, but allows structured enough approach to compare cases in relation to their cultural context. Therefore, the current
research incorporates interview elements into the questionnaire to provide more profound information about the consumers’ preferences and perceptions in regards to advertising execution elements.

The preconditions of explorative and context-centered approach has led to consider a projective and enabling techniques which are often used to inform the development of an advertising communication, and found invaluable when studying deep-seated beliefs and opinions (Daymon & Halloway, 2002, p. 223). Daymon & Halloway (2002) also note the usefulness projective and enabling techniques in cross-cultural research. This way the underlying characteristics of the respondents can be explored without directing them. Some of the most common techniques are word or picture association, sentence completion, and projective questioning. Some of these techniques are incorporated into the questionnaire.

The explorative nature and qualitative multi-method approach of this research also influences the selection of focus group method which can identify new or baseline information (Hennink, 2007, p. 11). Focus group interview technique is very different from more common in-depth interviews in many forms. Focus groups are often seen as interviews in which there are several participants from who the interviewer asks questions concerning particular fairly tightly defined topic. In focus group interviews a tension between the researcher and participants as well as interaction between participants characterizes the focus group methodology. (Bryman, 2008, p. 474; Smithson, 2008, p. 358)

Here data is generated in the interaction of research participants where others views are heard. Interviewees are commenting each other, seeking clarifications and prompt or stop other participants (Finch & Lewis, 2012, p. 171). Therefore the main purpose of focus group research is to identify different views around the research topic, and gain understanding of the issue through the perspectives of the participants (Hennink, 2007, p. 4). Thus the main reason for utilizing focus group interviews derives from the wide-ranging information on the views and preferences as well as social or community-level information. Hennink (2007, p. 10) sees focus group especially suitable for seeking information about social behavior, cultural values or community opinions. The use of focus groups is becoming a popular method in cross-cultural research (Smithson, 2008, p. 364).

Focus groups can be seen either focusing on the group discussions which shifts the attention away from the interviewer in order to generate discussion between the participants (Hennink, 2007, p. 5) or on the interview aspect of the focus group where interviewer has more directive role (Finch & Lewis, 2012, p. 171). In this research the hybrid role of the research and the themes directs the discussion. However, the directives of the researcher are needed to a certain aspect to steer the conversation away from irrelevant areas, encourage open discussion, and prevent dominance. The semi-structured focus group interview method of this research generate free discussion on the pre-determined topics of execution styles but allows the participants to bring new and emerging issues forward.

Summarizing, these before mentioned methodological approaches and techniques driving from the philosophical underpinnings incorporates elements from comparative, multi-case studies, and cross-sectional design. This research does not claim to belong under one sole design but identifies elements typical to these design approaches. The choice of qualitative
research strategy influences the whole process and thus reflects in the data collection methods of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the research project attention was paid to appropriate ethical issues. The study was conducted so that it ensured no harm to participants, invasion of privacy, lack of consent, or deception was done (Bryman, 2008, p. 118). Research questionnaires and interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis and research participants are comfortable with the research setting. As the research participants willingly accepted to fill out the questionnaire or participate in the interviews this was considered as an informed consent of participants. As a researcher I was responsible of providing the research participants with comfortable settings. For the interviews, informal and free conversation setting was created and participants filling out the questionnaire were given the chance to exit the questionnaire at any point.

Online questionnaire was administered with information about the topic and the purpose of the research. The introduction also explained that responses are confidential and anonymous and included the contact information of the researcher for further inquiries. Though, the privacy of the respondents’ was ensured by means of anonymity and confidentiality where only minimum amount of demographic information was requested. This stands for two group interviews as well. Interviewees had the possibility to have a closer look on the interview themes and research topic. They were asked for a permission to record the interviews and were told their freedom of not answering questions they were not willing to. However, no special practices were required due to the non-sensitive topic. In addition, as a comparative case study the responses were not treated as individual responses but rather as two case countries. Therefore, no physical, emotional or legal harm was made.

Data collection and reporting is made visible and collected data is used only for this research. Since the findings and conclusions of this research can be used by outside party I would like to stress collective case country aspect of the study. These are personal perceptions of the research participants and thus precaution is made to ensure that no individual respondent is identified.

3.3.1 REFLECTION OF AUTHOR’S BACKGROUND

When it comes to research orientation, the research process and method used in the study are influenced by the researcher’s background (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002, p. 13). I have gained cross-cultural experience in several cultural surroundings including the case countries which gives this thesis a beneficial and unique point of departure. During my Bachelor program, I studied in Seoul, South Korea for a year focusing in international business and marketing. For my Masters study I conducted exchange studies in international relations in Shanghai, China. However, I do not administer either of the languages fluently. Throughout my studies I have been focusing on the Asian business and marketing. Therefore I have familiarized myself with the case countries and cultures in
business setting. In addition, my own interest in these cultures had leaded me to study both countries history, language, and culture which helped me to conduct the interviews. Often examples included persons, companies, brands, language etc. which was familiar to me and assisted and facilitated the conversation with the interviewees.

I do note that my own Finnish background is influencing my perception. I am seeing and analyzing events through my own cultural frame and I do recognize that my interpretations might be different from a researcher with e.g. similar cultural background as the research objectives. However, I consider my experiences and knowledge about the case cultures as strength of this thesis. As a researcher coming from outside of the studied culture, I might notice aspects which a research owning similar cultural frame is blind to.

### 3.3.2 Literature use and criticism

The conceptual framework guiding this study is built on three major areas of marketing communication, advertising execution/styles, and culture. Literature is focusing on theoretical concepts and models as well as previous research on the related topics. Findings are further combined to create theoretical framework for how advertising execution can be understood in mobile messaging app marketing and analyzed in cross-cultural setting. Variety of theories from several sources such as books, course literature, and scientific articles was utilized to develop the basis for this study and strengthen the theoretical framework. Literature search was initiated by preliminary search through several scientific databases available through Umeå University Library and through Finnish National Electronic Library Interface (Nelli) utilized by most universities of the country. After gathering articles to build the base on, more thorough search began with the cited authors in these articles. Next step in the literature search was to map the theories to which the marketing communication, advertising execution/styles and culture are built on. As most of the communication and cultural theories draw back to the fundamentals of the concepts mostly books have been used to look at these theories. These books used were collected from Umeå University Library, Jyväskylä University Library, and library at Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences. In addition, online versions of books were viewed through Google Books and Nelli-portal. Books were the main source for developing the methodological chapters. Literature search indicated reoccurring authors and theories but several sources were researched since only using sources cited by other authors would lead to unilateral view. As this study utilizes not only one theory or theoretical framework but combines multiple concepts and theories, a variety of definitions, theories and theoretical frameworks are considered. Several other precautions have been taken so that the literature search would provide reliable and quality material for this thesis. As far as possible, peer-reviewed scientific articles were used and often cited sources which have wide acceptance in the field were utilized. In addition, original sources were retrieved when possible to properly analyze the author’s perception.
4 PRACTICAL METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the practical methods of this research. First, the basis for the respondent selection is identified and more detailed process of the research is examined from practical perspective. The chapter continues with the analysis process and assessment of the quality of this research. Finally, ethical considerations are examined.

Due to the explorative nature of this research as well as the cultural context and abstract nature of the research the practical methods of this study has been chosen to answer the flexibility of a qualitative research. This study employs comparative case study strategy with qualitative mixed method approach. The aim is to explore and generate understanding on perceptions of messaging app advertising in a frame where context guides the analysis. Okazaki & Mueller (2007) identified that most studies conducted in the field of cross-cultural marketing were quantitative and this study also aims to further answer the need of qualitative approach to cross-cultural studies in marketing and advertising.

4.1 RESPONDENT SELECTION

This current research first determined the topic of execution styles in messaging app advertising as a reflection of culture as a research topic which in turn led to the appropriate research subjects. The context of this study is determining the cases based on their national cultural background. However, it is not viable to collect data from the whole population, here representing the messaging app users. Accessibility and suitability of these research participants is seen more important than systematic sampling techniques (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 51). In addition, limited resources do not allow examining all potential participants (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 212). The purpose of the study determines the criteria by which the potential participants are identified (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 159). This purposive research participant criteria in this study are a) nationality (Chinese/ South Korean), and b) messaging app (WeChat/ KakaoTalk/Line) users. These criterions are the starting point of snowball sampling technique where questionnaire is administered to one person who knows others with these characteristics who could become participants in the study. They in turn identify other potential participants based on these criteria. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 52) In this study two participants were identified from each culture that is actively using messaging applications. These cases in the beginning of the snowball effect were selected from the researcher’s friends and acquaintances. A link to the online questionnaire was sent through messaging apps or Facebook. In turn, these respondents were asked to forward the link to the questionnaire to two of their friends who fulfill the selection criteria, which are again requested to forward it to two potential participants etc.

The appropriate number of participants depends on the type of research question, approach, and the resources available for the study as well as the number of researchers involved. Qualitative samples are relatively small which are studied more in depth since if the data is thoroughly analyzed a point will come where no new information is obtained from additional units. Also qualitative research is intensive and demand lot of resources thus
limiting the amount of the participants. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2012, p. 83-84) The aim of this research is not to generalize the findings and smaller amount of research participants were seen suitable for the preliminary questionnaire. In addition, more in-depth and rich portrait of the phenomenon could be received. The questionnaires were carried out until five responses from each case were reached within the tight timeframe.

After the preliminary questionnaire the triad interviews were carried out. Strategy to acquire interviewees was determined to be advertising for participants (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 34-35) with the same sampling criteria as in preliminary questionnaires. The search for participants in group interviews was announced in Facebook pages and groups of foreigners residing currently at the city of Jyväskylä in Finland. The announcement stated the required sampling criteria and the language requirements for interviews with contact information of the researcher. Voluntary participants were asked to contact the researcher. One contact was received from a Korean student and one from Chinese student. Together with these contact persons the date and time for the interviews were agreed and arrangement was made for them to bring other voluntary participants fulfilling the participant selection criteria. At the date of the interviews the first group scheduled was Korean participants which included three female exchange students. They were ages 20 to 30 currently studying in Finland. The second group consisted of three female Chinese participants aged 20 studying currently in Finland. Focus groups or group discussions usually consist of four to ten respondents, but since this search for participants yield in three respondents it can be considered as triad interview (Ritchie, 2012, p. 37). Triad interviews were seen suitable in terms of the quality of acquired data as well as the research resources available.

4.2 Research Process

Qualitative research is a continuous process and constant reviews of decisions and approaches are made (Lewis, 2012, p. 47). This research has developed the process around the research topic and questions with needed flexibility and creativeness in mind. In this research a rather exceptional method is used to generate data. The research employs mixed method approach which is often viewed in the context of combining qualitative and quantitative methods but can be applied using more than one qualitative insight (Ritchie, 2012, p. 37). First, semi-structured questionnaire was administered to achieve first insight into the topic and map out the problematic topics. Due to practical reasons, no personal interviews were able to conduct in China and South Korea. Therefore, online questionnaire were administered by sending links to researcher’s friends and acquaintances who were encouraged to forward them to their peers. The responses were gathered within the first two weeks of April, 2014. This preliminary questionnaire enabled better focus, specifications and explanations in the following group interviews.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was formed based on the theories and thus the researcher has familiarized herself with the theories before drafting the questions. Themes of the questionnaire were constructed based on the execution styles identified in the theoretical chapter and found suitable for marketing through mobile messaging apps. Themes were categorized based on; the underlying styles, who or what is appearing; and
verbal and/or visual styles. Special focus was given to the question formatting of the questionnaire. The questions were formed to be as unambiguous as possible in order to ensure respondents ability to comprehend the questions. In addition, potential steering of respondents were avoided with the question formatting because it would distort the answers according to researcher’s preconceptions. The order of the questions was designed so that enabling or interesting questions were appearing regularly for the respondents to stay focused and not lose their interest. In addition, separate questionnaires were constructed for Korean and Chinese respondents with their own links. This was due to the projective and enabling techniques used in terms of pictures from the case countries. The questionnaire was tested with fellow Master’s students as well as researcher’s friends who were familiar with the messaging apps and their functions. The responses from these tests lead to reformatting or clarifying some questions which proved to be unclear.

