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Conducting Research on International Advertising: The Roles of Cultural Knowledge and International Research Teams

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ABSTRACT. International research teams that are knowledgeable about the cultures under investigation are considered a prerequisite for sound research. By virtue of a meta-analytic review, this study empirically compared international and national research teams that have conducted experiments on the effectiveness of cultural value adaptation in advertising. Results show that, although the composition of research teams does not make for dependable differences in the outcomes of these experiments, international research teams may be more capable than national teams in designing pairs of culturally adapted–versus–unadapted advertisements. It may not matter much, however, whether the international team includes a representative of the audience's culture.

KEYWORDS. Advertising, culture, international teams, meta-analysis, value appeals

INTRODUCTION

As markets are globalizing and international trade is expanding, research on international marketing also continues to grow. Research crossing national borders faces a number of challenges, such as the equivalence of samples, constructs, and instrumentation in different nations. Against the backdrop of such issues, academicians have been interested in examining research practices such as measurement invariance (He, Merz, & Alden, 2008), back-translation (Douglas & Craig, 2007), and control for differential use of rating scales (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001). One of the major lessons from cross-cultural methodology for the enterprise of international marketing is the development of international research teams that are knowledgeable about the cultures under investigation. Douglas and Craig (2006, p. 18) said that "it is highly desirable to develop teams that are composed of researchers from different countries and different cultural backgrounds" and claim that such multicultural research teams are "an important prerequisite to the generation of sound international marketing research."

Yet, international research teams do not appear to be in common use in international

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marketing studies. In the set of cross-cultural advertising studies reviewed by Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009), for instance, only 40% of the studies in which two cultures were investigated were authored by an international team (20% were authored by a national team and 40% by an individual researcher). Unfortunately, as intuitively appealing as international research teams may appear, their effectiveness in comparison with national teams has received little empirical investigation. Naturally, researchers do not conduct the same international advertising or marketing study twice, once with an international research team and once with a national research team. However, the body of research contains studies conducted by national research teams and studies conducted by international research teams. In this study, therefore, we meta-analytically analyze findings reported in studies with different team compositions. These studies are important to global marketing because they involve the relative effects of consumer advertising appeals that are adapted or unadapted to the consumers' cultural values (e.g., Aaker, 2000; Han & Shavitt, 1994). These studies generally compare ads with culturally adapted appeal and ads with culturally unadapted appeal, intended for participants from one or two cultures. In the present study, two comparisons are of central interest: (a) the comparison of research findings of studies in which the researcher's culture matched the culture under investigation versus studies in which the researcher's culture did not match that culture, and (b) the comparison of research findings of studies conducted by international research teams versus those conducted by national research teams. The rationale of these comparisons is that the difference in effect between culturally adapted and unadapted advertising appeals is a measure of how good researchers are at developing these ad appeals for audiences from their own or other cultures. Empirical evidence on the usefulness of international research teams may encourage researchers to collaborate more in international research activities.

We first review extant literature on the importance of cultural knowledge and international research teams. We then introduce the set of studies on cultural value adaptation of advertising and present a meta-analysis investigating the roles of researchers' match with the culture under investigation and of research team composition on the relative persuasiveness of culturally adapted and culturally unadapted advertisements.

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH TEAMS

When conducting marketing research in different nations or cultures, whether the purpose is to compare objects or processes in those nations or to seek universalities that go beyond national frontiers, it seems straightforward for researchers to possess knowledge about the nations under investigation. Cavusgil and Das (1997), in their discussion of issues in cross-cultural research in management, put forth that knowledge about the cultures one investigates is one of the two most important steps in cross-cultural research. As international marketing research in most cases involves at least two cultures, knowledge of at least these two cultures is needed. Since academicians are not typically biculturalists, this means that a research team needs to be composed of members from different national backgrounds. Such an international research team may benefit from team members who bring in expertise with regard to the cultures that are studied.

The importance of international research teams has been underlined in methodology-oriented reviews about cross-cultural research in related disciplines such as consumer studies (e.g., Sin, Cheung, & Lee, 1999), management (e.g., Doktor, Tung, & Glinow, 1991), and consumer psychology (e.g., Maheswaran & Shavitt, 2000). Craig and Douglas (2002, p. 86) advise the use of a "team incorporating members from different cultural backgrounds and sites [...] to strike a balance between the need for local input and adaptation to local site conditions with the need for comparability and equivalence across sites." In their presentation of an approach to creating bilingual measures, Erkut, Alarcón, Coll, Tropp, and Vázquez García (1999, p. 216) also put forth the benefits of multicultural teams: "The bilingual/bicultural research team creates an opportunity for dialogue among professional

peers who are experts both in the subject matter and the cultures being studied.

