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**Cultural meaning, advertising and national culture: a four-country study.**<sup>1</sup>

Barbara Czarnecka, Ross Brennan & Serap Keles

**Abstract:** Cultural meaning transfer theory and GLOBE cultural dimensions were employed in this comparative study to examine the extent to which cultural meaning presented in advertisements reflected national cultures of the target countries. Content analysis was applied to 847 magazine advertisements from England, Hungary, Ireland, and Poland to investigate whether the use of advertising appeals presented in these advertisements mirrored variations in cultures as described by GLOBE Society Values. Results revealed that, in line with the hypotheses, there were similarities and differences in the use of advertising appeals, and only some of them mirrored the cultural variations. GLOBE Society Values were more likely to predict the use of appeals than GLOBE Society Practices, but not for all appeals. The results suggest that advertisers can draw on national cultures for cultural meanings to be used in advertisements only to a limited extent. It may be that advertisements mold rather than mirror societal values, or that only certain cultural traits are important for advertisers. GLOBE dimensions may therefore be of limited use when analyzing and explaining the content of advertisements.

**Key words:** cross-cultural advertising, GLOBE dimensions, cultural values, content analysis

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## **1. Introduction**

Researchers suggest that advertising is particularly reflective of, and dependent on, the culture in which it exists for meanings of images and words (Hong, Muderrisoglu, & Zinkhan, 1987; Khairullah & Khairullah, 2003), and is one of the elements of marketing mix most influenced by cultural differences (Powers & Loyka, 2010). They further argue that if it is to be persuasive advertising must be culturally congruent (Cui & Yang, 2009; Cui, Yang, Wang, & Liu, 2012); that is, it should reflect cultural values held by the target group (Ford, Mueller, Taylor, & Hollis, 2011; Huang & Shen, 2016; Um, 2013). Cultural values are defined as beliefs “that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-states of existence” (Rokeach, 1973, p.160). They are the smallest element and the foundation of cultures, and in advertising they are expressed via advertising appeals and can take the form of copy, images, or sound (Moon & Chan, 2005). Extant research results do not provide a clear and consistent answer as to which ‘culture’ advertising reflects. Advertisers are located in many different cultures such as the culture of the advertiser’s organization, the culture of the nation in which the advertiser operates, the culture of origin of the multinational brands, or the culture of the global world (Akaka & Alden, 2010; Sirisagul, 2000). Undoubtedly, one of the sources of cultural meaning is national culture, that is, the culture of the society of a particular country (De Mooij, 2015). However, the extent to which the differences in advertising between various cultures can be attributed to the differences in nations' cultural characteristics is a question to be answered to further improve our understanding of the link between advertising and culture. Apart from practical business relevance, advertising is a tool to influence people’s

values and behaviours, and there has been a long-standing debate about advertising's role in shaping and/or reflecting society values (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Pollay, 1986).

The aim of the current study, hence, was to investigate the use of advertising appeals using a cross-cultural design. Specifically, this study examined advertising from various countries, and how the advertising appeals reflect the national culture which the advertisements target. With this purpose in mind, this paper aims to respond to two specific calls for more research in marketing communications. Several researchers have called for more research in cross-cultural advertising using more recent models of cross-cultural differences, which have so far been relatively neglected (Charles R. Taylor, 2013). Most published studies utilized frameworks such as Hofstede's dimensions, which were conceptualized over 40 years ago (Engelen & Brettel, 2011; Kalliny, Saran, Ghanem, & Fisher, 2011). As culture is a dynamic phenomenon and changes over time (Inglehart & Baker, 2000), frameworks developed a relatively long time ago may not be appropriate to explain cultural phenomena in the present day. Marketing communications research is needed to assess the value of such research by extending such work and its relevance. This paper aims to respond to these calls (to extend such comparative studies and to use more recent cultural frameworks) by employing a GLOBE framework of cultural dimensions that has been developed more recently, and may therefore explain cross-cultural differences and similarities in advertising more accurately.

National culture plays an important role in international business research and the frameworks classifying national cultures are a useful source of guidance for both researchers and practitioners (Caprar, Devinney, Kirkman, & Caligiuri, 2015; Kumar & Pansari, 2016; Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2011). Past research in this area has used cultural frameworks to investigate the reflections of culture in advertising, however most of these

studies applied frameworks based on data gathered several decades ago (Engelen & Brettel, 2011). There have been calls to apply the more recent GLOBE model to study cross-cultural advertising because the frameworks previously applied are becoming obsolete (Ford et al., 2011; Charles R. Taylor, 2013). GLOBE stands for the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness research program, which conceptualized nine dimensions of cultures that differentiate societies according to society values (Society Values which describe things ‘as they should be’) and practices (Society Practices which describe things ‘as they are’) (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004).

Previous research examined how national culture (measured, for example, using Hofstede’s dimensions) influences advertising content, but provided inconclusive results. This study applies cultural meaning transfer theory and GLOBE cultural dimensions to examine the extent to which cultural values presented in advertising are drawn from national cultures. Cultural meaning transfer theory (McCracken, 1986) posits that advertising is a tool for transferring cultural meaning from advertisers to the advertised goods and then to consumers, and that meaning is drawn from the culturally constituted world. In line with this theory, we suggest that those cultural meanings featured in advertisements are drawn from national cultures, and the content of these advertisements can be explained by cultural dimensions.