The questionnaire frame and responses acted as the basis for the interview guide as well as open questions and examples in the group interviews. Interview guides vary largely in terms of layout and formulation of questions to be asked (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 38). For this research an interview guide was developed based on the questionnaire topics deriving from the theoretical frame but incorporated the flexibility essential for qualitative research (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 35). Certain order of topics and questions was created to ensure a logical flow of the interview but order was not restricted if alterations occurred during the interview. Language and examples used in interviews were planned to be relevant to the respondents (Bryman, 2012, p. 473). In addition, the researcher prepared to formulate some probes and prompts during the interview. With probes meaning the follow-up questions meant to expand respondents’ answers and prompts standing for interventions seeking for clarifications (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 40). Interviewees were provided with information sheet including the thesis topic in question as well as themes of the interview based on the interview guide (see Appendix 2).

One group or triad face-to-face interview for South Korean and one for Chinese students were conducted at 3rd of May 2014 in Jyväskylä, Finland. Small groups give a good balance between the individual and group context. It gives the opportunity for interview participants to express themselves as well as to draw on others responses and have more time to talk. (Lewis, 2012, p. 59) These group interviews were very informal in nature in order to let the respondents freely express themselves. In addition, Lewis (2003, p. 59) notes that small group interviews or triads can be particularly useful with younger people and result in lively conversation. With the cultural background of interviewees in mind, group interviews provide ‘safety in numbers’ and makes the situation less intimidating and uncomfortable (Lewis, 2012, p. 59). As familiar with the Korean and Chinese cultures, group interview situation was considered to be more comfortable and increase the likability of acquiring participants.

Interviews were conducted the same way with both groups. Interviews were very informal in nature and participants were allowed to use their smartphones to look up official accounts or PlusFriends from their messaging applications if they felt like it. The setting was made as comfortable as possible and quiet space was secured. After receiving the permission from the respondents, the interviews were recoded with several recording devices to secure that no data is lost. Interviews were conducted in English as mentioned in
the announcement for research participants. However, due to the insufficient language stills of some Chinese respondents’ translation and interpretation were used during the interview. Effects and consequences of this will be further reflected in the limitations. All respondents were allowed to explain and give examples to other in their native language if they were not able express themselves in English. Due to the interviewer’s knowledge of both cultures and languages some single words and names were communicated in Korean/Chinese. Due to the focus group interviews there was a significant difference in group dynamics and in-group hierarchy. Chinese group had one strong member whereas Korean group appeared less hierarchical.

The interviews lasted for approximately one hour and 40 minutes per each group interview. Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 485) suggest that multiple listening should be done before transcribing the relevant portions. However, in this study the recorded material was fully transcribed in language as close to being said in the interviews so that the cultural context could be fully understood. Also as a single researcher familiarity with the material was high. Transcribed materials build up to be approximately 53 pages.

4.3 Analysis

According to Spencer et al. (2012, p. 200) qualitative analysis does not have clear and agreed rules or procedures. How analysis is approached can be based on epistemological assumptions and the status of the researcher’s accounts. Research data can be approached from multiple perspectives. Alasuutari (1995) distinguishes the separation of factist- and specimen perspectives in approaching qualitative research analysis. Factist perspective is often used when approaching structured and open-ended interview data or questionnaires. Data is seen to tell something about the studied reality. Alasuutari (1995, p. 47) description of “reality ‘out there’, on one hand, and the claims made about it, on the other” expresses the division what is seen useful material. Factist perspective does not consider putting things into words, of the situations where this is done, jokes, proverbs, etc. relevant since they are not facts about the reality out there. The contrasting counterpart to factist view is specimen perspective. Alasuutari (1995, p. 63) describes “specimen as a form of research material is not treated as either a statement about or a reflection of reality […] but as part of the reality being studied”. Thus honesty is seen as irrelevant concept in analyzing the data. Factist perspective should be used when the requirement is that respondents are honest and dishonesty would demolish the value of the data. The target of analysis in this qualitative study using questionnaire and interview data is how respondents experience or perceive the communication styles. Thus, this would indicate the use of factist perspective. However, in practice these two perspectives are tangled to each other and in this study they are applied together thus making them difficult to demerge. By only using factist perspective in the analysis is considered to lead to insufficient use of the acquired data by this research. Therefore combining the specimen perspective and its interactions and cultural parse one can gather information which could be less representative or insufficient in terms of technicality but it would not be wrong information.

Analytical hierarchy has been used in this analysis to form a structure for the analysis. The analytical hierarchy of Spencer et al. (2012, p. 212-217) consists of a series of steps that
involves different analytical tasks which can be used for thematic cross-sectional analysis which is based on interpretations of meanings. This process is not linear and therefore I have gone back and forth between the groups, categories and explanations as well as the original data. The hierarchy consists of three steps; data management, descriptive accounts, and explanatory accounts (Spencer et al., 2012, p. 213). First step in the process was data management where data was sorted and initial categories appeared. The transcribed data was read through and initial concepts of styles were assigned. In the second step synthesized data is then used for forming descriptive accounts (Spencer et al., 2012, p. 214). Here data was classified into dimensions that helped to characterize the cultural aspects of the data. Finally, in the stage of explanatory accounts patterns and linkages were search for and matched. This let to building explanations concerning how or why these outcomes and linkages occurred.

4.4 QUALITY CRITERIA

Quality criteria for qualitative research differs largely from those used for quantitative research and are built from different benchmarks. Often used evaluation criteria by Lincoln & Guba can substitute these classic evaluation criteria by the concept of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness contains four aspects; credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, p. 294)

This study is aiming at high dependability. The research process is explained and documented accurately as is the empirical data from both questionnaires and interviews. By explaining the research process the trustworthiness of the research is obtained. Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 398) also suggests that the evaluation of coequals concerning the research process should be enabled. In this research the seminars with fellow students and meetings with a supervisor has provided a fresh insight and comments throughout the process.

Conformability parallels with objectivity (Bryman, 2008, p. 34). In this study all findings and interpretation are linked to the data as well as theory and literature increasing the giving conformability. This ensures that the researcher’s own opinions do not affect the analysis. In addition, previous research relating similar studies concerning culture and advertising enhances the transferability of this study. Transferability refers to whether the findings can be applied to other contexts. Also the findings should include the context of the study. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398) As this study focuses on the context, the cultures of South Korea and China are explained for the readers who in turn can evaluate the results in the context of other national cultures.

When evaluating the credibility the amount of data, logical links between the observations and categories, and the ability of other researchers derive to similar conclusions are looked at (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, p. 294). To ensure high credibility of the study I as the researcher have familiarized with the topic in order to form strong theoretical framework for the research which is then utilized in the analysis.

This research recognizes that full objectivity and neutrality are rather impossible to acquire in qualitative studies. As Blaxter et al. (2010, p. 14) noted that “research is a social activity that can be powerfully affected by the researcher’s own motivations and values. It also
takes place within a broader social context [...]”. Therefore, an acknowledgement is made that as a researcher I am the main instrument of the research and thus the study can never be totally consistent and replicable.

In addition to trustworthiness, authenticity of this research is aimed by fair and visible research process as well as authentic data. Also, the results can give insight to the society concerning the research topic. The authenticity is achieved when true reporting of the participants’ ideas are included in the study and when the research helps the participants and groups similar to them to understand their world and improve it. Authenticity also means that the research should be fair. (Daymon & Hallaway, 2002, p. 93)

4.4.1 LIMITATIONS

This study acknowledges certain limitations in terms of empirical research and theoretical frame. First, focus group participants consisted of only female students who voluntarily participated in the interviews. Even though focus groups should be rather homogeneous the total lack of male participants could have influence in the results. However, the preliminary questionnaire responses included males and therefore noticeable differences in the perceptions of female and male participants are pointed out to the reader. In addition, the voluntary nature of participant recruitment influenced the limited English language skills of the interviewees. Especially group interview of Chinese includes translations from other participants and therefore the full context of the information might not have been captured. However, I do see that the differences in group dynamic were more influential than translation which is often appearing in group interviews. More hierarchical Chinese group and strong member could have affected the other interview participants.

Also as utilizing student participants, one could question whether students are a valid embodiment of the cultural values of South Korea and China. These students have foreign experience which could influence the views of participants but also allows them to reflect their perceptions to foreign cultures. However, research in marketing and advertising often employ students as participants and this study focused on a marketing channel mainly employed by young adults.

Then, a question can be asked whether these selected advertising execution styles deriving from previous research and theory appropriately captures the styles suitable for the marketing channel of mobile messaging applications as well as allows the cultural aspects of nations to be presented.

To emphasize the nature of this study, a notion should be made that the purpose is not to generalize findings but to explore the topic and therefore the inability to generalize is not considered as a limitation.
5 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This chapter presents the empirical findings and results of the interviewing together with some remarks of the preliminary questionnaire. The chapter is divided into categories of execution elements in two case countries.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

Total of 9 completed responses to the questionnaires were recorded out of which five were Korean and four Chinese respondents. The Korean respondents consisted of two male and three female participants in ages from 22 to 29. All of the respondents were currently living in South Korea. The Chinese participants included three male and one female respondents ranging in age from 22 to 27. Respondents were currently residing in China, Finland and Monte Carlo.

Interview participants were three South Korean students currently studying in Finland. All three interviewees were females between 20 to 30 years old. The Chinese interviewees were also Chinese exchange students residing in Finland. Respondents were 20 year old females.

5.2 SOUTH KOREAN STYLES

The use of information and facts about an offer was presented in most of the ads questionnaire respondents had seen. Also they identified that most of the ads presented good point about the product. Information was also the preferred by the respondents. Delivering information is seen as the primary goal of the advertisements but they can be entertaining after deliver the primary goal first. Also South Korean interviewees identified the main importance of messaging app marketing to be in the delivery of information. It is mostly used for getting promotions, discounts, coupons, information of events and sales. Questionnaire also indicated that product information and reviews from other users were sought after.

Questionnaire responses were positive towards using humor in ads. These responses indicated that creative, brilliant, comparative and everyday events were things seen the most preferred styles of humor, not just apparently funny elements. However, humor was not seen as something Koreans would typically like according to the interviewees. Humorous messages were seen even negative and weird. Different genres would work for different individuals but respondents noted that there is a greater difference between generations regarding humorous advertising. When talking about humor interviewees noted that humor and funny videos would be the style of their parents. Humor was seen “effective for promotion and ads because it can be very spreaded fast” but also as something that will be forgotten rather quickly. Instead of humor interviewees identified drama as advertising style Korean like to see and are very popular in Korean marketing and advertising. It motivates, move people’s minds and emotions. These drama styles have an interesting or
inspiring story which was reflected in various examples the interviewees gave. Respondents also note that product placement inside television shows and dramas are very common way of marketing in South Korea.

Results from the questionnaire indicated that Koreans would prefer to see the product in the advertisement, know about the advantages of it, and perhaps get more detailed information. However, the presented advantages should be related to the benefits of the user and not about the product/service itself and this way they can learn why they would need it. Also too much information in KakaoTalk was not seen appropriate but that these could be accessed through a link for example. Furthermore, interviewees saw advertisements as more intriguing if all functions and elements were not mentioned. Explanations of the product attributes are not often seen in Korean advertisements. Also, demonstration can be dressed in drama style to present the benefits and functions indirectly. This indirectness is also seen in the comparative advertising. Questionnaire results were negative towards comparative advertising rather. These ads were seen bad, greedy, not convincing, and even inappropriate. Same was seen in interviews where respondents did not like direct comparison between products or brands since it makes the company look selfish, mean and aggressive. However, companies can compare their new products with their own older products or models, which are not seen in such negative light.

Koreans noted that patriotism is often used in Korean marketing. This was explained with the conglomerate companies unique to South Korea who are considered as a family. Companies are indirectly encouraging audience to by local products as well as marketing for a whole image of the concern. They are often utilizing Korean traditional or sentimental elements in their marketing. Respondents thought that they are influenced and affected by that atmosphere and in general are more touched by Korean than foreign advertisements. However, they noticed the influence of Western culture and stated:

“In Korea, I don’t like this culture, but we have this culture to respect some Western culture. [...] Maybe the product is not even is not that worthy, we kind of look up to that Western culture in some way. Even though we are not persuaded that much by advertisement...”