Maheswaran and Shavitt (2000) observe that international research teams are mostly used only for data collection in the countries under investigation. They stress that such teams are useful for more than just data collection (cf. Doktor et al., 1991). In fact, research teams can benefit from a multicultural composition in different stages in the research, including the formulation of research questions, design of the instrument, sampling, data collection, and interpretation of the results (Craig & Douglas, 2002; Friedemann, Pagan-Coss, & Mayorga, 2008; Zhang, Beatty, & Walsh, 2008).

So there does not appear to be a debate about the appropriateness of international research teams over national research teams in international marketing. Unfortunately, empirical research pertaining to this debate is scarce. In a certain way, this is not surprising because researchers do not typically conduct the same international study twice, once with an international research team and once with a national research team. Similarly, researchers do not conduct studies for audiences that match their own culture and compare these studies with other studies they conduct for audiences that do not match their own culture. There is no extant research on the comparison between author–audience match and author–audience mismatch, but comparisons do exist between international (multicultural) and national (monocultural) teams, albeit it not necessarily research teams.

In the field of decision-making, a number of studies have compared the task performance of national and international teams. It appears that multicultural teams present not only opportunities but challenges as well (e.g., Connaughton & Shuffler, 2007; Staples & Zhao, 2006). A multinational team composed of members from 10 different countries, for instance, intrinsically has delays in communications—an undesirable attribute given rapidly changing business demands. This equivocal character of multicultural teams has been demonstrated in empirical studies reporting advantages of multicultural teams (e.g., Friedemann et al., 2008; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996), as well as disadvantages (e.g., Thomas, 1999), and equal performance compared to monocultural groups (e.g., Staples & Zhao, 2006). In McLeod et al. (1996), for instance, groups composed of Anglo-, Asian, African, and Hispanic Americans produced more effective ideas in a brainstorming task than did Anglo-American groups. Thomas (1999), on the other hand, reported a study in which culturally homogeneous groups were compared to culturally heterogeneous groups on five business cases of organizational behavior in an international setting. The performance of the homogeneous groups was better than that of the heterogeneous groups.

Taken together, studies on decision-making do not provide a univocal answer to the question as to whether international teams perform better than national teams, and this answer does not specifically involve research teams. Moreover, research on the cultural match or mismatch between researchers and audiences is absent. The purpose of the present study is therefore to compare studies in which the researcher's culture matched the culture under investigation versus studies in which the researcher's culture did not match that culture, and to compare studies conducted by international research teams versus those conducted by national research teams. These comparisons are made for studies for which the cultural match and team composition are highly relevant, namely studies of cultural value adaptation in advertising. After a presentation of these studies in the next section, we will elaborate on our research questions.

CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN ADVERTISING

In the field of global marketing, the topic of standardization has received wide research attention (e.g., Waheeduzzaman & Dube, 2004), in particular in international advertising (e.g., Zou, 2005). The debate among practitioners and academicians on the issue of standardization versus adaptation in international advertising has centered on the question as to whether the same advertisement can be used worldwide or whether it should be adapted to preferences, tastes, and values of the local cultures (e.g.,

Agrawal, 1995; Duncan & Ramaprasad, 1995; Taylor, 2005; Taylor & Johnson, 2002). For companies, the benefits of standardization include the creation of a corporate brand image and economies of scale but also the possibility of having more control and to fully exploit extremely good creative ideas (see, for an overview, White, 2000). Adaptation, on the other hand, allows companies to tailor their ads to the needs and tastes of each local culture (e.g., De Mooij, 2005). Advertising agencies have been reported to adapt their advertisements to local cultures (e.g., Kalliny & Ghanem, 2009). A number of corpus analyses documenting the use of value appeals in actual advertisements have also shown that advertisements in different cultures often reflect these cultures' important values (Han & Shavitt, 1994; Lin, 2001).

Observed differences in actual advertising practice, however, do not directly support the view that adaptation is more persuasive than standardization. Such support has been provided by experimental studies that investigated the effectiveness of adaptation and standardization. The general research paradigm is a comparison between an adapted ad (expected to be relatively more persuasive) and an unadapted ad (expected to be relatively less persuasive). In particular, appealing to different cultural values has provided a straightforward way to operationalize cultural adaptation in ads. Cultures have been shown to differ in their value hierarchies, that is, their rankings of which values are relatively important or unimportant (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). In the United States, for instance, individualist values (e.g., independence) are relatively important, whereas in the Chinese culture, collectivist values (e.g., loyalty) are prioritized (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). As a consequence, Americans would be expected to be more persuaded by an ad with an individualist appeal than by an ad with a collectivist appeal, with the reverse pattern expected for Chinese.