Following this line of argument, when advertisers target consumers, it is to be expected that they do so in a way that appeals to those consumers’ cultural values. If this is the case, then frameworks which classify cultures based on cultural values, such as GLOBE (House et al., 2004), should be capable of predicting the similarities and differences in advertising content.

By applying the GLOBE model (House et al., 2004), we aim to explain and predict differences and similarities in the use of cultural values in advertising from four European countries, and hence determine what cultural meanings were encoded in the advertisements. Specifically, Society Values should predict the variations in the value appeal usage more accurately than Society Practices. This argument is based on several premises. First, what consumers see in advertisements is a function of target national cultures rather than a function of other factors (such as subcultures or product category) (Czarnecka, Dahl, & Eagle, 2013). Second, advertising is aspirational: it features representations of values, ideas and attitudes that consumers aspire to but do not currently possess (Dimofte, Goodstein, & Brumbaugh, 2015; McCracken, 1986). For example, celebrity endorsement is used in the hope that consumers will aspire to be like the celebrity in the advert, and the product or service will allow them to feel like the celebrity (Choi, Lee, & Kim, 2005). Based on such claims, it is reasonable to assume that advertising should reflect ‘how things should be’ (Society Values) so that consumers can aspire to those ideals, rather than ‘as they are’ (Society Practices).

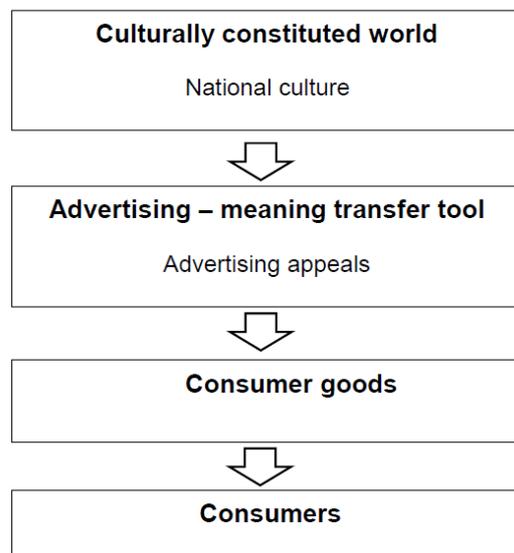
In brief, this paper focuses on two research questions: 1) what are the differences and similarities in value appeals usage in print advertising from England, Hungary, Ireland and Poland?; and 2): Are cultural meanings in print advertisements aligned with the national cultures of the target countries and can these be better explained using GLOBE Society Values rather than Society Practices?

## **2. Theoretical framework and literature review**

### **2.1. Advertising appeals and cultural meaning transfer**

Much prior research on reflections of culture in advertising has approached the subject through the examination of the use of cultural value appeals. Advertising appeals are designed to align with the values of consumers, and as such, values are the underlying source of appeals (Pollay, 1983). The contention is that the goal of advertising is to persuade consumers by appealing to the values held by the target group. If advertising is not aligned with the values of the target segment, it may alienate that group, by reducing consumer identification with the brand. Thus, advertising is often said to be a reflection of the dominant cultural values in a society because culturally congruent representations in advertising are expected to be more effective than non-congruent appeals (Gupta & De, 2007; Zhang & Gelb, 1996). Advertising is therefore a tool for transferring cultural meaning from advertisers to consumers as proposed by cultural meaning transfer theory illustrated in Figure 1 (McCracken, 1986).

**Figure 1:** Transfer of cultural meaning. Adapted from McCracken (1986).



McCracken (1986) further asserts that cultural meaning in a consumer society moves continuously from one location to another. First, it moves from the culturally constituted

world (the world of everyday experience shaped by the beliefs and values of one's culture) to consumer products and then from these products to the individual consumer. Several mechanisms, of which one is advertising, are responsible for this movement. Advertising brings the consumer good and a representation of the culturally constituted world together within the frame of a particular advertisement. Cultural meaning includes cultural principles which are the ideas or values that define how the world is organized, evaluated, and interpreted. As the guiding ideas for thought and action, cultural principles are expressed in every aspect of social life, including consumer goods (McCracken, 1986). Meanings are transferred into an advertised product through advertising because advertisements reference the general cultural symbols needed to provide meaning (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). These ideas are selected by advertisers and then presented as advertising appeals in advertising messages via use of copy and images (Pollay, 1986).

Cultural meanings are drawn from the culturally constituted world of which national cultures are an important part. Theoretically, it is therefore important to examine to what extent advertising meaning can be explained by frameworks of cultural dimensions which classify national cultures to answer the question whether, and to what extent, advertising reflects culture.

## **2.2 National culture and the GLOBE framework**

Culture is defined in various ways in different fields. The word is used in different contexts, such as national culture, global culture, and cultural differences between countries. Essential to this study is the concept of culture as understood and defined by anthropologists, later used in research in cross-cultural psychology inspired by Hofstede (2001) and in the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004). In this context, culture is defined as "shared motives, values,

beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations” (House et al., 2004, p.57). These collectives include many different social groups, including nations. National cultures are described by frameworks such as Hofstede’s dimensions, or GLOBE dimensions among others (De Mooij, 2013). These frameworks are based on research into cultural values, as these are the smallest unit of cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004; Schwartz, 1999).