Using celebrities was identified as one of the most popular style of marketing and advertising, although it is not seen often in KakaoTalk ads by the interviewees. Questionnaire responses indicated that celebrity ads were seen in neutral light. These responses noted that celebrities in ads tend to change so frequently and appear in commercials of multiple brands simultaneously and therefore are not representing the image of the brand which makes it harder to deliver the advertising message. Interviewees though that indirect use of celebrities is more preferred and too obvious endorsing or product placements can have a negative effect.

“I can’t say I like it or hate it, but it’s true that I also am very sensitive to those celebrity styles...”

However, the importance of linkage or connection between the celebrity and brand/product was recognized.
“But sometimes if a only celebrity made advertisement by those products which is not related to this singer or an actor, actually it makes anti-emotion to me...so it doesn’t affect to me that much”

Non-celebrity models were thought to be rare and interviewees identified that they were used when a story/drama style of marketing was used. Another type of advertising using non-celebrities was experiments or demonstration style of advertising. One respondent noted:

“I think I have seen only the plastic surgery...of course they are using normal people as promoter and...marriage arrangement companies, they are using normal people as a model. So that reminds me of that kind of thing.”

One of the reasons for using celebrity advertising was considered to be the low memorability of ordinary people. Even advertising with the company CEO was thought to be more memorable than ordinary people or unknown models. Regardless of memorability and recognition, respondents thought that sometimes using non-celebrities could be more comfortable and trustworthy. They note that the similarity could sometimes be more persuasive at these situations. Endorsements from bloggers for example are thought to be more honest that information on company’s own site but endorsements of idols and celebrities were thought to be convincing especially for young girls.

Respondents identified foreign luxury companies using Western models more effective than using local Korean celebrity or non-celebrity models. If advertisements for these high-end goods would use local endorses or local style it would have a negative image for Korean consumers. However, respondents thought that Korean personality or characteristics could work for daily products.

Koreans enjoyed using and seeing emoticons and other animated characteristic in messaging apps and advertising. Questionnaire responses pointed out the preference of characters, animations, and fantasy images in KakaoTalk advertising. They thought them to be more familiar, effective and easier way to recall the brand. Also emoticons and stickers often used in messaging apps were mentioned to be enough and other characters and images would make the ads too messy. Interviewees noted that they use emoticons a lot and due to this using well known emoticon in advertising feels familiar to them. However, if company creates an emoticon or character for an advertisement it might not be as effective. It should be free, related to the brand and not too obvious.

Endorsement and testimonial advertising style was viewed critically by questionnaire respondents. Responses were not against using this style but noted that the product and endorser needs to match together. Also, own experiences are affecting and that they would rely more on their own research and judgment rather than believe the endorser. In cases of hesitation of the purchasing decision endorsement can be found helpful.
5.2.1 VERBAL AND VISUAL

Even though messaging app advertisements were used for information, more indirect style of communication was preferred by Koreans.

“...we are not that direct, we don’t have that direct culture. So sometimes if we wanna say something we usually say quite like around the way so it also works in advertisement...”

Due to some unclear responses concerning the preference of verbal and visual aspects in the questionnaire it was addressed in the interview. Respondents preferred pictures over text. The visuals and first impression was mentioned as important for the interviewees. For example image was seen more important than mentioning the functions. Respondents had not seen any video or audio ads on messenger apps. The app was considered more as a messenger whereas Facebook or Twitter was used for visualizing such as videos. Also, the video possibilities in KakaoTalk was said to be too short for proper use.

Questionnaire gave variety of responses regarding the verbal content and therefore clarifications were needed. Interviewees identified that mobile messaging app ads are using short messages in Korea but sometimes emoticons are also used. Just the important key information is preferred in mobiles because they are with you all the time and are checked while doing other things. However, images are also seen as a fast way of going through the information and select those that interest one the most. Links are seen as a good way of getting more information but the level of interest and needs to be high or the message needs to be very convincing to see the effort to click on the link.

Advertisement in Korea was considered indirect. It was presented in the high use and preference on product placements which was thought to be more natural way of the audience to know about the product or a brand. Very direct marketing and presentation of brand names can be seen even a bit aggressive. However, in messenger advertisement more short and informatics communication is preferred. When it comes to language, interviewees identified the use of word plays or tricks with the pronunciations of Korean. There is also a difference with written text and routine speech. Respondents also gave examples of advertisements where the meaning is embedded in the language or culture and does not clearly state the core idea. Sometimes it is difficult to explain the meanings or concepts to foreigners since there are no proper translations in English. Furthermore, differences between generations were identified. Respondents remembered many slang used by younger generations which older Koreans do not know. They also note that this is already used in Korean advertising.

Questionnaire response indicated that Koreans would like to be communicated as individual consumers rather than a part of a group. In order to clarify the communication approach and addressing of audience this was explained in the interviews. Regarding individual- or role-orientation, Korean interviewees preferred role orientated communication. Promotions for groups were seen very good and practical.

“I think group will be, I think I prefer if they suggest to me like privately I can easily forget about that.” and “I can feel it makes me selected customer by that advertisement”.

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However, interviewees did not like to be addressed according to their relationship status but they noted that most activities are done with peers, friends, and companions.

In addition, during the interview the dependence or importance of a product type came into light in several occasions. Many occasions the preferred style or source was depending on the type of brand or product advertised. Even though respondents noted that the goal of the marketers depends on the product, industry or structure they though it to be long-term oriented relationship. This was clarified in the interviews since questionnaire responses varied from relationship building, attracting customers, advertising to masses, to get the audience to purchase product.

Interviewees also noted that other SNS such as Facebook is much commercialized and therefore their friends have stopped using it. However, KakaoTalk is not commercialized. Furthermore, respondents mentioned that when they are annoyed by official accounts and their notifications or are not using or benefiting from these accounts they can block them.

### 5.3 Chinese Styles

Questionnaire results showed the preference to both information and entertainment aspects of messaging app advertising. However, Chinese interviewees used WeChat for more information than entertainment. They look for news, information and knowledge, recruitment, language learning, discounts etc. More factual style of advertising is preferred where advantages of the product/service are mentioned. Interviewees thought this would help them to make a decision over some other option, outcome of the usage, and if it is good option for them. Respondents also noted that there are similar styles of advertising every year but could not recognize or specify the style. Questionnaire responses indicated that more information was sought after but also pictures, humor and creativity were mentioned in the styles they would like to see.

Humorous preferences varied largely by individuals and no commonalities could be detected in the questionnaire responses. According to interviewees humorous style is rather common in China but they note that there is no specific type of humor Chinese like due to the large population. Also there are different preferences among different regional area in China.

Celebrities in ads were not seen important by the questionnaire responses. It seemed that sometimes disliked celebs were pushing them from the purchasing decision. However, interviewees saw celebrities in advertising as memorable and influencing. The background of the celebrity being an actor, idol, athlete etc. did not seem to matter the effectiveness of celebrity advertising. When discussing advertisement of grocery products and food they had seen in Finland and reflecting it to Chinese ads, in addition to pictures of products and prices they stated:

“And maybe a handsome boy, beautiful girl but not a chef, no matter how good he is. He’s not celebrity, we don’t know him, he’s not attractive.”
They were thought to be responsible for their own reputation and therefore believable and trustworthy. However, the product category influenced the use of celebrities as they were used for luxury products whereas every day products were using ordinary people in their advertising. Ordinary people were thought to be closer to the audience and have a feeling of similarity. Generally, celebrity advertising was preferred and used more in China. Celebrities also appear in other style of advertisements as well. An experiment/comparative advertisement was remembered where a very popular star was hired to do the comparison.

Characters, animations and fantasy images were thought to be a good, funny and memorable way of advertising according to the questionnaire responses. However, these execution styles were also thought to be childish sometimes. The interviewees noted that animation and fantasy characters are not seen in Chinese advertising. Respondents noted that when communicating with friends emoticons were used by some Chinese, especially girls, but it was thought to be more Korean than Chinese style. Therefore, emoticons were not found in messaging app advertising either.

The results from online questionnaire suggested that endorsements and testimonials were seen positively, but mostly when the praising came from someone they knew such as friends and family. When question was specified in interviews the testimonials or endorsements were not seen convincing among the interview respondents. Celebrities do not present these testimonials but they are seen in endorsement style ads where they just appear with the product.

“Even a celebrity promote some product they weren’t to say that I really use this stuff, and I think it is good.”

Interviewees did not prefer this type of testimonial style which was seen even disgusting. Also comparative advertising was seen negatively. Questionnaire responses described comparative advertising as fake and not convincing. However, when comparison was made indirectly more positive approach was noticed among the interviewees. Respondents thought these statements were a good way, not necessary convincing, but reflecting the confidence of the company. Comparison was not seen as a common advertising style in China.

Questionnaire responses exhibit that demonstration are seen important in advertisements. However, it was mentioned that well recognized products and new inventions had different need for demonstration. Interviewees thought that demonstration style was good and persuasive as long as the quality of the advertisement is high. Though, this style was thought to be rather new and rarely used in China. The product should also be shown in the advertisement and this is seen often in Chinese advertising. Furthermore, the product category influences this since the product is not shown but rather gives the feeling of the product.

When asking interviewees about their ideal WeChat advertising their answers varied greatly. On the other hand realistic style was seen attractive as well as funny cartoons and animations. New form of WeChat advertising was sought after to be surprised by the ads. However, this surprising factor was found in the foreign ads which were different from Chinese and was new, interesting and attractive to the respondents.
“I think I like foreign advertisement. [...] it’s new, it’s surprising, that attracts me a lot.” and “They have got used to the Chinese stuff and it get something different.”

From Chinese advertising style, celebrities and idols was thought to belong in the ads and old cultural elements were seen likable and attractive in advertising.

### 5.3.1 Verbal and Visual

In WeChat advertisements more text than pictures are used. However, questionnaire results showed that Chinese would prefer to have more visual than verbal ads. Responses indicate that pictures require less time and are easier to read and get information. Pictures are seen as a way of attract your attention and was preferred by the interview respondents as well. However, it proved to be that pictures take more time and appear on the screen slowly which was seen negatively. If these pictures would appear faster in the smartphone screen they would be highly preferred. Pictures are easier to “read” and do not make you feel tired or bores as with high use of text. When discussing about the use of audio or video messages in advertising the respondents told that they have seen these ads few times. However, they were not seen as practical due to the use of messaging apps often in public spaces where you are not supposed to make noises.

Questionnaire results indicated that low level of text and information is typical in Chinese WeChat advertising. Also interviewees thought WeChat advertising to be short text and core information which was also preferred way of communication. They noted that people often follow many official accounts and high amount of text and information would take too much of their time. The interviewees also suggested the use of a link to get more information if you are interested. This is currently used in WeChat ads. Respondents also explained that they need to be very interested in that information in order to click the link. However, this was seen time saving.

“It will save our time to choose the information we like.”

Advertisements were seen to be direct in nature. Preliminary questionnaire results suggested that going straight to the point was preferred than indirect presentation of marketing message. Interviews indicated that direct communication with clearly expresses the message was seen well in the context of marketing and advertising. Though, indirect marketing communication was seen interesting and intriguing. A concern about misunderstanding was presented in the interviews when talking about indirect style of communication. Indirect communication was thought suitable in situations where no one would misunderstand but not in everyday marketing. There are also some words unique to Chinese language that is hard to translate to other languages which are used in advertising. Interviewees see that these currently popular words and mottos are commonly used in advertising communication. They like this since it makes it related to their lives and attracts them.

Questionnaire results indicated that Chinese want to be communicated rather as an individual consumer but sometimes when e.g. discount is given to a student group, group-oriented communication was seen positively. These results were emphasized by the
interviewees who wanted to be communicated with individually-centered language and a personal way.

“Chinese need that. They need to be treated as a single one not a group of people.”

There was not common ground about the goal of the marketers. However, the interviews suggested longer relationship approach to marketing could be preferred by Chinese. This is seen convenient and time saving but for some it would feel like they are losing their privacy.

“They like the longer relationship because that makes them feel like I’m treated like a customer they cherish...they value”.

In general, there are lots of functions in WeChat that can be used for marketing purposes. These functions can be used for different marketing purposes. WeChat advertising is seen very convenient but sometimes bothersome if there is no interest to the company or brand. However, responses from the questionnaire indicated that there is a risk of too much marketing.