The prototypical research design in the ad appeal studies consisted of a comparison of the persuasiveness of two advertising appeals in two different cultures (e.g., Han & Shavitt, 1994; Lau-Gesk, 2003; Zhang & Gelb, 1996). In Lau-Gesk (2003, experiment 1), for instance, two ad appeals were created for a coffee ad: One was individually focused (self-fulfillment), and one was interpersonally focused (group fulfillment). American and Chinese participants read and judged one of the two ads. For each of the two cultures, one ad was adapted to cultural value preferences (self-fulfillment for the United States, group fulfillment for China) and the other ad was not adapted (group fulfillment for the United States, self-fulfillment for China). The adapted ad appeal was found to be more persuasive than the unadapted appeal for both the American and the Chinese participants.

A large number of studies have explored similar questions, across a variety of cultures and consumer products. Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009) have provided a meta-analytic review of this research. Their meta-analysis computed an effect size for each study (expressed as a correlation), representing the difference in effectiveness (persuasiveness or ad liking) between the culturally adapted appeal and the culturally unadapted appeal for a given cultural audience. Larger effect sizes represented a larger differential effectiveness of culturally adapted and culturally unadapted value appeals. Results showed that ads with culturally adapted value appeals were more persuasive (mean $r = .073$, across 67 studies) and better liked (mean $r = .082$, across 66 studies) than were ads with culturally unadapted value appeals.

The experimental research on cultural value adaptation serves our purpose to compare studies in which the researcher's culture matched the culture under investigation versus studies in which the researcher's culture did not match that culture, and to compare studies conducted by international research teams versus those conducted by national research teams. The general question is whether the size of the effects observed in the studies varies as a result of variations in the research teams (cultural knowledge and team composition). We elaborate on this research question in the next section.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two aspects of the research teams that conducted experiments on cultural value adaptation research were of interest: the cultural mis(match)

between the study's author(s) and the culture under investigation, and the composition of the research team.

Audience–Author Cultural Match

The first center of interest was whether at least one of the study's authors had a cultural background that matched that of the audience. In studies with a single researcher studying two cultures, one of the cultures commonly corresponds to the researcher's background and the other culture does not. In studies with multiple researchers and multiple cultures, a given culture being studied might or might not be represented on the research team.

Designing culturally adapted or unadapted ad appeals for one's own culture may be regarded as a relatively feasible task for a researcher. As members of their own culture, researchers are in a good position to develop messages that naturally include an adapted or unadapted value appeal. Designing ads with culturally adapted or unadapted value appeals for another culture, however, may be considered a much more challenging task. A researcher may be able to design a pair of ads that yield relatively large differences in persuasiveness for consumers in the researcher's own culture but may be less successful at designing such a pair of ads for a different culture. Being relatively insensitive to the subtilities of the other language and culture, the researcher's chances of designing a culturally adapted and a culturally unadapted value appeal are naturally smaller. The multitude of studies on cross-cultural training, such as for expatriates who work in global environments, underlines the need for knowledge about the other culture in which one is interested (see, e.g., Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Ratiu, 1987; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004; Zakaria, 2000). A question that arises in the context of cultural value appeal studies is whether researchers are indeed better at designing differentially effective adapted and unadapted ad appeals for their own culture than for a different culture:

RQ1: Are researchers better at developing differentially effective pairs of cultural value–adapted and cultural value–unadapted ads for their own culture than for another culture?

Research Team Composition

The second aspect of interest was whether the set of authors was national (monocultural) or international (multicultural)—regardless of whether the authors and the cultures under investigation were matched or mismatched. The question is whether international research teams are more effective than national teams in designing pairs of culturally adapted and unadapted ads, such that the ad pairs designed by international teams yield larger differences in effectiveness between the adapted and unadapted ads:

RQ2: Are international teams better than national teams at developing differentially effective pairs of ads that are adapted and unadapted to cultural values?

We addressed these two research questions by reanalyzing the data from Hornikx and O'Keefe's (2009) meta-analytic review of research in this area. That meta-analysis includes experimental studies that compare the effectiveness of ads that differ only in whether their value appeals are culturally adapted or culturally unadapted to an audience. These studies were located through retrieval systems (ABI-INFORM, Communication Abstracts, Dissertations Abstracts, and PsycINFO); unpublished reports were also located. For each experiment, two independent coders computed an effect size for each comparison between an ad with an adapted value appeal and an ad with an unadapted value appeal for a given cultural audience. Effectiveness was operationalized as persuasion (e.g., attitude toward the product, purchase intention) and as ad liking (cf. Brown & Stayman, 1992; Machleit, Allen, & Madden, 1993). In the present reanalysis, we classified their cases on the basis of the (mis)match (RQ1) and the cultural composition of the research teams involved (RQ2). Finally, comparisons were made between the averaged effect sizes for match and mismatch cases and between the averaged effect sizes for national and international research teams.