Hofstede’s dimensions have been very widely used, and subjected to extensive critique (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2016; Messner, 2016), and researchers have called for the application of more recent frameworks of national cultures such as the GLOBE model (Ford et al., 2011; Charles R Taylor, 2010). The GLOBE study examined both leadership and societal culture therefore making a distinction between the two, and providing more generalizable dimensions. The GLOBE model includes nine cultural dimensions: Performance Orientation, Future Orientation, Assertiveness, Institutional Collectivism, In-group Collectivism, Power Distance, Humane Orientation, Gender Egalitarianism and Uncertainty Avoidance (see Table 1). In contrast to other frameworks, GLOBE also considers two aspects of culture: values (Society Values) and practices (Society Practices) (Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2010). Society Practices measure perceived behaviors and practices, hence describe ‘what is’. Society Values measure ‘what should be’, that is respondents’ beliefs about how things should be organized in a society (House et al., 2004).

Other frameworks, such as Hofstede’s (2001) dimensions, are based on studies of organizational culture and derived from work-related questions. In addition, Hofstede’s original work lacks data from important parts of the world such as Eastern European

countries (Schwartz, 1999). Moreover, GLOBE provides bands of scores (A, B, C, D) which classify cultures into bands that are designed to differentiate more reliably between cultures. GLOBE researchers used the procedure of test banding to overcome the issue of over-interpreting small differences in rank order between cultures. Test-banding groups societal scores into bands, in which scores within a particular band are considered not to be meaningfully different. Thus, this banding methodology identifies a range of scores that cannot be distinguished from the top score in a band (House et al., 2004). This characteristic distinguishes GLOBE from other frameworks, and this framework, despite criticisms, may still be useful in predicting the variations in cultural manifestations (Venaik & Brewer, 2013, 2016). For example, in earlier frameworks, Hall (1990) does not provide any scores at all, and Hofstede (2001) does not specify how meaningful the differences between the scores are. Table 1 presents the GLOBE Society Values and Society Practices scores together with their score bands (A, B, C or D which are presented next to the numerical score) for each of the studied countries.

**Table 1:** GLOBE Society Values and Society Practices scores for England, Hungary, Ireland and Poland. Source: House et al. (2004).

| <i>Dimension</i>   | <i>V/P</i> | <i>Country scores**</i> |                |                |               |
|--|------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
|  | *          | <i>England</i>          | <i>Hungary</i> | <i>Ireland</i> | <i>Poland</i> |
| <b>Performance Orientation:</b><br>encouraging and rewarding<br>innovation, high standards and<br>performance improvements | V          | 5.90 B                  | 5.96 B         | 5.98 B         | 6.12 B        |
|  | P          | 4.08 B                  | 3.43 C         | 4.36 A         | 3.89 B        |
| <b>Future Orientation:</b> the   | V          | 5.06 C                  | 5.70 A         | 5.22 B         | 5.20 B        |

|  |   |        |        |        |        |
|--|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| degree to which people engage in future-oriented behaviors (planning, investing in the future, delaying gratification)   | P | 4.28 B | 3.21 C | 3.98 B | 3.11 D |
| <b>Assertiveness:</b> people are or should be encouraged to be assertive, aggressive, and tough, or nonassertive, nonaggressive, and tender in social relationships                        | V | 3.70 B | 3.35 B | 3.99 B | 3.90 B |
|  | P | 4.15 A | 4.79 A | 3.92 B | 4.06 B |
| <b>Institutional Collectivism:</b> the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action | V | 4.31 C | 4.50 C | 4.59 B | 4.22 C |
|  | P | 4.27 B | 3.53 C | 4.63 A | 4.53 B |
| <b>In-Group Collectivism:</b> the degree to which people express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families   | V | 5.55 B | 5.54 B | 5.74 B | 5.74 B |
|  | P | 4.08 C | 5.25 B | 5.14 B | 5.52 A |
| <b>Power Distance:</b> the extent to   | V | 2.80 C | 2.49 D | 2.71 C | 3.12 B |

|  |   |        |        |        |        |
|--|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| which people accept and endorse authority, power differences, and status privileges  | P | 5.15 B | 5.56 A | 5.15 B | 5.10 B |
| <b>Humane Orientation:</b> the degree to which people encourage or reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, caring, and kind to others | V | 5.43 B | 5.48 B | 5.47 B | 5.30 C |
|  | P | 3.72 C | 3.35 D | 4.96 A | 3.61 D |
| <b>Gender Egalitarianism:</b> the degree to which a community minimizes gender role differences  | V | 5.17 A | 4.63 A | 5.14 A | 4.52 B |
|  | P | 3.67 A | 4.08 A | 3.21 B | 4.02 A |
| <b>Uncertainty Avoidance:</b> the extent to which people strive to avoid uncertainty by relying on established social norms and bureaucratic practices | V | 4.11 C | 4.66 B | 4.02 C | 4.71 B |
|  | P | 4.65 B | 3.12 D | 4.30 B | 3.62 C |

\*V – Society Values, P – Society Practices

\*\* - Response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly disagree).

### 2.3 Extant literature on cultural values in advertising and hypotheses development

Cultural values are expressed as advertising appeals and a number of frameworks have been applied to study cross-cultural values in international advertising: Hofstede (Albers-Miller, 1997; Moon & Chan, 2005; Zhang & Gelb, 1996); Hall (Callow & Schiffman, 2004; Zhou,

Zhou, & Xue, 2005); Schwartz (Dahl, 2004); and GLOBE (Diehl, Terlutter, & Mueller, 2016). Reviews of marketing journals (Engelen & Brettel, 2011; Soares, Farhangmehr, & Shoham, 2007) show that some cultural frameworks have been used more than others and that the most frequently used framework is that of Hofstede. Engelen and Brettel (2011) reviewed 99 studies published in major marketing journals during the years 1990-2008 and found that majority (59 studies) employed Hofstede's dimensions, followed by Hall's dimensions (14 studies) and Schwartz's dimensions (6 studies).