“Sometimes it is too much, just as in China, Weibo is becoming an online-fake-fan sales network, too much adds will destroy the app. I barely use Weibo now because of the ads”

“Ads just help the company monetize the users and then killed the customers”

But they also note that users have the power of the communication

“You can follow them if you like them or if you are tired just unfollow”

In addition, WeChat advertising makes Chinese feel like they are special and communication is experienced as more individual and private.
6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis and discussion follows a similar structure as in the previous part of empirical results. First, the identified execution styles and their preferences will be discussed. Also their relation to previous research will be brought forward. This part also includes the specific styles and preferences in messaging app advertising context. First, similarities and differenced between China and South Korea are analyzed and discussed in terms of execution style preferences. Then, these are reflected through the cultural dimensions and metaphors. To provide clear and easy to follow chapter, it is organized according to the research questions and summarized and illustrated after each part.

6.1 EXECUTION STYLES OF CHINA AND SOUTH KOREA

This part aims to answer the first research question concerning execution styles that appear in advertising in general and how and if this is seen in the context of mobile messaging app advertising. In literature framework universal advertising execution styles were discussed and compared guiding to the formation of the theoretical frame for the execution styles. The elements forming the interview guide were only directional and new styles or elements were allowed to appear. The objective of this study is to explore the preferred executional styles of China and South Korea and in particular the context of mobile messaging app marketing. After carrying out the empirical research some specific notions to messaging app marketing could be identified.

6.1.1 FACTUAL & ENTERTAINMENT

The general appeal of execution can be considered as rational, emotional or moral (Sharma & Singh, 2006, p. 235-238) and as in this study more entertaining or factual. Korean respondents often gave examples of advertisements that utilized drama style which can be seen as entertainment or emotional executional appeal. These examples seemed to have a story that was touching, interesting or memorable to them. Most of the examples used some kind of emotional or dramatized approach. This preference towards emotional execution styles came into light also when respondents told to be influenced by television dramas. What the drama characters do and wear is affecting the interest and preferences of them. This execution style of drama was considered as a part of entertaining advertisements but Koreans saw this as a separate style. Drama style can also be considered as persuasive to purchase or having a goal in selling and therefore should be considered as a separate style in Korea. These findings were in line with the previous research and cultural assumptions concerning group conformation and trend following (Choi et al., 2005). Due to the high context culture of South Korea, more indirect and less informative execution was assumed to prevail in Korean advertising.

However, when putting advertising into the channel of mobile messaging apps different practice and preferences were noticed. In this specific marketing channel more rational and informational approach was seen in the execution and also preferred by the Koreans. They
use the PlusFriends of messaging app mainly for information retrieval, promotions and discounts. Even though Taylor et al. (1997) argued that commercials containing low levels of information are more effective in Korea, they noted that small differences in means would indicate no greater preference towards either low or high information commercials. The preference towards more informatics and rational style of marketing through messaging apps can be explained by notions of Taylor et al. (1997) and by the function and usage of the app. Since information was seen as the main function of these advertisements the entertaining aspect should only come after receiving the required information.

Some similar results were seen among Chinese audience. Drama and emotional style of advertising was remembered but it did not seem to appear often in China. Previous research suggests that a low level of information would be relied by Chinese audience (Xue, 2011, p. 161-162). However, this research indicated that Chinese would prefer higher levels of information when it comes to mobile messaging app marketing. The marketing communication identified was highly rational or informational and often appeared in the form of coupons, promotions, discounts, learning, and news. Even though entertainment was also mentioned as a preference of marketing communication the quintessential desire was in information. Chan & Chan (2005) suggested that Chinese advertisements were becoming less informative and moving towards audience-centered themes emphasizing the lifestyle and ideal self-image which could be more accurate in the context of television advertising. However, findings of this research discover more similarities with the results of Jin (2010) on internet banner advertisements which showed that performance and special offers are key information cues in Chinese ads. Preference of rational appeals was seen in both studies. Similarities with the banner and messaging app advertisements could be explained by the similar use of space and time. Advertisements in television are not searched for, mostly appearing during the viewing of entertaining TV-shows. Often they are longer in duration whereas message app advertising appears to be short text and pictures on our smaller phone screen.

6.1.2 Demonstration

This preference for informational communication was also seen in specific styles of execution. Koreans prefer to see the product in the advertisement, get knowledge concerning the advantages, and receive more detailed information. Similar results were seen in a study of Korean magazine ads by Jeon et al. (1999) which indicated a higher use of rational appeals overall and in the illustrations. Even though information and advantages are preferred by Koreans, the marketer should be cautious of too much information. Due to the mobility and core usage of instant messenger, KakaoTalk ads should contain necessary information and utilize the internet to give excess information separate from the advertisement send through messaging app.

Explanations of the product attributed and functions are not often presented in Korean advertisements. The use of explanation and testing was assumed to be preferred based on the cultural view (De Mooij, 1998, p. 199). This could derive from the use of perceived indirect communication in Korea through symbols and meanings suggested by de Mooij (1998). These make the ad more interesting and intriguing. In case of traditional marketing,
the demonstration and presentation of product/service attributes is often executed indirectly through a drama or story. Text is not often used for explanations and presentation. When function or advantages would be told, a customer-oriented way should be used focusing on the benefits for the customer, not the benefits of the product. Demonstration style of advertising was seen as an old form of advertising. As De Mooij, (1998) noted advertising used to be focusing more on the product features and attributes but now when Korea has developed more refined styles of advertising appeals.

Chinese wants to see the product in advertising. However, demonstrations and experiments were rather new style of advertising and rarely seen in China. China seems to develop its advertising culture, as suggested by De Mooij (1998), towards more cultivated styles behind the South Korea’s example. Chinese present preference towards factual style of advertising where advantages of the product/service are mentioned. This gave them the opportunity to reflect whether the product was suitable for their needs and wants and about the outcomes of the usage. De Mooij (1998, p. 200) suggests that Chinese see the end result important which was portrayed also in this research. Advertisements presenting advantages and results were seen to give a point of comparison against other options. However, the product influenced the preference of Chinese in terms of new products and luxury category. For new products and inventions basic demonstration of how the product or service works should be explained. Whereas, in case of luxury products the emotional appeal with a feeling of the product could be more effective. Demonstrations are seen as an effective way of advertising when the quality of ad execution is high. But in case of television advertising these low-quality demonstrative ads are seen in the local channels and can give a negative impression to the Chinese audience.

| 6.1.3 Endorsement and Testimonial |

Koreans are critical towards testimonials and endorsements. They are relying more on their own and research they have done rather than believe the endorser but can find it useful in a difficult purchasing decision. Cultural elements of Korea would have suggested a more preferable approach to endorsements and testimonials (De Mooij, 1998, p. 199). However, there are differences between generations. Young Koreans tend to be influenced by their role models such as idols and actors. Testimonials and endorsements by celebrities are seen influential for these young Koreans but tend to become less effective when they become older. Then a visible match should exist between the product and the endorser. However, today Koreans tend to turn to information from their peers through blogs and online forums. They are regarded as honest when they present both sides of the issue and therefore as perceived more convincing.

Similarly, Chinese like endorsements and testimonials mainly when the praising came from their friends or someone they knew. Testimonials and endorsements have been seen in marketing communicating for long time and most Chinese do not consider them as convincing or likable advertising. It had no influence whether the source is ordinary person or a well-known celebrity. These findings reflect the advertising style assumptions presented by De Mooij (2001, p. 20) who considers this type of personalized “lecture” style and celebrity endorsement as contradictory style to Chinese preferences. In China
celebrities do not endorse products directly. They are appearing with the product but do not explicitly express their own opinions or suggest being a user of the advertised product/service.

### 6.1.4 Comparison

Koreans do not prefer comparative advertising as they value harmony (De Mooij, 1998, p. 283). Direct comparative advertising is seen aggressive and inappropriate which makes the company look mean and greedy. However, indirectness of Korean culture reflects to the comparison within the company’s own products. When company compares its newer models and products with the company’s own older products, the comparison is seen suitable. De Mooij (2001, p. 21) has identified cultures owning similar characteristics as Korea avoiding advertising which can be regarded as offending. The study by Jin (2010) noticed that the amount of comparison was seen more often in Korean than e.g. in Japanese and Chinese advertisements. However, the study did not mention whether indirect comparison was included in the research, which could explain the results.

Comparative advertising is not often seen in Chinese advertising which was also noted by Jin (2010). Chinese consider direct comparison negatively and non-convincing. They perceive it as fake and see that these brands or products might not be better or the best in their category. Also, Chinese audience notices that these claims can be made concerning one aspect or function not the whole product. However, when comparison is made more indirectly it reflects the confidence of the company and is perceived more positively. These findings are similar to Jozsa et al., (2010) who identified soft-sell and warmth as likable attribute among Shanghainese whereas exaggerated advertisements were disliked.

### 6.1.5 Humor

Humor as a preferred execution style was very divisive among Koreans. Previous research noted that authoritarian elements such as parody and humor are not seen in Korean advertisements (De Mooij, 1998, p. 188). Humor is not seen typical execution style for Korea due to the differences in individual and generational preferences concerning the different styles of humor. However, in the context of messaging app advertising humor was more positively perceived. Humor in Korea is effective and fast way of bringing laughter or amusement to the audience but it is not memorable. However, if humor is used in Korea it should be different and creative, not just apparently funny elements.

Humor is seen more often in Chinese advertisements. Nevertheless, preferences of different types of humor vary greatly among the Chinese and no typical or specific type of humor exists that would be preferred by Chinese society in general. Preferences vary among all according to their region of residence in China. The cultural suggestions (De Mooij 2001, p. 19-21) and previous research (Jin, 2010) also notices this higher use of humor in China compared to South Korea.
6.1.6 Creativity & Inspiration

Not included as a specific style in the theoretical frame, creativity arouse from the data to depict some styles and changes in China and Korea. Creativity and inspiration in Korea was sought for among humor, drama and imagination. The importance of creativity was noticed by Jin (2010) who noted some important creative factors in Korean advertisements were interactive communication and symbolic, visual metaphor-association, and curiosity arousal. Especially when it comes to humor, which is not greatly used style in Korea, creative and new approaches were missed. Similarly, Chinese would like to see creativity in a humorous context. Also more indirect communication was seen creative. Joza et al. (2010) also found that creative and clever ads were the most important aspect of entertaining commercials among Shanghainese and Hong Kongese. This study noticed that foreign advertisement styles were seen surprising and interesting due to the different style of marketing communication.

6.1.7 Celebrity versus Similarity

Previous studies (e.g. Choi et al., 2005; Um, 2013) have observed a rather high use of celebrity advertising in South Korean. This was also indicated by this study which suggests that celebrities are one of the most popular elements of marketing and advertising in Korea. A unique character of Korean celebrity advertising is the promotion of multiple products at the same time (Choi et al., 2005; Um, 2013) was also found in this study. Celebrities in Korean advertisements also change frequently, making it difficult for the audience to associate them with the brand. This can have a negative effect on the brand recall and effectiveness on marketing message delivery. If a celebrity is used a domestic well-known person would be the most effective as they are the most often used source noted by Um (2013). However, this study identifies foreign luxury and high-end goods as a category that should focus on its international or foreign style. Western models are considered more effective than using local Korean celebrity or non-celebrity models which would affect the brand image in the eyes of Korean consumers. This study is aligning with De Mooij (2010, p. 223) who notes that the context plays important role in collectivistic cultures where local appeals fit the ads for local brands while as foreign appeals for global brands.

Influenced by the indirect nature of Korean communication, the celebrities are not endorsing the product but rather appearing with them in other contexts than advertising. These results are in similar with findings of Um (2013). This study suggests that subtle use of celebrity advertising would be preferred. Celebrities are more memorable and therefore highly used in Korean marketing. Non-celebrity models and non-known actors are used with mainly in drama and demonstration/experiment style advertising, where similarity with the audience is sought for. In these advertisements the story line is seen most important. However, other type of well-known sources such as CEO’s could be used in Korean advertising to increase the memorability.

Koreans would also prefer to have linkage or connection between the celebrity and the advertised product. This connection can derive from the celebrity’s expertise or from other connection made between the well-known person and the product/service. This result contradicts findings of Paek (2005), but could be aligned with his explanation of Korean
consumers’ view of celebrity endorsers as experts and as reference groups to them. Currently, celebrity advertising is not appearing in Korean messaging app marketing but this study indicates that celebrities in visual advertisements could be utilized.