METHOD

Unit of Analysis

We analyzed the cases identified by Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009) as relevant to the question of the relative persuasiveness of culturally adapted and culturally unadapted advertisements. They located a total of 67 cases for persuasion outcomes (an average of attitude toward the product, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention) and 66 cases for ad liking outcomes. These cases are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1. Cases Analyzed (Persuasion Outcomes)

Study	*r*	*N*	Codings[a]
Aaker (2000) study 3, Japan, ruggedness	.221	48	2/2
Aaker (2000) study 3, Japan, sophistication	.044	52	2/2
Aaker (2000) study 3, U.S., peacefulness	−.025	66	1/2
Aaker (2000) study 3, U.S., sophistication	−.002	52	1/2
Aaker & Schmitt (2001) study 1, China	.272	50	2/1
Aaker & Schmitt (2001) study 1, U.S.	.235	71	1/1
Aaker & Williams (1998) study 1, China	−.137	90	2/2
Aaker & Williams (1998) study 1, U.S.	−.274	60	1/2
Agrawal & Maheswaran (2005) study 1	.140	167	2/2
Agrawal & Maheswaran (2005) study 2	.219	198	2/2
Gregory & Munch (1997) automobile	.043	316	2/2
Gregory & Munch (1997) gelatin	.025	316	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) Colombia, toothbrush	−.052	135	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) Colombia, t-shirt	.023	135	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) Colombia, watch	−.092	135	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) U.S., toothbrush	−.053	141	1/2
Gregory et al. (2002) U.S., t-shirt	.041	141	1/2
Gregory et al. (2002) U.S., watch	.243	141	1/2
Gunaratne (2000) New Zealand	.287	140	−/2
Gunaratne (2000) Sri Lanka	.298	140	−/2
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, chewing gum	−.063	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, clothes iron	.324	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, detergent	.330	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, running shoes	−.268	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., chewing gum	.352	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., clothes iron	.294	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., detergent	.284	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., running shoes	.348	64	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) combined, the Netherlands	.135	177	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) combined, Spain	−.140	183	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) Belgium	.137	142	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) France	−.040	125	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 1, Belgium	.016	72	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 1, the Netherlands	.271	57	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 1, Spain	.121	123	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 2, Germany	.204	98	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 2, the Netherlands	−.076	79	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 2, U.K.	.114	74	1/1
Kirk (2003)	−.090	24	2/2
Lau-Gesk (2003) study 1, easterners	.437	29	2/2
Lau-Gesk (2003) study 1, westerners	.534	25	1/2
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., collectivistic	.005	275	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., functional	−.194	278	1/1
Reesink (1994) the Netherlands	−.054	106	1/2
Reesink (1994) U.K.	.383	70	2/2

(Continued on next page)

TABLE 1. Cases Analyzed (Persuasion Outcomes) (Continued)

Study	*r*	*N*	Codings[a]
Sanderse (2004) U.K., camera	.115	78	2/2
Sanderse (2004) U.K., mp3 player	−.142	73	2/2
Sanderse (2004) the Netherlands, camera	−.112	80	1/2
Sanderse (2004) the Netherlands, mp3 player	−.123	92	1/2
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) Belgium, added attributes	.009	50	2/2
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) Belgium, product attributes	−.093	50	2/2
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) the Netherlands, added attributes	−.142	50	1/2
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) the Netherlands, product attributes	.064	50	1/2
Wang et al. (2000) China	.134	105	1/1
Wang et al. (2000) U.S.	.182	96	1/1
Zhang (2004) study 3, China, body wash	−.320	93	1/2
Zhang (2004) study 3, China, car	−.080	93	1/2
Zhang (2004) study 3, China, chocolate	.273	93	1/2
Zhang (2004) study 3, China, frozen food	.108	93	1/2
Zhang (2004) study 3, U.S., body wash	−.180	74	2/2
Zhang (2004) study 3, U.S., car	−.195	74	2/2
Zhang (2004) study 3, U.S., chocolate	.075	74	2/2
Zhang (2004) study 3, U.S., frozen food	.006	74	2/2
Zhang & Gelb (1996) China, camera	.459	80	1/1
Zhang & Gelb (1996) China, toothbrush	−.092	80	1/1
Zhang & Gelb (1996) U.S., camera	.046	80	1/1
Zhang & Gelb (1996) U.S., toothbrush	.355	80	1/1

Note. The labels of the cases and their corresponding effect sizes and sample sizes were taken from Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009).
[a]The coding judgments are, in order: cultural match (1 = match, 2 = no match, − = insufficient information) and cultural team composition (1 = international, 2 = national).