Results from advertising studies based on cultural dimensions show that there are both similarities and differences in advertising across different countries. However, results from these studies are not consistent. Some studies confirm the hypothesis that advertising content reflects selected cultural traits of a country. For example, Zandpour et al. (1994) studied advertising content from 23 countries and found strong support for the hypothesized differences between countries in aspects of messages. However, in contrast, in a study of advertising from 11 countries, Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) found confirmation in only 10 out of 30 hypothesized relationships (based on Hofstede's framework).

The reviewed studies focused mostly on one or two dimensions out of a selected framework, so were unable to establish which dimensions are more important than others, and hence their findings are limited in terms of implications. For example, Mortimer and Grierson (2010) used only three dimensions from Hofstede's framework and found support for only one of their culture-related hypotheses. Such studies have often concluded that advertising reflects culture to some extent, but failed to underline that it was the case for only the one or two dimensions that they studied.

Another important weakness of previous studies employing cultural dimensions is that Eastern European countries have been largely under-researched. Okazaki and Mueller (2007) systematically reviewed the major marketing journals to identify cross-cultural advertising studies and found 106 articles from the period 1995-2006. The most researched countries were those of North America (26.7%), Western Europe (21.8%) and Asia (12%); while Central and Eastern European countries featured in only 1.9% of the studies. Samiee and Jeong (1994) examined the period 1980-1992, finding 24 papers on the subject. The majority of studies focused on the USA (21 studies), with Japan (7) and the UK (4) also well-represented; Eastern Europe and Ireland did not feature at all. Similarly, more recent studies applying Hofstede's dimensions focus mainly on Western countries, with inconsistent results. For example, Mortimer and Grierson (2010) studied services advertising from France and the UK, while Zorn, Bellman, Robinson, and Varan (2016) studied interactive TV advertising from the USA and the UK and applied Hofstede's framework. Sobh, Singh, Chun, and Benmamoun (2015) studied print advertising from Arab and US magazines.

There is, therefore, a gap in research focused on countries of Eastern and Central Europe in cross-cultural advertising. Ireland has also been neglected, perhaps being regarded as very similar to the English culture (Keating & Martin, 2008). In order to meet the objectives of this study, the empirical research was conducted in England, Hungary, Ireland, and Poland. England was included in the study as a country which, according to GLOBE study, has distinctly different cultural values scores from the rest of the UK (House et al., 2004). Consequently, the study includes two countries from the under-researched region of Eastern Europe, and two countries from well-researched Western Europe. The selected countries represent two of the ten GLOBE cultural clusters. England and Ireland represent the Anglo cluster, have similar per capita gross national income (GNI), and have been EU members

since 1973 (although at the time of writing the UK is negotiating its exit from the EU). Hungary and Poland represent the Eastern European cluster, have similar per capita GNI, have been the EU members since 2004, and are past communist states (The World Bank, 2016).

GLOBE dimensions, although published some time ago, have also been little used to study advertising. Very few studies have applied this framework, for example Diehl et al. (2016) applied one of GLOBE dimensions, humane orientation, to study how consumers from six countries (Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, USA, and Chile) respond to humane-oriented advertisements. Terlutter, Diehl, and Mueller (2010) studied the dimension of assertiveness and Mueller, Diehl, and Terlutter (2016) applied the dimension of gender egalitarianism. Diehl, Terlutter, and Mueller (2008) employed the Performance Orientation dimension to examine how consumers from five countries respond to advertising appeals associated with this dimension. They found that consumers evaluated performance-oriented advertisements favourably and suggested that this appeal may be appropriate for use in standardized campaigns which aim to portray brands as global. Other available published studies examined the content of advertisements and the use of cultural values linked to some or all GLOBE dimensions. For example, Czarnecka and Brennan (2009) presented an analysis of the use of the Pollay's (1983) value appeals and compared their usage across different countries representing various GLOBE clusters. The study offered some evidence that values in advertising did not reflect cultural orientations of the countries as ranked in the GLOBE study. This study also excluded the Gender Egalitarianism dimension hence failing to provide a complete description of the reflection of advertising appeals linked to all GLOBE dimensions. Moreover, that study investigated how GLOBE Society Values explain the usage of advertising appeals and ignored Society Practices and their explanatory

potential. Matthes et al. (2016) employed, amongst other measures, the Gender Egalitarianism (Society Values scores) dimension to examine whether this cultural orientation can explain the use of stereotypical images of men and women in TV advertisements from 13 countries. The authors found that gender stereotypes were found in advertisements from all studied countries and that none of the employed measures of gender equality explained the variations in the use of such images. Diehl, Mueller, and Terlutter (2013) employed the Future Orientation dimension to examine how consumers from Germany and the USA responded to future-oriented advertising messages. The authors found that consumers from both countries evaluated the future-oriented advertisements positively and suggested that such appeals can be used successfully in advertising campaigns targeting those two cultures. Saleem and Larimo (2017) and Saleem (2017) were so far the only researchers to investigate the values-practices inconsistency (in advertisements from Finland), but the authors applied the Hofstede's framework not GLOBE dimensions. Such studies are rare and usually focused on cultures that have been well-researched, typically using individual dimensions from the GLOBE framework. Researchers emphasise that additional research incorporating more GLOBE dimensions would be useful to both advertising practice and scholarship (Diehl, Mueller, & Terlutter, 2014; Quigley, Sully de Luque, & House, 2012).