Celebrity advertising in China is enhancing the recall of the advertisement and the brand. Jozsa et al. (2010) found that advertisements showing celebrity endorsed brands are the most preferred among Chinese. In this study a gender differences were detected when females considered celebrity advertising as influencing whereas males’ view was neutral or negative. Celebrity advertising relies on the likability and appearance in China, where the linkage between the product and celebrity was not seen as important as the attractiveness of the source. The preference and trust in celebrities in advertising derives from their perception that when they endorse or appear with the product they are responsible of their own reputation. Intriguingly, Chinese were more concerned about the brands effect in the celebrity than the celebrity’s influence on the brand perception. The background or the profession of the celebrity does not influence the effectiveness of celebrity advertising and it depends on the audiences’ interests what type of celebrity should be used. Celebrities in China can be used for different styles of advertising such as demonstration and comparison due to the likable and attractive attributes they own.

Similar to South Korea, another influencing factor in Chinese celebrity ads was the product category. This research indicated that high-end luxury goods should be using celebrity sources whereas daily products could be advertised with ordinary people. Similar findings was made by Nelson & Paek (2007) who identified e.g. beauty goods and fashion items as more likely to use non-domestic style and a global model than were daily commodities. Ordinary people were thought to be closer to the audience and have a feeling of similarity which can be better grasped when advertising for everyday commodities. This study did not bring into light whether product category influenced the source preference in terms of foreign or local celebrities but the study of Sun (2013) suggests that majority of Chinese celebrity sources are Chinese, Taiwanese or Hong Kongese.

6.1.8 IMAGINATION

The use of animated or fantasy characters is preferred by Koreans. Imaginational characters are familiar and effective when a character is introduced to the audience. By using the same character in advertisements the audience can easily recall the brand. Also, adding imaginational characters can help Koreans to express themselves and understand the message better than with only written text. Emoticons are highly used in Korea, presenting often cute or funny images and characters.

Imagination in advertisements is seen as creative by Koreans. Using imagination is especially preferred in advertising through the channel of messaging apps. Koreans like to use and see emoticons and other animated characteristic in messaging apps and advertising to certain extent. However, this use has to be subtle to avoid clarity and messiness of the ad. In KakaoTalk, a large amount of emoticons exists already for free and person can purchase additional emoticons. Therefore, if a marketer designs an emoticon for KakaoTalk advertisements it should be free and additional attention should be given to the connection between the advertised product and the emoticon as well as directness of the promotion.
In China, imagination in the form of characters, animations and fantasy images were thought to be a good and funny way of advertising. However, imaginational characters are not often used in Chinese advertising. Imagination is a memorable way of advertising but a precaution should be taken when advertising to adult audience since these styles can be seen childish. Emoticons are used in China when communicating with friends but not to the same extent as in South Korea. Due to the Chinese language and the functions of WeChat, voice messages were frequently used to express the emotions and feeling that emoticons would deliver. Therefore emoticons are not currently used in Chinese messaging app advertising. Chinese female preferences are more towards Korean style and use of cute emoticons and characteristics whereas males would prefer more masculine and funny style which would make the ad more interesting. Similarly, the study of Jozsa et al. (2010) noticed specifically cute and adorable execution was favored by respondents.

6.1.9 VERBAL & VISUAL

Koreans prefer visual clues over verbal as also suggested by De Mooij (2001, p. 17). Visuality and the appearance are important, which was reflected in the lack of focus on verbal explanation of the functions and attributes and emphasis on the look. However, functional focus could be more preferred my Korean males than this research shows. In the case of mobile messenger advertising Koreans like to see pictures. Images and visual cues are a faster and interesting way of going through the information and help them to select the interesting information for further exploration.

Audio and video marketing messaged do not seem to appear in Korean KakaoTalk. One explanation can be seen in the short length of these multimedia messages through the app. At the moment short messages and some emoticons are used in messaging app marketing communication. Koreans prefer this type of balance where short verbal and smart visual cue are presented. Even though Koreans are suggested to have visually detailed advertisements (De Mooij 2001, p. 19-21) the channel of messaging app and its main function as messaging in text format influences this balance. Other platforms of SNS such as Facebook and YouTube provide more visual approach.

Chinese WeChat advertisements include more text than pictures, but more visual approach would be preferred by Chinese. De Mooij, (2001, p. 17) noted that cultural characteristics of China would indicate its orientation towards visual source of information which is also seen in this study. Even though Chinese would like to acquire more information through messaging app advertising they prefer more visual and pictorial execution. Chinese see that pictures are easier format of getting information and therefore require less time. Pictures in advertisements attract their attentions and are found more intriguing and even useful way of demonstration in WeChat ads. However, pictures could be slowly to download. Audio or video ads are rarely seen in Chinese messaging app advertising but would be seen as a good form of combining informational and visual approached. But due to practicality they are not considered suitable for all Chinese since messaging apps and especially official accounts and moments are often used in public places where loud noises or disturbance should be avoided.
6.1.10  DIRECT OR INDIRECT STYLE

Previous studies and observations suggest indirect communication is seen in South Korea (De Mooij, 2001; Xue, 2011; Choi et al., 2005). This research also noticed that direct marketing and presentation of brand names was perceived negatively by Koreans. Advertising in Korea uses indirect style in both execution and language and sometimes the meaning is embedded in the culture. However, in the context of mobile messenger advertising Koreans like short and less direct language. Korean language includes lot of indirect communication through tricks and word plays which could be hard to transform to messaging app advertising. This is due to the difference in written text and commonly used speech where indirect messages are embedded in the pronunciation of Korean. Korean language has also indirect characteristics which could be difficult or impossible to translate or explain. In addition, slang and expressions typical for certain generations are often utilized in marketing purposes.

This indirect style of communication and seek for harmony (De Mooij; 1998; Jin, 2010) is seen in the advertising appeals and styles of Korea. This research noticed the high use of product placements in Korean marketing communication. Product placements are often used and preferred by Koreans since it is more natural and indirect way of marketing. A product or service is associated with a character, theme or style of a drama not with a celebrity per se. Due to the indirect style this placement should not be too obvious and a connection between the story or character and the product should exist. This study also noticed an indirect style how advertisements are presented. Koreans are willingly to search for additional information when the brand or company is deemphasized in the ad.

Similar assumption of indirect communication style was directed to China (De Mooij 1998; Xue, 2011; Liang et al., 2011). However, this research indicates that the nature of Chinese advertisements is more direct. Chinese audience would like clear and straight presentation of the advertising message especially when marketing through the channel of mobile messaging apps. Direct marketing style is seen time saving and convenient. Chinese considered indirect marketing communication to be interesting and intriguing but less suitable for WeChat advertising.

This study notes that indirect communication could be challenging in Chinese marketing but connects the vast amount population. Misunderstandings can arise when indirect communication is used in everyday marketing but are less likely when marketing occurs in a common well-known event or context. Also the regional differences in China concerning language/dialects, social surroundings and development can lead to difficulties in confirming coherent advertisement utilizing indirect communication. As seen in Korea, also Chinese language has words and expressions which are unique and often hard to describe. Chinese advertising uses topical and popular words and mottos which are attractive to Chinese audience. Use of these unique language points and current sayings are popular and relate the advertisement to their lives.
6.1.11  ELABORATIVE VERSUS SUCCINCT STYLE

Koreans prefer to have exacting style of communication when it comes to messaging app marketing. Even though advertising messages are mostly identified as relatively shot with perhaps some emoticons, very clear and necessary information style is sought after by Koreans. Advertisements in KakaoTalk should present only the key information according to the Korean preferences and give an option to acquire more information. This could be done through links lead to e.g. webpages which provide more information. However, Koreans need to be highly interested or convinced to click on the link for further information. Exacting style is liked due to the mobility and function of messaging apps where advertisements are often seen but not focused on.

Chinese WeChat advertisement messages are also exacting or even succinct. This is the preferred form of mobile messaging ads by Chinese where only short text and core information is presented. As in Korean KakaoTalk, marketers in WeChat should use links for gathering more information when interested. This is currently used in WeChat by some marketers. Chinese like exacting or succinct style since they are following several official accounts and elaborative style would take too much of their time.

6.1.12  PERSONAL VERSUS CONTEXTUAL STYLE

Contextual oriented communication verbal styles are used in Korean advertisements. It is suggested that Korea advertisements tend to use trust-generating orientation and contextual (role-oriented) non-verbal acts (De Mooij, 2001; 1998). However, these orientations were also seen in Korean verbal contextual style. Koreans generally like role-oriented communication but sometimes see it insufficient to capture their identity. Contextual style or role-oriented language can be used in promotional advertising in Korea, since the context relatedness was seen practical and positive. But some role-centered language such as relationship status should be avoided as De Mooij (2001, p. 21) recognizes that Korean communication tries not to offend and sustains a public face.

Specific to Korea is the use of patriotism in marketing. Family and country are seen important in South Korea and often these national family companies (chaebol) are portrayed as a family of the Koreans and utilize this in the marketing language. In addition, contextual style marketing is often utilizing Korean traditional or sentimental elements. This is generally effective way of marketing to Koreans, as long as the brand or company is local. Koreans are generally more touched by Korean than foreign advertisements.

Similar to Korean patriotism, Chinese liked traditional Chinese styles and elements such as calligraphy and ancient paintings and prints in advertising. However, contradictory results to Korean contextual style were found in China where the prevailing preference was focusing on personal and individual centered approach. This shift towards more personal style marketing preferences was also seen in the study of Jin (2010) where individualism value items appeared widely in Chinese banner ads. This study noticed that Chinese want to be communicated mostly as an individual consumer but when e.g. discounts and offers are targeted to a group one belongs; role-centered language is accepted. Chinese also see messaging app marketing as more personal way of communicating when the message or
advertisement comes directly to your phone and it would be received from a friend. Today marketing in WeChat is using more contextual style of language, but the functions of WeChat gives the possibility for individual-centered approach.

### 6.1.13 Instrumental versus Affective Style

Cultures such as South Korea and China tend to maintain intimate bonds with people and form a relationship between the company/brand and the consumer (Xue, 2011, p. 156-162). This was seen in South Korea where longer-term relationships was considered as one goal of the marketer. It could be seen more often in Korea due to the business conglomerates that operate on several industries. These companies are also marketing not only for the brand image but also for the whole enterprise. De Mooij (1998; 2001) suggests that China and South Korea use more trust-generating orientation in their marketing communication. In case of Korea this was seen as the orientation to affective communication where local conglomerates promote for a common interest of Korea. However, other more sender-oriented communication such as customer attraction and mass advertising leading to purchasing behavior was also notice.

Chinese perception of affective style of communication in China was similar to Xue (2011) and De Mooij (1998; 2001). Chinese see long-term relationship as convenient and time saving for the receiver. Receiver or process oriented communication makes Chinese feel special, as a customer they value. Memberships and accounts are creating this feeling for Chinese and they are more willing to maintain that relationship and give information to the companies. This could be seen at few official accounts in WeChat already.

To summarize, the current orientation and preferences of advertising execution do not always mach. Chinese and Korean consumers have similarities and differences in terms of advertising style preferences which are presented in the table VII on the following page. The new marketing channel of mobile messaging apps seems to change these assumed preferences in both countries but give new approaches of relationship building and personalized communication. Even though the additional functions of KakaoTalk and WeChat vary slightly the current use of messaging app ads focuses on promotional activities. However, the advertising cultures of Korea and China are constantly developing and transforming towards more and more sophisticated and refined styles. There is a drive for new and creative advertising execution.
### Table VI Execution styles in China and South Korea by author

#### SOUTH KOREA

**Informative vs Entertaining**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Emotional/Entertainment/ Drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KakaoTalk</td>
<td>Rational/Informative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indirect demonstration

**Testimonials & Endorsement**

- Own experiences and peer information
- No direct celebrity endorsements
- Generational differences

**Comparison**

- Direct comparison avoided
- Comparison within own products

**Humor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Unusual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KakaoTalk</td>
<td>positively perceived</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Creativity sought after

**Celebrity vs. similarity**

- Frequent use and preference in traditional channels
- Connection between product/service and celebrity important
- Western models for global vs. Korean celebrities for local goods
- Similarity used for drama and demonstration style
- CEO appearances
- Not used in KakaoTalk

Imagination preferred in KakaoTalk

Visual over verbal but balance preferred

Indirect communication in both language and marketing styles

**Exacting**

**Contextual**

**Affective**

#### CHINA

**Informative vs Entertainment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Emotional/Entertainment/ Drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WeChat</td>
<td>Rational/Informative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demonstrations relatively new

**Testimonials & Endorsement**

- Testimonials through personal relationships
- No direct celebrity endorsements
- Older style of advertising which is not convincing anymore

**Comparison**

- Direct comparison seen negatively
- Indirect comparison reflects the confidence of the company

**Humor**

- More common in China
- Different preferences in types of humor

Creativity sought after

**Celebrity vs. Similarity**

- Gender differences in preferences of celebrity advertising
- Connection between product/service and celebrity not important
- Source similarity suitable for daily products

Imagination perceived positively

Visual cues over verbal

More direct communication preferred especially in the context of WeChat

**Exacting**

**Personal**

**Affective**
7 CULTURAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF ADVERTISING EXECUTION STYLES

This section reflects the previous findings through the cultural lenses. Similarities and differences are discussed through the cultural metaphors as well as dimensions of cultures.