Their central comparison of interest was the difference of effectiveness between an adapted message and an unadapted message for a given cultural audience. In Gregory and Munch (1997), for instance, one of the message pairs was one for an automobile of which Mexican participants judged a version with a collectivist appeal or an individualist appeal. Hence, the fundamental unit of analysis was created by the conjunction of a given message pair and a given audience. For each message-pair × audience combination, Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009) computed and reported an effect size r. We followed the meta-analytic procedure used in Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009), namely Borenstein and Rothstein's (2005) random-effects procedures.

Independent Variables

We independently coded each case identified by Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009) for two independent variables of interest, one concerning the match (or lack thereof) between the audience's culture and the authors' cultures and one concerning whether the set of authors was international or national. We analyzed the effect sizes by computing mean effect sizes for each level of the independent variables.

Audience–Author Cultural Match

The first independent variable represented the answer to the question as to whether the audience's culture matched that of at least one of the study's authors. A case was classified as having such a match if at least one of the authors was a native of the country associated with the case. For example, the case "Aaker & Williams (1998), Study 1, US" was classified as "match" because at least one author is American (in this case, both authors are American). Similarly, the effect size for "Hoeken et al. (2003) combined, Spain" was classified as "match" because one of the authors is Spanish (Domínguez). A case was classified as "no match" if none of the authors was a native of the country in question. For example, the "Aaker & Williams (1998), Study 1, China" case was classified as "no match"

TABLE 2. Cases Analyzed (Ad Liking Outcomes)

Study	*r*	*N*	Codings[a]
Aaker & Williams (1998) study 1, China	−.164	90	2/2
Aaker & Williams (1998) study 1, U.S.	−.320	60	1/2
Briley & Aaker (2006) study 1, China	.222	80	2/2
Chang (2006) U.S.	.304	112	−/2
Diehl & Terlutter (2004) China	.121	36	2/2
Diehl & Terlutter (2004) Germany	.247	39	1/2
Gregory & Munch (1997) automobile	.067	316	2/2
Gregory & Munch (1997) gelatin	.084	316	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) Colombia, toothbrush	−.081	135	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) Colombia, t-shirt	.015	135	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) Colombia, watch	−.095	135	2/2
Gregory et al. (2002) U.S., toothbrush	.203	141	1/2
Gregory et al. (2002) U.S., t-shirt	.047	141	1/2
Gregory et al. (2002) U.S., watch	.238	141	1/2
Gunaratne (2000) New Zealand	.303	140	−/2
Gunaratne (2000) Sri Lanka	.308	140	−/2
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, chewing gum	−.130	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, clothes iron	.311	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, detergent	.274	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) Korea, running shoes	−.260	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., chewing gum	.411	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., clothes iron	.296	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., detergent	.278	64	1/1
Han & Shavitt (1994) U.S., running shoes	.306	64	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) combined, the Netherlands	.036	178	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) combined, Spain	−.085	183	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) Belgium	−.039	142	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2003) France	.122	124	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 1, Belgium	−.313	72	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 1, the Netherlands	.324	57	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 1, Spain	−.171	123	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 2, Germany	−.071	98	2/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 2, the Netherlands	.258	79	1/1
Hoeken et al. (2007) study 2, U.K.	−.114	74	1/1
Kirk (2003)	.003	24	2/2
Lau-Gesk (2003) study 1, easterners	.528	29	2/2
Lau-Gesk (2003) study 1, westerners	.643	25	1/2
Lau-Gesk (2003) follow up, westerners	.247	43	1/2
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., cleanser, collectivist	−.187	68	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., cleanser, functional	−.267	70	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., chocolate, collectivist	.242	71	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., chocolate, functional	−.214	70	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., fridge, collectivist	−.311	69	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., fridge, functional	−.310	70	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., jeans, collectivist	.312	67	1/1
Lepkowska-White et al. (2003) U.S., jeans, functional	−.220	68	1/1
Nelson (1997) Denmark	.209	37	2/2
Nelson (1997) U.S.	−.217	71	1/2
Reesink (1994) the Netherlands	−.054	106	1/2
Reesink (1994) U.K.	.383	70	2/2
Sanderse (2004) U.K., camera	−.040	79	2/2
Sanderse (2004) U.K., mp3 player	.147	76	2/2
Sanderse (2004) the Netherlands, camera	.246	79	1/2
Sanderse (2004) the Netherlands, mp3 player	.086	93	1/2
Terlutter et al. (2005) France	−.153	84	2/1