The present study investigated advertising from two Eastern European countries (Hungary and Poland), using GLOBE which provides empirical data from these two countries and is therefore a helpful update to Hofstede's work (Diehl et al., 2008; Mueller, Diehl, & Terlutter, 2015).

De Mooij (2010) discusses the value paradox which proposes that people value that which they do not have. This was also confirmed to some degree by GLOBE researchers: the Value scores were often higher than Practices indicating that the respondents wanted more of a certain value. In the absence of previous empirical evidence, it is reasonable to assume that advertising would reflect values rather than practices, because of the value paradox and because of the aspirational role of advertising. It was therefore expected that Society Values scores predict the variations in value appeals usage more accurately than Society Practices scores.

The proposition that the GLOBE framework will accurately explain the use of advertising appeals is based on the following assumptions: 1) advertisements carry the cultural values of the target market; 2) national culture frameworks are useful for predicting and explaining variations in use of cultural values in advertising; and 3) for advertising, values are more important than behaviors, and therefore Society Values will predict the variations more accurately than Society Practices.

Based on identified gaps in the literature, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

**H1:** There will be variation in the use of GLOBE advertising appeals used in magazine advertisements from England, Hungary, Ireland and Poland; and

**H1A:** These variations in the use of appeals will be explained by GLOBE model in the following way: GLOBE Society Values scores will positively predict the presence of advertising appeals better than Society Practices.

### 3. Research procedure

#### 3.1. Coding framework

The coding scheme (Table 2) was established by reviewing previous studies that developed coding frameworks by linking advertising appeals to cultural dimensions (Ji & McNeal, 2001; Moon & Chan, 2005; Mortimer & Grierson, 2010). As a result, selected Pollay's (1983) appeals were linked to GLOBE dimensions in line with the procedure used by aforementioned researchers. Three researchers well-versed in cross-cultural research methodologies independently linked the appeals to dimensions. This was followed by a discussion to resolve any disagreements. The final version was then presented to an expert in the field who reviewed and confirmed the coding framework. Of Pollay's (1986) 42 appeals, 22 were used in the final framework. These 22 appeals were deemed to positively reflect GLOBE dimensions; that is they reflected the positive extremes of the dimensions. 20 appeals were excluded from the coding framework because they were linked to the negative extremes of the dimensions. One of the dimensions, Gender Egalitarianism did not have any appeals linked to it, so separate coding guidelines were developed based on previous studies examining gender representations in advertising (Gilly, 1988; Nassif & Gunter, 2008). Specifically, images or text that portrayed male and female models in situations that demonstrated gender equality were coded as reflecting this value. For example, men acting as care-givers, or women acting as experts, or in professional work situations, would be coded as reflecting the Gender Egalitarianism dimension.

**Table 2:** GLOBE dimensions and Pollay's value appeals.

| <i>GLOBE dimension</i> | <i>Pollay value appeals linked to high end of dimensions</i> |
|------------------------|--|
|                        |  |

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Performance Orientation</b>    | Effective, Technology, Productivity, Wisdom, Convenient      |
| <b>Future Orientation</b>         | Durable, Modern  |
| <b>Assertiveness</b>              | Healthy, Security  |
| <b>Power Distance</b>             | Dear, Maturity, Status, Vain, Distinctive                    |
| <b>Humane Orientation</b>         | Nurturance, Succorance, Morality                             |
| <b>Uncertainty Avoidance</b>      | Safety, Neat   |
| <b>In-group Collectivism</b>      | Family, Community  |
| <b>Institutional Collectivism</b> | Affiliation  |
| <b>Gender Egalitarianism</b>      | Men and women in similar roles in work and family situations |

The coding scheme was prepared in three languages: English, Hungarian and Polish. The instrument was first prepared in English, and then translated into Hungarian and Polish, and back-translated into English (Brislin, 1970). Both translators were native language speakers of Hungarian or Polish, familiar with native and English culture, and who had lived in England for a period of 3-5 years. Both were university graduates and were familiar with the challenges of translations and cultural variations. After translation of the instrument into these two languages, they were pilot-tested by a Polish group and a Hungarian group of university students, who further commented on mistakes in the translations, if any.

### **3.2. Sample advertisements and content analysis**

In this empirical study, content analysis was applied to print magazine advertisements from TV guides from the four European countries. Print advertisements were chosen because this medium has been found to be appropriate and conducive to transferring cultural meanings for

several reasons. Print media has been part of these cultures for decades. In addition, practitioners have found that print advertisements are superior to digital advertisements in several ways (Tarantino, 2016). That is, they generate higher awareness and recall, they help increase effectiveness of other platforms, and consumers trust them more (Nielsen, 2015). Moreover, although newspaper and magazine sales figures show declines in print edition readership, the digital subscriptions do not compensate for those declines (Ponsford, 2015).