VERBAL AND VISUAL

One of the most distinct differences between Korean and Chinese preferences was seen in the contextual versus personal style of marketing communication. Basing on the cultural dimensions of high power distance and high-context Chinese should enhance the “We” identity of contextual style (De Mooij, 1998, p. 161). However, Chinese emphasized the individuality and personal approach in several aspects of advertising elements. As the cultural metaphor suggests some elements of collectivism are decreasing in China where own needs and desires are more often put first (Gannon & Pillai, 2013). This change has been indicated by several studies (e.g. Chan & Chan, 2005; Jin, 2010; Jozsa et al., 2010) which have noted the movement towards more individualistic attributes and styles in Chinese advertising. Also the heterogeneous population of China influences the perceptions and preferences of the audience. There are not only individual but also regional differences which could effect on preferences towards more personal approach on communication.

The contextual communication in Korea is in line with the collectivistic society, with high power distance and high context. Collectivism in Korea is seen in the view of group benefits over the individual interests (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 133). Hofstede’s (1980) collectivistic dimension sees cultures emphasizing collective identity, group solidarity and group decisions. Collectivistic culture of Korea is highly group oriented and the study indicated that Koreans attend and do things together rather than by themselves. De Mooij (1998, p. 189) identifies that in collectivistic cultures “being alone means you have no friends, no identity”. The contextual style of communication is emphasizing the role identity of Koreans. Role or group oriented communication is linking them to their in groups and to their identity. This study noted that contextual communication was giving the feeling of being special and selected to the Koreans whereas to Chinese similar feelings were adduced by personal style of communication. Therefore promotions and marketing communication in should utilize contextual communication which Koreans also perceive as more convenient.

Another difference was found in the preferences and use of indirect/direct forms of communication. Chinese expressed their preferences towards more straight and explicit style of communication where intentions are expressed more directly. This direct style is seen as a part of individualistic cultures (De Mooij, 1998, p. 161) when collectivistic China would have presumably preferred more indirect approach to marketing communication. De Mooij (1998, p. 189) notes that collectivistic societies indirect approach is preferred since direct address would alienate the individuals from the group. The previously mentioned personal style of communication in China supports this note that China has shifted towards more individualistic communication.
However, South Korea seems to have maintained these collectivistic characters in their communication. The cultural metaphor of Korea identifies the effects of high-context culture and the uncomfortableness of Koreans towards more Western direct style of communication (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 133). Koreans favor indirect communication which was seen in the execution of the marketing communication. High use of product placements and the lack of comparative advertising portray the indirectness of the marketing culture. Often the indirect nature of communication is linked to the high-context communication of cultures (De Mooij, 2001; Xue, 2011). Since both cultures are described as collectivistic, high-context cultures the difference between the cultures could derive from the uncertainty avoidance. Korean as a high uncertainty avoiding culture tend to pursue harmony as do China but are more emotional than other Asian cultures (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 133). This is often seen in the use of entertainment and drama styles in the local advertising. These styles present the advertising message as well as company or brand names indirectly to the audience and therefore can deliver the explanations needed by the uncertainty avoiding culture. Both China and Korea are face saving and harmony seeking cultures where confrontation is avoided. To avoid these conflicts and confrontations more indirect communication which can be found in e.g. collectivist and feminine cultures of high power distance and uncertainty avoidance (De Mooij, 2010, p. 229) should prevail. South Korea matches these cultural dimensions and therefore I could assume that femininity of Korea influences the preference towards more indirect communication.

China and Korea had similar approach towards more affective rather than sender oriented style of communication. The results of this study have similar indications to Xue (2011) who derives the conclusion from collectivist and high-context cultural dimensions typical to East Asian countries. Collectivistic cultures tend to maintain intimate bonds with people and this is also reflected to the relationships formed between the company and the consumer (Xue, 2011, p. 156-162). Relationships in Korean culture are very important since they determine the behavior taken. The relationships should be known for the Koreans to decide how and what actions are taken since if relationship is defined the relationship does not exist (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 135). This relationship building is therefore essential in Korean marketing communications. Similarly, in China the relationship based-system of guanxi emphasizes the connection between the communicator and the audience and still influences the behavior of Chinese (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 456). Generally, marketing communication should be viewed as instrumental style since mostly the goal of marketers is to persuade the audience. However, high-context and collectivist cultures especially in East Asia seem to have affective orientation to the relationship building with the brand. This could indicate the influence long-term orientation (pragmatism) to the preference towards more affective style of marketing. This focus on the process and the relationship between the parties denotes the long-term relationship building.

Chinese and Koreans have similar approach to the richness of the language in messaging app advertising. Both countries prefer exacting style where only the necessary information is given. In China there is slightly higher use of empty space and lower amount of written text, implications of succinct style. However, the exacting style is often used in low-context cultures of weak uncertainty avoidance (De Mooij, 1998, p. 161). Both Korea and China as high-context cultures should present and like more succinct or elaborative styles. Perhaps
the femininity of Korean culture influences the preference towards more exacting communication. As a feminine culture Korea should be slight more direct (De Mooij, 1998, p.283) and therefore perceived as more exacting. However, the rather low uncertainty avoidance and more masculine culture of China do not seem to explain this preference towards direct exacting style of marketing communication. However, China as more heterogeneous country might also shift towards directness in communication. There could be a need for more exacting style to communicate with different regional and ethnic groups within the country which could have differences in the shared meanings and assumptions.

As assumed both high-context cultures prefer visual cues and execution over high amount of verbal/text content. In addition, direct styles tend to be more verbal whereas indirect styles rely on visuals (De Mooij, 2010, p. 171). According to De Mooij (2010, p. 173) Chinese would prefer visual, straightforward and more vivid. This movement of Chinese towards more direct style of communication would also suggest increasing preferences of verbal or written text. However, the visual symbols are a key aspect of firm’s corporate identity in Asia (De Mooij, 2010, p. 171) and therefore visuals are important part of the integrated marketing communications in China. However, Korea places higher in uncertainty avoidance which could explain the need for balance with more direct form of verbal information in advertising.

**WHO AND WHAT**

China and Korea are rather similar in the use of celebrities in advertising. They are frequently used and mostly seen positively. The high use of celebrities and the preference can be explained through the collectivistic cultures of China and Korea where relationship orientation and conformity are essential in part of the cultures. As noted by Choi et al. (2005) celebrities embody the current meanings and cultural values which could be seen as credible or influential in collectivistic cultures. This allows people from collectivistic cultures like China and Korea to associate and conform themselves with these meanings. Also the high-context communication style which is prevalent in collectivistic societies could be influencing the use of the style of celebrity advertising (Choi et al, 2005). The indirect marketing communication of these cultures can use already well known celebrities to communicate the message to the audience more implicitly. As mentioned before no direct celebrity endorsement of testimonial is used. They appear with the product but do not explicitly state of preference or usage of the advertised product/service. Due to the familiarity and indirect/collectivistic culture of Chinese and Korean I could argue that sometimes the celebrity could be more important than the explicit verbal/textual message in these high-context cultures.

The study of Choi et al. (2005) identified Korean celebrities to be portrayed as a character rather than as themselves. This is against the preferences of connection or linkage between the product and the celebrity which is more often seen in low-context cultures. Currently, celebrities are used as an attention attraction or visual tools in the indirect more entertaining advertising communication seen suitable in Chinese advertising. There was also gender difference between the Chinese male and female concerning the preference of celebrities in advertising. However, there is no evidence that cultural values would influence this
difference. Similar findings related to females responding to celebrity advertising more favorably than men were noted in the study of Klaus & Bailey (2008).

Imagination and animation was positively seen and preferred both countries. The use of special effects and computer animations are frequently seen in Chinese commercials (De Mooij, 1998, p. 283). A study by Heiser et al. (2008) conducted in U.S indicated that print advertisements that were considered creative by consumers a higher attitudinal and purchase intention were detected. It also showed that more positive responses were displayed when cartoon characters were used as spokespersons than when the ad used human spokesperson. The distinctiveness of the ad spokesperson was important and triggers positive attitude towards the ad. As to the authors knowledge there is no specific previous research on the preference and usage of imagination in Asian advertising. However, Jozsa et al. (2010) noticed importance of creative or clever ads in entertaining advertisements as well as cute and adorable execution preferences in Chinese advertisements. I could notice that the likability or preference towards imaginative or creative advertising does not derive from the culture of the country but rather from the desire for something new and innovative. Even uncertainty avoiding and Korea which does not adapt to new as fast as less pragmatic China saw imagination as well as creativity as positive and preferable execution style.

**Styles**

Both China and South Korea present similar transformation in their preference towards information in advertisements. Collectivistic cultures of high-context communication are seen to express an indirect way of communication where entertainment is strongly used over information (De Mooij, 1998, p. 188-189). In addition, as long-term oriented countries lot of advertisement are thought to be pure entertainment where visuals and objectives are pleasing they eye of the audience (De Mooij, 2010, p. 236). As expected cultures relatively similar on both collectivistic and long-term orientation dimensions are preferring more emotional and entertainment style advertising. However, this is only seen in traditional media preferences whereas mobile messaging app ads should be more informative rather than entertaining. There is a difference in preferences according to the advertising channel used. Taylor et al. (1997) noticed that Koreans did not show a great preference towards either low or high information commercials therefore the advertising channel might be the reason for higher informational advertising in messaging app ads.

Uncertainty avoidance influences also the difference between demonstrations in advertising. According to De Mooij (1998, p. 199-200) uncertainty avoiding Korean would like to find explanations and testing, technology and design in their advertisements whereas weak uncertainty avoiding China would prefer to see the end results. Similar influence of uncertainty avoidance was portrayed by this study where Chinese preferred to see results and advantages when Koreans liked to view indirect demonstrations through entertaining advertisements therefore focusing on the process. However, the indirect demonstrations are difficult to translate to short ads on messaging apps. Korea is however moving out of the demonstrative advertisements whereas this style is relatively new to China where results and benefits can be easily demonstrated in mobile messaging app ads.
Both countries dislike the use of comparison in the advertisements. This derives from the Asian long-term orientation where harmony is an important aspect of East Asian advertising (De Mooij, 1998, p. 204). Presumably, collectivism, Confucian influence and the goal of harmony and face are reflected in the avoidance of comparison. Also the high level and success of family entrepreneurship in China and Korea influences the reluctance of comparative and highly competitive advertising. Comparative advertising could lead to the other party losing their face which is avoided in both cultures. Even though short-term advantages would derive from the comparison, the long-term thinking and relationship building influences the decision to avoid comparison. Winning at all costs is seen as a Western concept and in individualistic masculine advertising but Chinese and Korean cultures preserve harmony (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 134). However, indirect comparison is not affecting the harmony when for example in Korea it is used within the company not addressing outside parties. In effect, a rather confident perception was received by Chinese when indirectly comparing with other brands but not directly naming the competitors which could derive from the more masculine culture of China. Even when indirectly comparing to other using worlds as “the best” no damage it done to the face and prestige of others. Feminine cultures see showing off as negative (De Mooij, 2010, p. 228). Therefore the femininity of South Korean culture could explain the slight difference in the preferences and use of comparison.