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TABLE 2. Cases Analyzed (Ad Liking Outcomes) (Continued)

Study	*r*	*N*	Codings[a]
Terlutter et al. (2005) Germany	−.046	182	1/1
Terlutter et al. (2005) U.K.	−.057	89	2/1
Terlutter et al. (2005) U.S.	.000	132	1/1
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) Belgium, added attributes	.235	50	2/2
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) Belgium, product attributes	.238	50	2/2
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) the Netherlands, added attributes	.112	50	1/2
Van Hartingsveldt (2004) the Netherlands, product attributes	.163	50	1/2
Zhang & Gelb (1996) China, camera	.610	80	1/1
Zhang & Gelb (1996) China, toothbrush	−.029	80	1/1
Zhang & Gelb (1996) U.S., camera	.045	80	1/1
Zhang & Gelb (1996) U.S., toothbrush	.399	80	1/1

Note. The labels of the cases and their corresponding effect sizes and sample sizes were taken from Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009).
[a]The coding judgments are, in order: cultural match (1 = match, 2 = no match, − = insufficient information) and cultural team composition (1 = international, 2 = national).

because neither author is Chinese. Similarly, the effect size for "Hoeken et al. (2003) combined, Belgium" was classified as "no match" because none of the authors is Belgian.[1]

These coding decisions were based on biographical information obtained from publicly available sources (an author's personal website or the website of the author's institution). There was total agreement between the two coders' findings. For only 2 of the 43 authors, information was insufficient to permit coding the relevant cases on audience–author cultural match (Chang, 2006; Gunaratne, 2000).

Research Team Composition

The second independent variable represented the answer to the question as to whether the set of authors (for a given case) was national or international. A case was coded as "international" if the set of authors represented multiple native nationalities (cf. Thomas, 1999) and as "national" otherwise. Assessment of authors' native nationalities was based on the same information as that for coding the match between the audience's and the researchers' culture. For example, the case "Aaker & Williams (1998), Study 1, US" was classified as "national" because both authors are American. By contrast, the case of "Hoeken et al. (2003) combined, Spain" was classified as "international" because one author is Spanish (Domínguez) and the others are Dutch.

RESULTS

Audience–Author Cultural Match (RQ1)

Persuasion

When the authors' cultural background matched that of the audience, adapted appeals were significantly more persuasive than unadapted appeals ($r = .077$, $p = .025$). There was no such adaptation effect when there was no audience–author cultural match ($r = .052$, $p = .061$), despite the excellent statistical power of the meta-analysis to detect statistically significant effects (Table 3). The difference between these two mean effect sizes was not significant: $Q(1) = 0.3$, $p = .566$.

Ad Liking

Ads with adapted appeals generated significantly greater ad liking than did ads with unadapted appeals when there was a cultural match ($r = .089$, $p = .022$). Despite excellent statistical power (Table 4), no significant difference in ad liking between adapted and unadapted appeals was found for cases where there was no audience–author cultural match ($r = .032$, $p = .358$). The difference between these two mean effect sizes was not significant: $Q(1) = 1.2$, $p = .277$.

TABLE 3. Summary of Results: Effects on Persuasion

	K	*n*	Mean *r*	95% CI	Power[a]	*Q* (*df*)
All cases	67	7655	.073	.029, .118	—	209.3 (66)***
Cultural Match						
Match	38	3603	.077	.010, .143	—	143.6 (37)***
No match	27	2872	.052	−.002, .105	.96	49.2 (26)**
Team Composition						
International	28	2837	.128	.054, .200	—	100.1 (27)***
National	39	3918	.035	−.021, .090	.99	106.2 (38)***

[a]These are power figures for detecting a population effect size of $r = .10$, assuming large heterogeneity, with a random-effects analysis, .05 alpha, and a two-tailed test (Hedges & Pigott, 2001).
**$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Research Team Composition (RQ2)

Persuasion

Ads with adapted appeals were significantly more persuasive than ads with unadapted appeals when the study was conducted by an international research team ($r = .128$, $p = .001$), but not when the team had a national character ($r = .035$, $p = .220$). For the national cases, the statistical power was excellent (see Table 4). The difference between the two mean effect sizes was significant: $Q(1) = 3.9$, $p = .048$.