The highest circulation weekly national TV guide in each country was chosen as the source magazine: *Szines RTV* from Hungary (Central Mediacsoport, 2016), *Tele Tydzien* from Poland (Wirtualne Media, 2016), *What's on TV* from England (NRS, 2016) and *TV Now* from Ireland (Media Street, 2016). They are comparable across countries based on editorial content; TV guides are general appeal magazines, published locally. Circulation figures were obtained from the official circulation databases from each studied country such as Magazines Ireland (Magazines Ireland, 2017), ABC UK (ABC, 2017), Polskie Badania Czytelnictwa (Polish Readership Survey) (PBC, 2017), MATEZ in Hungary (MATEZ, 2017). A total of 847 full page advertisements (180 from Poland, 178 from Hungary, 283 from England, and 206 from Ireland) were collected from magazines published over a period of one year to control for seasonal differences. Duplicates were excluded.

Content analysis of advertisements was performed by two coders from each country. The coders were born, raised and at the time of the analysis, residing in their respective countries. The content analysis protocols proposed by Krippendorff (2013) were followed. The instructions were both read aloud and provided in writing to each coder to minimize any influence by the researcher. First, test coding was performed by the coders in order to make sure that they understood the coding scheme and the procedure. After the test coding, the main coding followed. Each of the 22 appeals was coded as a dichotomous variable: the

appeal was present in the advertisement or it was not. Inter-coder reliability was measured using Cohen's kappa with the following values: Poland 0.92; Hungary 0.91; England 0.86; Ireland 0.82. The kappa values are all above 0.8 which indicates high inter-coder agreement (Neuendorf, 2002).

#### 4. Data analysis and results

The content analysis revealed that advertisements from England, Hungary, Ireland and Poland feature a range of different appeals. Some common appeals featured in advertisements from all countries with similar frequency. Table 3 presents the proportions of advertisements displaying a specific appeal.

**Table 3:** Proportions of advertisements displaying advertising value appeals linked to each of the GLOBE dimensions (in %).

| <i>Value appeals</i>       | <i>England</i> | <i>Hungary</i> | <i>Ireland</i> | <i>Poland</i> |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Performance Orientation    | 55.1           | 75.3           | 52.9           | 56.1          |
| Future Orientation         | 14.5           | 24.7           | 31.6           | 34.4          |
| Gender Egalitarianism      | 1.8            | 14.6           | 5.8            | 6.1           |
| Assertiveness              | 8.5            | 9.0            | 34             | 7.2           |
| Institutional Collectivism | 10.2           | 24.7           | 31.6           | 18.9          |
| In-group Collectivism      | 19.4           | 13.5           | 13.1           | 20.0          |
| Power Distance             | 15.2           | 27.5           | 45.6           | 46.7          |
| Humane Orientation         | 10.6           | 7.3            | 6.8            | 2.8           |
| Uncertainty Avoidance      | 3.9            | 13.5           | 5.3            | 10.6          |

Performance Orientation appeals were widely used, featuring in over 50% of advertisements in all four countries. Future Orientation and Power Distance appeals were also popular. The appeals of Assertiveness were used infrequently in Polish, English and Hungarian advertisements, but rather more frequently in Ireland. Humane Orientation and Gender Egalitarianism appeals were the least used appeals.

In order to test H1 (i.e., there will be differences and similarities in the use of GLOBE advertising appeals used in magazine advertisements from England, Hungary, Ireland and Poland), we compared the proportions of advertisements from each country featuring the appeals based on each GLOBE dimension which are presented in Table 3. Either Chi-square or Fisher's exact test was used to test the differences between countries. The four countries included in this study yielded six inter-country pairs which were examined for each of the nine appeals, resulting in the 54 overall comparisons (see appendix, Table A1).

As hypothesized, there were differences and similarities in the use of GLOBE advertising appeals used in magazine advertisements from England, Ireland, Hungary and Poland, and hence hypothesis H1 was supported.

In order to test Hypothesis 1A (i.e., GLOBE Society Values scores will positively predict the presence of value appeals better than Society Practices), logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict the presence of each value appeal using corresponding GLOBE Society Values and Society Practice scores as predictors. Table 4 presents the results from the logistic regression analyses for each value appeal. In the table, a significant Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value indicates that a test of the full model against a constant only model was statistically significant; hence, the predictors reliably distinguished between the presence or absence of the value appeal. In line with the Wald criterion, we demonstrated which variable makes a

significant contribution to prediction. Finally, the  $\text{Exp}(B)$  indicates the extent to which raising the corresponding measure by one unit influences the odds ratio; hence, a value higher than one indicates an increased likelihood of exhibiting/having present the corresponding value appeal. The results revealed that while decreasing GLOBE Society Performance Orientation and Future Orientation Practices as well as Gender Egalitarianism Values were associated with an increased likelihood of exhibiting/having corresponding value appeal presence; increasing GLOBE Society Assertiveness, Institutional Collectivism, Power Distance, and Humane Orientation Values were associated with an increased likelihood of exhibiting/having corresponding value appeal presence. Neither GLOBE Society Practices nor Values of In-Group Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance reliably distinguished between presence and absence of the corresponding value appeal. Hence, H1A is partially supported.