Also humor is seen more positively in China than in South Korea. Humor is often found in small power distance cultures of weaker uncertainty avoidance where the style is used for implicit relieve of tension and anxiety (De Mooij, 1998, p. 258). Therefore the differences between China and South Korea could derive from the levels of uncertainty avoidance. These findings regarding the case countries use of humor, which is lower in Korea than in China, due to the uncertainty avoidance are similar with Hatzithomas et al. (2011) who noticed that the approach on humorous ads in collectivistic and uncertainty avoiding culture was as a creative device that can engender positive mood for gain consumers' trust. Jin (2010) also noticed the more frequent use humor in Chinese than in Korean advertising. Uncertainty avoiding Koreans would like to have more factual advertisements with could be more serious and structured that Chinese. The aim of humorous advertising in high uncertainty avoiding cultures is to provide information in a disguised form of humorous ads (Hatzithomas et al., 2011). Therefore humorous advertising is more likely to be effective in China.

Similarities were also noted in the use of testimonial or endorsements in South Korea and China. This style was considered rather old and unpersuasive. The results of this study are in line with the assumptions that testimonial style of advertising is fitting the individualistic and masculine cultures (De Mooij, 1998, p. 266). In these collectivistic cultures, Korea being more feminine where as China more masculine, this style of testimonials or lessons is not preferred. In Asian cultures the credibility of the person appearing in testimonial style advertising is less important (De Mooij, 1998, p. 247). Therefore it did not matter the preferences whether the source would be celebrity or normal person. The celebrities are appearing with the products supporting them indirectly but do not explicitly state their preferences. To display the influence of masculinity/individualism dimensions to testimonial and endorsement style of advertising an example in Asia can be seen. This type
of celebrity endorsements are often seen and identified in Japan which is more collectivistic/masculine culture than Korea or China.

Table VIII gathers the influencing cultural dimensions for visual comparison. The most influencing aspects of culture appear to be collectivism together with context which China and Korean have similar placing on the dimensions. Also the characteristic of Asian cultures, the long-term orientation (pragmatism) construe the similarities. However, most differences can be explained by the uncertainty avoidance where cultures differs the most. Also the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the cultures, which is not included in the Hofstede’s dimensions, can account for some of the differences.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>South Korea</th>
<th>China</th>
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<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>High-Context</td>
<td>High-Context</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exacting</td>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>Heterogeneity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Collectivistic</td>
<td>Collectivistic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High-Context</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Long-term orientation</td>
<td>Long-term orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imagination/creativity</td>
<td>No distinct dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High-Context</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Testimonial/Endorsement</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>Less masculine</td>
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<td>Humor</td>
<td>High Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>Low Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
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<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Long-term orientation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>More masculine than feminine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>High Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>Low Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information/Entertainment</td>
<td>Collectivistic</td>
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<td>High-Context</td>
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<td>Long-term orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect vs Direct</td>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>Masculinity/Femininity</td>
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<td>Contextual vs Personal</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>More individualistic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High power distance</td>
<td>Heterogeneity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High-Context</td>
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Table VII Similarities and difference in terms of culture by author
7.1 DISCUSSION

The basic assumption of this research was the influence of culture in the appearing and preferred advertising styles. It has been assumed that existing advertising styles are the portrayal of the preferences as the cultural values present themselves through the advertising (De Mooij, 1998). This has led to utilizing content analysis to identify these styles in advertising in most of the research conducted so far (e.g. Jeon et al., 1999; Jin, 2010; Paek, 2005; Sun, 2013). However, this study took a different perspective and examined the preferences and perceptions of Koreans and Chinese. By studying the audience a more direct view was research in case the styles used and the styles actually preferred would be different. What is appearing in ads at the moment seems to be relatively coherent with the preferences of Chinese and Korean audience with few exceptions (e.g. Chinese preference for more visual execution). The qualitative approach for the topic enabled more vivid view of the background effects of these preferences. Even though previous research has been focusing on content analysis of television, print and internet advertising the findings have been rather similar. This study reflecting on the previous research noticed equivalent styles as previous studies. However, more research concerning new media and marketing channels are needed.

However, as this study has explored the preferences in the specific channel of mobile messaging applications some differences were found when comparing to previous studies of traditional marketing channels. A lot of the results of this research had similarities with the study of internet banner advertisements by Jin (2010) and therefore the influence of more contemporary methods of advertisements and new channels can be seen influencing the audience’s preferences. This study showed that more informational and direct communication in mobile messaging app advertising should be used. Previous studies have emphasized the entertainment style and indirect communication of advertising in Asian countries. Preferences and usage of these messaging apps suggest that more rational or informational advertising communication is preferred. Ads are used for information retrieval as well as channel of promotional marketing and therefore the information content is seen more important than the entertainment value. Entertaining execution technically is also more challenging in messaging app ads where the space is limited and audience use relatively little time per post. Even though visual and pictorial execution in app ads seemed to be preferred the similar function of entertainment as in television commercials would be hard to reach through this channel. Whereas traditional marketing in China and Korea are using more indirect marketing, this specific channel of messaging apps influences the change of preference. Mobile messaging apps are used for sending instant messages and the same function applies to firm generated communication. This is a direct form of communication where relatively short post is send to the subscriber of the official account and received a similar way as messages from friends.

Reflecting these findings through the cultural dimensions and previous research, similarities and differences between the countries as well as the marketing channels appeared. Often East Asian countries and cultures are issued together due to the historical and Confucian ties but more detailed country-focused examination should be conducted. This study identified that the higher uncertainty avoidance and femininity of Korean culture could be seen as an influential element in the differences. More explanation, technology
and design elements should be in the Korean advertisements focusing on the process and usage mirroring to the preferences of indirect presentation of this information in e.g. high use of product placements whereas Chinese prefer to see the results (De Mooij, 1998, p. 199-200). Level of uncertainty avoidance of these cultures could also be seen influencing the use and attitudes towards humor and comparison. These differences could be taken into consideration when designing messaging app advertising. For example symbols in Korean and small copy in Chinese advertisements could allow higher chances for them to understand the humor (De Mooij, 1998; Hatzithomas et al., 2011).

This study showed difference not only between Chinese and Korean preference towards individuality but also drift of Chinese preference towards more personal and individual approaches in advertising execution. Moon & Chang (2005) also notices the struggle of reconciling between traditional cultural values and new values. The change and conflicting between these values can affect different countries to a different extent. Chinese culture and preferences in advertising seemed to shift towards the characteristics of more individualistic culture. The communist influence in China should reject these individualistic approaches but seemingly China is developing and becoming closer to the more individualistic Western cultures. However, I could argue that higher individualism and personal approach in advertising context is not threatening to the collectivistic society since it is very personal and do not harm the society and prevent its collectivistic goals (Gannon & Pillai, 2013). Personalized marketing communication, especially through private channel of mobile messaging apps, allows Chinese to stand out from the masses without doing it in public.

Even though individualistic or modern values and appeals are seen in Chinese advertising (e.g. Fam & Waller, 2004; Jin, 2010; Jozsa et al., 2010) there still is a place for traditional and old cultural elements. Similar preference and acknowledgement regarding the influence of cultural traditionalism was indicated among Koreans who are affected by Korean sentimental advertising. Hsu & Barker (2013) suggests that individualistic values and modern themes would be predominant in Chinese advertising targeted to younger generations whereas collectivism and traditional themes are seen in ads for older target group. This indicated that the shift in China towards more individualistic values and preferences exists among younger generation who have experienced or grew up in a more open society. However, as the participants of this study are students or young professionals who indicated the likability and attractiveness of traditional elements in advertisements I could see that even if on the surface these cultures seem to westernize the traditional values obtains in the culture. The long-term orientation (pragmatism) of Chinese culture is an important part of processing this change since it allows Chinese to adapt to other cultures. Therefore, I could argue that China is seemingly getting westernized.

China is an example of torn culture a country which is ripped from its cultural roots several times (Gannon & Pillai, 2013, p. 441). This can be seen in the balancing between traditions and modernity in several aspects of Chinese culture. A great part of the change derives from economic and social transformation after the Mao communist era, which has opened China up to for foreign influence. This change can give people more freedom and space for self-expression, which are identified as a part of individualistic cultures. Therefore, even as the behavior changes the underlying cultural values can still stay rather stable. It can be the
form of the value that is changing, not the value itself (De Mooij, 1998, p. 287). The paradoxicality of values influencing the preferences and likable advertising execution styles was seen in this study. Value paradoxes are seen between cultures as well as within cultures, each of them having their own opposing values (De Mooij, 1998, p. 2). Even though Chinese mostly reflect traditional values such as collectivism the opposite, individualism, was also presented by this study. There is a value paradox between the traditional values and the contemporary preferences. This can be described as what is desirable and what is desired in life (De Mooij, 1998, p. 2). Not only concerning the cultural values, paradoxicality is essential concept of Chinese culture. Even the Chinese language combines two opposing meanings to form a word which carries its own meaning. (Gannon & Pillai, 2013) This paradoxicality can offer an explanation for the seemingly individualistic characters of Chinese preferences. Chinese want to stand out from the masses but they still belong to a group.

Similar paradoxality was not seen so vividly in Korea. There is no doubt that these paradoxalities exist in Korean culture which have dynamic contrasts of Confucian-capitalism and social conformity-individualism values. South Korea presented its collectivistic values through several forms of advertising execution and often this reason made the differences between the two case countries. A notion was made concerning the high conformity of Koreans when collectivistic and conforming characteristics was not only presented in the data but also seen in the overall interview process. As previous analysis expressed high group orientation and collectivism in Korean advertising styles and preferences the same unitedness was also experienced in the data collection bringing the cultural values forward. This stability of values in Korea is rather surprising since the ties with western countries such as U.S have been strong since the Korean War but this could be explained by the paradoxes. Even though creativity is desired the desirable should be traditions. However, De Mooij (1998, p.2) suggests that these value paradoxes of a specific culture could be utilized as a marketing communication.

As a homogeneous culture Korea does not seem to need similar directness in communication as China. Even though the language is full of meanings and current trends vary among generations, misunderstandings are rare and Korean language can still be used in marketing communication effectively. However, Gannon & Pillai (2013, p. 126) note that the monoculturalism of Korea is under attack due to the globalization. This study presented the prevailing attitudes of Koreans influencing also global advertising in Korea. Koreans have idealizing and admiring perception of highly developed Western cultures even though Korea itself has been influential and developed country for several decades. Koreans look up to Western countries and consider that image to be the reason why some international advertising is persuasive in Korea. Therefore, product category and country of origin effects were seen in this study.

Often the foreign influence is seen deriving from the Western cultures especially be researchers and practitioners with western background. However, the influence between countries in the Asian region has been seen throughout the centuries. Deriving partly from the economic development Japan was the first country to export their cultural products such as music, movies and television series. Now, the focus is on South Korea whose hallyu, the exportation and popularity of Korean entertainment and pop culture, is influencing the
neighboring countries such as China. According to Clark (2012, p. 123) this influence was not only felt by teenagers and young adults but the whole society. Since advertising is interconnected into the popular culture, the Korean influence could be seen in the Chinese advertising. Highlighting an example from imagination and animation which was preferred execution style in both cultures; Chinese had a lower preference towards imagination as South Korea. However, this study indicated that influence from Korean culture is taken in China e.g. in terms of emoticons and cute style. Often Korean popular culture reflects the values of the socially conformed and desired life and shared Confucian and hierarchical values of Chinese. Also this modern Asian culture showed to Chinese that traditional values and modern development could coexist in a society (Clark, p.123). The development of cultural products and advertising was seen in China where the style of testimonials is seen as rather old style of advertising and demonstrations are seen more frequently. The styles and development are behind Korean advertising industry due to the earlier industrialization of South Korea and the Korean influence e.g. through hallyu to Chinese advertising as well as preferences. As de Mooij (1998, p.282) noted countries advance their advertising execution styles towards more and more refined styles. This advancement is appearing in the desire for new and creative advertising execution styles.
8 CONCLUSIONS

This present study examines the execution style preferences in a cultural context of China and South Korea. The topic of advertising execution styles, especially in cross-cultural setting, and the inner differentiation in the Asian region pointed this under-research subject. Therefore the purpose of this study was to seek and enhance the understanding of different advertising execution styles in the context of culture. In addition, in order to answer the research questions of this study and explore the execution style preferences in a cultural context, a new approach for this stream of research was adapted bringing methodological contributions. As noticed in the research gaps, there is no or few research conducted on the topic of culture in advertising execution (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). Therefore, a methodological advancement was made by using qualitative mixed-method approach in data collection and hierarchical qualitative analysis. I believe qualitative methods enabled more holistic perception of the phenomenon. As examining the perceptions and likability of advertisement execution elements and styles this study did not rely only on the assumption deriving on the actual execution. Even though this study also identifies that advertising is reflecting the cultural values, it does not suppose this is directly expressed in the preferences of the audience. As another conclusion, this study indicated there can be a difference between the actual execution and the preferences of the audience but largely advertisements fit the values and are liked.