Ad Liking

With the international teams, adapted and unadapted ads did not differ significantly in how well they were liked ($r = .039$, $p = .356$) despite excellent statistical power. With national teams, adapted appeals were significantly better liked than were unadapted appeals ($r = .127$, $p < .001$). The difference between these two mean effect sizes was not significant: $Q(1) = 2.8$, $p = .094$.

Alternative Analyses

The national–international variation among research teams was necessarily partially confounded with a difference in the number of authors associated with cases; international research teams (by definition) consisted of at least two authors, whereas national research teams might consist of only one author. Moreover, an international research team would not necessarily have to contain an author whose cultural background matched that of the study's participants (the audience). And because research teams commonly contributed multiple effect sizes (by virtue of using multiple pairs of ads), data from one or two prolific teams might potentially skew the results. Thus, to clarify effects, we undertook three alternative analyses. In the first alternative analysis, we reduced the

TABLE 4. Summary of Results: Effects on Ad Liking

	K	*n*	Mean *r*	95% CI	Power[a]	*Q* (*df*)
All cases	66	6091	.082	.029, .135	—	265.2 (65)***
Cultural match						
Match	40	3309	.089	.013, .164	—	181.8 (39)***
No match	23	2390	.032	−.036, .100	.93	55.3 (22)***
Team Composition						
International	34	3002	.039	−.043, .120	.97	163.8 (33)***
National	32	3089	.127	.063, .190	—	90.0 (31)***

[a]These are power figures for detecting a population effect size of $r = .10$, assuming large heterogeneity, with a random-effects analysis, .05 alpha, and a two-tailed test (Hedges & Pigott, 2001).
***$p < .001$.

number of national-researcher cases by excluding single-authored papers, so that the comparison between national and international teams involved only cases associated with multiple authors. In the second alternative analysis, we further reduced the number of cases by additionally excluding any international-team cases in which the background of an international research team did not include a match with the culture associated with the case. In the third alternative analysis, we collapsed the results generated by a given research team into a single composite effect size. All three alternative analyses corroborate the findings reported for the main analysis with one exception: the differences between the mean effect sizes for national and international research teams for persuasion were just barely not significant in these three analyses.

DISCUSSION

Faced with a number of methodological challenges, international advertising and marketing researchers have been advised to compose international research teams (e.g., Cavusgil & Das, 1997; Douglas & Craig, 2006; Maheswaran & Shavitt, 2000). Such teams are knowledgeable about the cultures that are investigated. Although it is commonplace to assume international research teams to outperform national research teams, the effectiveness of international teams or of researchers who possess or do not possess knowledge about the culture under investigation has hardly received any empirical investigation. Such investigation was undertaken here on the basis of a field of research relevant to global marketing and advertising—namely, the study of the effects of advertising appeals that are adapted or unadapted to the consumers' cultural values. An advantage of the present approach over experimental studies in which the performance of one or a few international and national teams is compared (e.g., McLeod et al., 1996; Staples & Zhao, 2006; Thomas, 1999) is that the present findings are based on a large set of different international and national teams from more than 17 cultures (ranging from Colombia to Poland and from Japan to Spain).

Audience–Author Cultural Match (RQ1)

The present meta-analysis in the first place addressed the question as to whether the cultural match or mismatch between the author and the audience affects the results found in studies comparing cultural value–adapted and cultural value–unadapted ads. There was no significant difference in mean effect sizes for persuasion depending on whether the researchers' culture matched ($r = .077$) or did not match ($r = .052$) the audience's culture. Similarly, there was no significant difference in mean effect sizes for ad liking depending on whether the researchers' culture matched ($r = .089$) or did not match ($r = .032$) the audience's culture.

Research Team Composition (RQ2)

In the second place, the meta-analysis addressed the question as to whether the composition of the research team affected the results found in studies comparing cultural value–adapted and cultural value–unadapted ads. There was no significant difference in mean effect sizes for ad liking depending on whether the research team was national ($r = .127$) or international ($r = .039$). There was, however, a significant difference ($p = .048$) in mean effect sizes for persuasion depending on whether the research team was national ($r = .035$) or international ($r = .128$): International research teams produced studies that yielded larger differences in persuasiveness between culturally adapted and culturally unadapted ads compared to studies with national teams.

This result means that international research teams may be more capable than national teams of designing pairs of culturally adapted–versus–unadapted advertisements in such a way that the two messages display relatively large differences in persuasiveness. Even where the relevant differences between effects obtained by national and by international teams were nonsignificant, the direction of effect consistently suggests that international research teams are more likely to be able to produce pairs of advertisements that yield larger differences in persuasiveness.