**Table 4:** Logistic regression analysis of value appeals usage.

|                            | GLOBE Society Value |      |           |                  | GLOBE Society Practice |      |                    |                  | $X^2(2)$          | $R^2$ |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------|-----------|------------------|------------------------|------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|
|                            | B                   | SE   | Exp(B)    | 95%CI for Exp(B) | b                      | SE   | Exp(B)             | 95%CI for Exp(B) |                   |       |
| <i>Value Appeals</i>       |                     |      |           |                  |                        |      |                    |                  |                   |       |
| Performance Orientation    | -.76                | .88  | .47       | [.08-2.62]       | -1.10***               | .23  | .33***             | [.21-.52]        | 23.84***          | .037  |
| Future Orientation         | -.55                | .43  | .58       | [.25-1.34]       | -.77***                | .20  | .46***             | [.31-.69]        | 16.34***          | .028  |
| Assertiveness              | 6.00***             | 1.88 | 403.16*** | [10.10-16089.39] | 2.71 <sup>t</sup>      | 1.48 | 14.98 <sup>t</sup> | [.83-271.40]     | 35.09***          | .072  |
| Institutional Collectivism | 3.06***             | .61  | 21.36***  | [6.45-7.70]      | .17                    | .20  | 1.18               | [.79-1.76]       | 26.02***          | .048  |
| In-Group Collectivism      | .66                 | 1.28 | 1.93      | [.16-23.67]      | -.21                   | .21  | .81                | [.54-1.22]       | 1.04              | .002  |
| Power Distance             | 1.38*               | .57  | 3.97*     | [1.31-12.04]     | .55                    | .71  | 1.73               | [.43-6.97]       | 9.21**            | .015  |
| Humane Orientation         | 5.16*               | 2.48 | 173.88*   | [1.56-22255.01]  | -.14                   | .22  | .87                | [.57-1.34]       | 4.91 <sup>t</sup> | .014  |
| Gender Egalitarianism      | -2.18***            | 1.00 | .11***    | [.02-.80]        | -.34                   | .90  | .71                | [.12-4.13]       | 14.43***          | .045  |
| Uncertainty Avoidance      | .55                 | .95  | 1.73      | [.27-11.25]      | -.72                   | .47  | .49                | [.19-1.22]       | 19.84***          | .056  |

Notes. The dependent variable in this analysis is value appeal, so that 0 = absence of the corresponding value appeal and 1 = presence of the value appeal.

$R^2$ = Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ; <sup>t</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## 5. Discussion

Advertising shapes and cultivates consumers' attitudes and behaviors, hence studying what advertising presents is important because of its influential nature (Harrison, 2000; Hastings & Aitken, 1995). In addition to influencing individuals, advertising has wider societal impact as advertisers are seen as cultural intermediaries transferring meaning from goods to consumers (Akaka & Alden, 2010; Cronin, 2004; McAllister & Mazzearella, 2000). As the link between advertising images and individual and societal changes has long been established, it is important to study what values advertising promotes and try to explain where these values come from. Hence, this paper's main aim was to examine if the GLOBE model of cultural dimensions can explain the use of advertising appeals; that is, to what extent advertising appeals reflect national cultures of the target markets. In addition, in this study we investigated the similarities and differences in the usage of advertising appeals in four countries: England, Hungary, Ireland and Poland.

The results of this study contribute to the body of literature in the area of cultural values, advertising and the usefulness of the concept of national culture in advertising research (Leung et al., 2011) as well as literature on cultural meaning transfer via the use of advertisements. We have broadened the scope of cross-cultural research by examining differences in the reflection of cultural values in print advertisements by employing the GLOBE model. With regards to theoretical contributions, the cultural meaning transfer theory (McCracken, 1986) was employed to investigate how much of the cultural meaning presented in advertisements reflects national cultures. The study demonstrated that advertising reflects only some aspects of national cultures, and the culturally constituted world. That is, the source of cultural meaning may include more than just national cultures. Advertisers in the

respective countries draw advertising meaning from national cultures but only on a selective basis.

As hypothesized, results revealed that there are both cross-cultural differences and similarities in the content of advertisements but they cannot be fully explained with the GLOBE dimensions. When looking at differences in usage of advertising appeals across countries (Appendix 1), at least six appeals showed statistically significant differences. Even in countries that are deemed culturally similar in the GLOBE model, such as Poland and Hungary, there were significant differences in the usage of value appeals. It suggests that at present advertisers targeting culturally 'close' countries see those markets as culturally different and tailor their advertising messages accordingly.

Certain value appeals were frequently employed in all four countries, which may indicate that advertisers believe that these appeals are particularly effective. For example, the Performance Orientation appeal was the most widely used appeal in all four countries. Other studies (Diehl et al., 2008; Czarnecka, 2011) have found that this appeal is highly effective in several countries and with various audiences. Diehl et al. (2008) suggested that the dimension of Performance Orientation is a value positively held in many cultures and that this type of appeal could be suitable for standardized campaigns. Indeed, the Society Value scores for Performance Orientation are the highest of all GLOBE dimensions (with a mean of 5.94). Many cultures in the GLOBE study reported high scores on Society Values for this dimension, this may be because there is a universal human need to succeed and to have high performance standards (House et al., 2004). Hence, the Performance Orientation appeal (framing the advertised products as innovative, with very good performance and displaying high standards) is not only frequently used but also highly effective and may be considered as

a 'global appeal' which can be standardized across cultures (Oyedele, Minor, & Ghanem, 2009). This finding suggests that advertisers in those countries share the culturally constituted world in a sense that this particular value is seen as important aspect of culture to be used in advertising in all four countries.

On the other hand, some appeals such as Uncertainty Avoidance or Humane Orientation appeals were used the least frequently in the studied countries. These appeals may not be seen as important values to draw on for advertising purposes.