This study showed that the execution styles build in the theoretical framework are perceived differently and to varying extent in both cultures. However, new styles outside of the theoretical frame did not appear that would be distinctive in these cultures apart from product placements in overall marketing in South Korea. As assumed, the use of celebrities, drama and visual cues were preferred in the traditional media. However, basing on the new data as well as previous research, this study noted that execution style preferences and identification varied from advertising conducted in traditional media channels and mobile messaging app ads. Especially direct communication and informational style were seen more likeable in this context by both Koreans and Chinese. However, current presentation of information was seen rather verbal or textual whereas preferences pointed towards more visual and pictorial execution of mobile messaging app advertisements.

Researchers and practitioners in the field of marketing and advertising should advance the knowledge of marketing communication through new media and marketing channels. The traditional models of advertising execution seem to be insufficient in this new channel. By incorporating verbal communication styles into the execution elements presented more suitable way of understanding the advertising messaging applications. However, the audience did not regard these mobile messaging app official accounts as a form of advertising due to the direct communication through a personal device of mobile phone. Also the current use of official accounts mainly in promotional tool in forms of coupons, discounts, and events did not assimilate this marketing channel to more traditional e.g. television and magazine marketing communication. However, this study identified the potential of mobile messaging app marketing as well as certain concerns and pitfalls.

One aim of this research was to apply Hofstede’s framework of cultural values and Gannon’s cultural metaphors to explain cross-cultural similarities and differences in
advertising execution styles between China and Korea. This study suggests that these cultural categorizations provide a frame for identifying the connections and relationships between the advertising preferences and the national culture of a society as well as across different cultures. In this study the differences in preferences was seen deriving mainly from the levels of uncertainty avoidance of China and South Korea. Also the cultures heterogeneity and homogeneity presented by Gannon was seen to influence the execution styles. Similarities were seen deriving from the collectivism and long-term orientation as well as Confucian heritage in cultural values which even today are influencing the execution styles and the likability of them.

Previously the focus has been on the conflict of Western and Eastern values and often prevailing thinking regards modernization as westernization. However, this study identified paradoxes within the similar Asian cultures sharing similar values and historical ties. Differences between Chinese and Korean preferences can also be identified by the paradoxal standpoint. As Korean values have stayed relatively stable, Chinese values seem to present themselves with preferences closer to the other end of the individualism-collectivism paradox. However, Chinese cultural collectivism was reflected in several styles and therefore difference in preferences of personal communication over contextual was seen deriving from this paradoxality of values.

The question between standardization and localization in East Asian Market seems to have variety of elements influencing this decision. As this study presented, even relatively similar cultures have different preferences in the advertising execution styles. This study supports the argument of Wei & Jiang (2005; 2012) that the choice of international advertising strategy depends on cultural proximity of countries. However, this study notices not only the importance of culture but the level of development in terms of economic, social as well as advertising industry. These factors seem to influence the advertising execution style of that time and therefore influence in the preferences of the audience.

While national cultural characteristics were seen as the main indication of preferences towards execution styles, the product categories and country of origin influenced the overall attitude and likability differently in China and South Korea. Therefore, international advertisers should be sensitive to the influence of product categories and the “Western image” when designing advertisements for Asian markets. Regardless of the relatively similar cultural values international marketers need to be careful when pursuing standardization and attention should be paid to the distinctive cultural characteristics of the audiences they want to reach. When designing marketing communication a holistic perception needs to be taken in order to achieve effective and appealing outcome.
8.1 CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results, discussion, and conclusions presented by this study identified some theoretical and practical contributions. In addition, few practical recommendations are given. This study helps to increase the understanding concerning the role of culture in advertising execution.

The decision concerning the topic of this study derived from the comprehensive review of the previous research. A specific area of standardization/localization in terms of creative and execution strategies in international advertising was identified as an under-researched topic. The lack of research and focus on advertising execution also reflected the incoherent definitions of the terminology. Therefore a foundation was required in order to answer the research questions and this study gives insights these problems.

In terms of international marketing and advertising this study shows the influence of cultural values in advertising preferences. This implies that advertising execution should be aligning with the national cultural characteristics in order to be liked among the audience. In addition, this study incorporates new form of cultural categorization by utilizing Gannon’s cultural metaphors in understanding the case cultures. This study showed the importance of qualitative research method in international marketing research which should be exploited further.

The findings of this study have some managerial implications for international marketers when these results indicate possible support to the standardization of one-creative strategy with multiple execution styles when the cultural values align. This can lead to potential cost savings in marketing campaigns.

Some practical notions regarding the differences in the use of these applications between countries can be made which practitioners should take into consideration. Chinese language in its written form can be difficult to translate into messaging app advertising. Currently Chinese use voice messaging in WeChat when communicating with peers instead of typed text. Marketers should take into consideration this unique style of using messaging apps in China.

8.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several aspects and issues of this present study came forth. As this research only focuses two East Asian countries the analysis should be extend to include more Asian countries in order to explore a wider understanding. In addition, the participants in this research were students and females. Therefore future research should focus on wider group of people consisting of different age groups and genders.

In addition, as noted before earlier research has focused heavily on content analysis to discover styles and appeals most often used in these cultures. This study aimed at examining the preferences of execution styles in case cultures but the effectiveness of these techniques is not studied. Therefore, the effectiveness should be studied to find out the true
effect of paradoxality (e.g. the desirable versus the desired). Experimental approaches can increase the understanding of preferences and examine the influence even further towards the behavioral aspects. This type of approach would also increase the researchers' subjectivity which the current research has not been able to achieve.

More detailed examination of the Wei & Jiang’s (2005) model of standardization should be done within relatively similar cultures but in terms of both creative strategy and execution. The issue of the best from of standardization/localization from a consumer's perspective should be investigated in future research.

The prior research has only focused on the traditional marketing channels of television and print media in the area of advertising appeals, creative and executional strategies. Future studies should explore the new media channels more extensively. There could be a difference in these elements between the different media.
References:


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

ADVERTISING STYLES

Mobile messaging app advertising in Asia

I am a Master student at Umeå University and currently working on my final thesis. The aim of my thesis is to find out what Koreans, Chinese and Japanese people would like to see in advertisements on their mobile messaging apps such as KakaoTalk, WeChat and Line.

Here link for Chinese respondents: http://freeonlinesurveys.com/s.asp?sid=9rlwqgcfxnkk1v451805
Here link for Korean respondents: http://freeonlinesurveys.com/s.asp?sid=anv7fm0uk96d8sa450177

What are mobile messaging ads? Ads are the communication, posts, pictures, etc. by brands or companies through;

- Plus Friends in KakaoTalk
- Official accounts in WeChat and Line

The requirement for participating in this survey is that you are using at least one of these applications. Before starting the questionnaire, please look up three (3) ads or campaigns of consumer product/service from the messaging app that you are using. These ads should be in your native language of Korean and preferably by a Korean brand or company. Later you are asked to shortly mention and reflect on these ads.

Most of the questions (21 in total) are open answers and the time needed to finish this survey is estimated be 20-30 minutes. I would appreciate if you answer the open questions with at least a few sentences. All questions are about advertising on mobile messaging apps.

Your response will be dealt with the upmost care, confidentiality and anonymity.

Thank you for your participation!
Sofia Kivinen
Any questions, please contact: heso0012@student.umu.se

1* I am...

- Male
- Female
• Other (Please Specify)

* Age

2*

What is your nationality or cultural background?

• Chinese
• Japanese
• Korean
• Other (Please Specify)

* Currently living in...

3*

Describe briefly one ad or campaign you saw on KakaoTalk/WeChat/Line that you liked and explain why did you like it?

4*

You were asked to look at three ads on mobile messaging app, which ones did you see? (e.g. company, brand, product, service, time of posting)
What kind of style or elements did you see in the three ads you were asked to look at before? (You can select several)

- [ ] It showed how the product/service works
- [ ] It presented good points about the product/service
- [ ] Someone was endorsing the product/service or telling how good it is
- [ ] It had Information and facts about the product/service
- [ ] You felt the person in the ad was similar to you
- [ ] It had one or more celebrities
- [ ] It was humorous
- [ ] It was entertaining
- [ ] The product/service was compared with others
- [ ] It expressed that the product is better than others

What kind of styles or elements you would have liked to see in those ads? You can reflect on the previously mentioned elements.

When you think about the three ads, what do you think the goal of the marketer is? E.g. create a relationship with you, get you to buy the product, entertain you, make the company look good...

What style would you prefer?
8* What do you think about humorous advertising? What kind of humor or what makes you laugh? Why?

9* Do you prefer to get information from advertisements or would you rather be entertained? Why?

10* What do you think when someone is endorsing and praising the product/service and saying how good it is? Do you find it convincing?

11* Which one of the following ads you like the most and why? (You can select more than one)
아이비클럽과 카카오톡 Plus 친구하고 선물받자!

하나. 아이비클럽의 풀친이 되어주세요!
아이비클럽과 카톡 충전 익고 아임포에 익음함에
추첨을 통해 5천명의 1인당 1만원의 가드쉬원을 증 1,000명의 쓰신에게 받습니다.

둘. 아이비클럽 쓰신을 소개하신 주세요!
아이비클럽 카톡 충전 및 쓰신이 카카오톡 친구에게 추천해 주세요.
인증을 이메일 kypkorea@naver.com로 전송해 주신 분들에게 추가 추첨을 통하여
액소케어 세련 교복, 디자인 티셔츠, 디자인 카메라, 자전거 등 특별한 경품을 당첨 기회를 드립니다.

공모일자 2012년 12월 24일 ~ 2013년 1월 11일
정답자 발표 2013년 1월 25일

참가자에게 제공되는 아이비클럽 선물
1. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
2. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
3. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
4. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
5. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
6. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
7. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
8. 카카오톡 쓰기 페이지에서 아이비클럽을 알려요.
Why?

12

What do you think about celebrities in advertisements? e.g. like/dislike, appear too little/too often, rather have a celebrity, the more celebrities the better, prefer a person who is not a celebrity.

13

What do you think of using characters, animations or other fantasy images in ads?
What do you think if you see an ad where the product/service is compared to its competitors or described as "the best" of its category?
15*

Should the ad demonstrate how the product/service works, show the product in the ad, or tell advantages of it?

16*

Ads in KakaoTalk/WeChat/Line often...

- [ ] Are rich in language/text
- [ ] Only present necessary or key information
- [ ] Use lot of short phrases and space
- [ ] Other (Please Specify)

* 

What kind of style would you prefer? (see the previous question)

17*

Do you want to see ads which express their point clearly and straight or do you prefer ads which might require more understanding e.g. idioms/sayings such piece of cake? Why?
Do you mind if marketer put you into a certain role e.g. a student/housewife/single/businessman? Or would you like to be communicated to as a individual consumer?

Do you prefer ads which have more text or more pictures? Why?

Please finish the sentences

I enjoy KakaoTalk/WeChat/Line ads that have...

In KakaoTalk/WeChat/Line ads, I would like to see more...

In KakaoTalk/WeChat/Line ads, I do not like...
Here you can freely describe your thoughts about mobile messaging ads in your country.
You can also comment on this questionnaire.
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW THEMES

Styles

Entertainment versus information
Humor
Other

Who and what is in it?

Life style
Celebrities
Imagination, animation, characters
Testimonial /Endorsement

Need to…

Demonstrate; product in action and advantages of it
Compare

Verbal Styles

Rich language/text - Necessary information - Lot of short phrases and space
Direct – Indirect styles of communication
Clear and straight points - more understanding
Individual consumer – part of a group

Verbal versus visual