There is little evidence here that the sheer size of the research team matters to these

effects; excluding single-authored national studies yielded mean effect sizes quite similar to those from analyses that included such cases. Moreover—and somewhat surprisingly—although international teams may be more capable of designing ad pairs that yield large differences in persuasiveness, it may not matter much whether that international team includes a representative of the audience's culture. There are two indications of this. First, there is not much change in the difference between the effect sizes produced by national and international teams when examining all of the cases in hand (national $r = .035$ vs. international $r = .128$) and when comparing multiauthor national teams against multiauthor international teams that contain a representative of the audience's culture (national $r = .027$ vs. international $r = .134$). Second, there is no significant difference in the persuasion effect sizes obtained in studies in which the researchers' culture matches that of the audience as opposed to studies in which it does not match (match $r = .077$ vs. no-match $r = .052$). So it appears as though what is important (to produce large differences between the persuasiveness of a culturally adapted and that of a culturally unadapted ad) is having an international team—even if the audience's culture is not necessarily represented on the team.

IMPLICATIONS

When it comes to the composition of the research teams, the international teams outperformed the national teams on the persuasion outcome. However, taken together, the findings for the cultural value adaptation studies suggest that the research teams' relationship with, and knowledge of, the cultures under investigation hardly affects the outcomes of their studies.

As we indicated earlier, only 40% of studies in the meta-analysis that compared two or more cultures were conducted by an international team. Do the present findings imply that researchers, in their international research activities, should not form international research teams? We do not believe so, for three reasons. First, individual authors and national research teams are likely to have used the expertise of translators or advertising agencies to construct material for a culture that is not their own culture. Their authorship, however, suggests that the translators' role is subordinate and that the authors assume their responsibility as principal investigator for the quality of the research.

Second, these findings concern research on cultural value adaptation in advertising and may not be generalizable to other contexts. Additional reviews that address the same question in domains other than cultural value adaptation in advertising are very welcome, as they could provide more knowledge about the possible impact of the composition of research teams on studies' outcomes.

Third, the findings are limited to measures of persuasiveness and liking of ads. The relative effectiveness of international and national teams (and the relative effectiveness of researchers investigating their own or other cultures) was measured through the differential persuasiveness and liking of culturally adapted and culturally unadapted value appeals. Assessment of other outcomes (e.g., the reliability of instruments, the quality of translations, the efficiency of the research process) might reveal other effects of research team cultural composition. As an example, international research teams may be found to conceive research instruments that are more reliable than national research teams, even if ad liking for their pairs of ads is not different from that for the pairs of ads of national research teams. Future research may assess other outcomes to provide a more complete picture of the potential advantages of international research teams over national research teams. Also, addressing another limitation of the present investigation, it may explore other ways of capturing the researchers' cultural background (here, the researcher's nationality). It may be worthwile to take into account researchers' knowledge about a specific culture, researchers' experience with cross-cultural training (Black & Mendenhall, 1990), or researchers' skills, such as interpersonal skills (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). The measurement of such characteristics is much more complicated than the assessment of a researcher's nationality but may allow for a more fine-grained analysis of the impact of cultural knowledge about the culture under investigation.

In any event, the current results suggest a more complicated picture of the role of the cultural composition of research teams than is usually assumed. It seems natural to suppose that international research teams will have some advantage in addressing research questions that cross national boundaries, but the current results suggest any such advantage is not always straightforward. For the most part, the cultural characteristics of the research team did not affect the research results—although there is some indication that in multicultural applications, international teams may be better able than national teams to design advertisement pairs so as to yield large differences in persuasiveness, even if the audience's culture is not represented on the research team.

NOTES

1. It could be argued that nationality is not the only indicator of an author's match or mismatch with a culture that is studied. Extended residence in the culture under investigation is likely to be sufficient to permit researchers to be able to design culturally adapted messages. Therefore, if the nationality of all authors of a given experiment mismatched the culture under investigation, it was determined if at least one of the authors has been in residence in that culture for at least 10 years. In only one case, this residence altered the original coding. "Agrawal & Maheswaran (2005) study 2" was first coded as "no match" (both authors were born and raised in India, but the participants are from the United States). With the criterion of extended residence, this case was coded as "match" as Maheswaran has been in the United States for more than 10 years. In a new analysis, when the authors' cultural background matched that of the audience, adapted appeals were significantly more persuasive than unadapted appeals ($r = .081$, $p = .016$). There was no such adaptation effect when there was no audience–author cultural match ($r = .041$, $p = .128$), despite excellent statistical power (.95). The difference between these two mean effect sizes was not significant; $Q(1) = 0.8$, $p = .357$.

2. References marked with an asterisk indicate studies included in the meta-analysis.

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