This study demonstrated that advertisers, at best, are very selective when drawing meanings from the culturally constituted world and national culture alone is not able to explain the variations in the use of advertising appeals. The proposition that country-specific advertising messages would substantially reflect local culture (as measured by using GLOBE dimensions) was poorly supported by the current results. The hypothesis that GLOBE Society Values would be more accurate predictors of value appeals usage than Society Practices was partially supported. Advertising may reflect only some cultural values which are seen by advertising creators more important and effective than others.

From a practical perspective, this finding is important to international advertisers who would be interested in using national culture frameworks for guiding the design of advertising campaigns. The results of this study revealed that advertisers do not use the full range of culturally congruent appeals, hence they may be designing advertisements that are not the most effective ones. Further studies are needed in order to examine if appeals to national cultures can be more effective than those that are not culturally congruent.

Overall, the results of this study question the validity of making naïve predictions about advertising appeals based on frameworks of national cultures. Similarly to previous studies that employed other frameworks of cultural dimensions, this study provided evidence that national cultures are only partially reflected in advertisements. The GLOBE framework does not seem to be more accurate than, for example, Hofstede dimensions, in explaining variations in the use of cultural values in advertising. Predictions based on this approach tend to disregard product categories or types of audiences. Such predictions assume within-culture homogeneity (e.g., all target groups of different adverts/product categories are culturally similar) and disregard differences between specific target groups (e.g., men vs. women). Such approaches assume that cultures are dichotomous opposites and do not take into account the effect of the combined effect of dimensions on advertising. Researchers argued that culture is more complex and ‘happens’ on many different levels: national, organizational, individual. Hence, there is a need to clearly define culture and encompass more facets of culture.

In addition, it is important to consider the level of cultural homogeneity of the studied cultures as it could have had an effect on the results (Tung, 2008). Hungary, Ireland and Poland are rather homogenous cultures, but England is a very heterogeneous culture. Future selection of cultures for international advertising should take the level of homogeneity into account as such frameworks of national cultures may be more accurate for homogenous cultures.

## **6. Limitations, future research considerations and conclusion**

A number of limitations should be noted in the present empirical study. Coders in the content analysis process examined a large number of advertisements and so coder fatigue might have affected the precision and accuracy of their analysis. The nature of the publications used for analysis might also limit its generalizability. Only one magazine per country was selected

and, although care was taken to make sure the magazines have comparable audiences across countries, both the nature and the number of the magazines have led to the exclusion of other audiences. Moreover, only full page advertisements were selected for content analysis which could have led to the exclusion of advertising of businesses with smaller advertising budgets (e.g., smaller local companies). Future research should focus on examining advertising in new media, such as online advertising, advertising on social media sites or mobile advertising. In addition, outdoor media could also be examined for presence of cultural values.

Researchers argue that, in order to detect trends between culture and business phenomena, the samples need to include at least 20 countries (Cadogan, 2010; Franke & Richey Jr, 2010). This may be overcome by broader collaboration of researchers across the globe (Hornik & O'Keefe, 2011), future international advertising research could focus on examining advertising from, for example GLOBE cultural clusters.

The method of counting the advertising appeals in each advertisement did not take into account the importance of that appeal to the advertisement. For example, if three appeals feature in an advertisement, only one may be a primary appeal and the other two secondary appeals. Future research should take into account that not all appeals featured in an advert carry the same weight.

In addition, the design of this study did not take into account various 'dimension combinations', for example, what appeals appear in advertising from a culture which is not only high on Performance Orientation but also high on Power Distance; and what appeals feature in advertising from a high Performance Orientation but low Power Distance culture.

Despite its limitations, the current study responded to the two main calls in the use of cultural values in advertising research: to extend cross-cultural advertising studies and to use more recent cultural frameworks. The findings from this study do not support the idea that advertising is a straightforward mirror of cultural values, but support a far more nuanced relationship between advertising and culture. Perhaps, as some researchers argue, the concept of national culture is not meaningful or useful in cross-cultural research because national cultures are too complex, and therefore smaller cultural ‘units’ should be studied instead (Craig and Douglas, 2011). Holden (2004) suggests that cross-cultural marketing researchers need a new approach to culture which would be more consistent with the nature of the modern global and interconnected economy.

## Appendix

**Table A1:** Value appeals with significantly different usage for country pairs.

| <i>Country pairs</i>   | <i>Values with significantly different usage</i>   |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Poland-Hungary</i>  | Performance Orientation*, Power Distance*, Gender Egalitarianism**, In-Group Collectivism**, Future Orientation***, Humane Orientation***    |
| <i>Poland-England</i>  | Power Distance*, Future Orientation*, Humane Orientation*<br>Uncertainty Avoidance**, Institutional Collectivism**, Gender Egalitarianism*** |
| <i>Hungary-England</i> | Gender Egalitarianism*, Performance Orientation*, Institutional Collectivism*, Uncertainty Avoidance*, Power Distance*, Future Orientation** |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b><i>Poland-Ireland</i></b>    | Assertiveness*, Institutional Collectivism**, Uncertainty Avoidance***, In-Group Collectivism***; Humane Orientation***               |
| <b><i>England – Ireland</i></b> | Power Distance*, Assertiveness*, Institutional Collectivism*, Future Orientation*, Gender Egalitarianism***, In-Group Collectivism*** |
| <b><i>Hungary – Ireland</i></b> | Assertiveness*, Performance Orientation*, Power Distance*, Gender Egalitarianism**, Uncertainty Avoidance**                           |

\* significant at .001 level

\*\* significant at .01 level

\*\*\* significant at .05 level

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