FACTORS INFLUENCING PRODUCT CUSTOMISATION: A STUDY ON GLOBAL PRODUCT

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ABSTRACT
This study intends to determine the relationship between cultural factors and customization strategy of a global controversial product using Playboy magazine as a research target. Through a content analysis of four nation editions, the relationship between Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and articles of Playboy magazine are hypothesized and tested. Result found that femininity significantly influences the type of written article on the magazine.

KEYWORDS
Customization, Hofstede’s cultural dimension, global product

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Debate on standardization versus customization strategy for going global has been a never ending topic yet no final result has been decided (Duncan & Ramaprasad, 1995). Even though many scholars argued that increasing number of world traveler and the improvement of technology create a homogeneous market (Levitt, 1983; Bartle et al., 2003), many studies illustrated that customization is still affecting sales (Duncan & Ramaprasad, 1995; Viswanathan & Dickson, 2007), since many differences and constraint between countries defeat the feasibility of standardization approach. Therefore, it is no longer the time to keep this issue on the surface. Instead, research on factor influencing the need for global product customization (Powers & Loyka, 2007) and degree of product customization are more suggested (Leonidou, 1996; Viswanathan & Dickson, 2007).

Consistent with the aforementioned argument, the existing researches on controversial product explained that differences and constraint between countries are also affecting people perceive level of offensiveness toward products. It is thus controversial products exist in the market (Wilson & West, 1981; Waller et al., 2004; Waller et al., 2005), in which some of them are categorized as everyday products (Katsanis, 1994). Among various factors, culture and religion turn to be the major factors. Thus, it is expected that the presentation of controversial products in different markets should be customized in accordance to host country’s culture and religion (Wilson & West, 1981; Waller et al., 2004; Waller et al., 2005). Nevertheless, none of the existing cross-country researches on controversial products examined the relation between cultural dimensions and product customization strategy, whereas it is needed in order to make marketers know how to penetrate the market. It is thus this research intends to have it studied by using Playboy magazine as the illustration. It is because Playboy magazine is considered as a global controversial product that already exists in twenty-three different countries with various national editions.

The importance of culture in marketing a global product leads to the subsistence of various great cross-cultural researches (de Mooij, 1998; Hofstede, 2001). Most of those researches have employed Hofstede’s cultural dimensions due to its validity and relevancy on cross-cultural studies (de Mooij, 1998; Power & Loyka, 2007; Baack & Singh, 2007; Soares et al., 2007). As such, the author finds the relevancy in employing Hofstede’s cultural concepts as cultural factors influencing global controversial product’s customization strategy in this study.

1.2. Research Objective

The objectives of this study can be divided into two. Firstly, this study hopes to contribute additional empirical support on the importance of cultural factors influencing product customization strategy, especially on a global controversial magazine.

Secondly, the result of this study is expected to help marketers of controversial product, such as editors of controversial magazine and advertisers, for being acknowledged with cultural dimensions that should be
considered and/or could be disregarded during the marketing of controversial products in different markets. Thus, over and under customization practice can be avoided since it will jeopardize global brand image and boost the customization cost.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Debate on Customization/Standardization Strategy

The development of information technology allows people from various countries to share the same information. Together with the increment in mobility, they enhance people to have the same way of thinking, same needs as well as preferences; and thus, homogeneous market is created. Also, supported by trade liberalization and economic integration, marketers are suggested to apply product standardization strategy in going global. By doing so, marketers can be benefited from the realization of economies of scale in all value-adding activities and can achieve a low-cost competitive position in global competition (Cavusgil et al., 1993) that becoming more significant in the current market situation. Furthermore, applying standardization strategy helps headquarter imposing closer management control over its overseas subsidiaries, deriving maximum benefit from good ideas know-how created within the total organization and generating the consistent brand image in different markets (Leonidou, 1996).

However, there are too many differences and constraint between countries that might defeat the feasibility of standardization approach (Viswanathan & Dickson, 2007), such as differences in culture, government regulations, product use patterns, level of economic development and education (Ghemawat, 2001). It is thus applying customization strategy is needed. It may bring profit maximization for marketers since revenue gained from product modifications may raise by more than expenses of the customization process (Cavusgil et al., 1993; Terpstra & Sarathy, 1994). Additionally, this strategy can encourage creative thinking and innovations within the firm due to pressure in finding ways to adjust the product to meet specific overseas customers’ requirement (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 1995).

As aforementioned arguments, neither absolute standardization nor customization strategy applied will bring total success for marketers in entering overseas markets (Cavusgil et al., 1993). Each strategy holds its own benefits. Thus, marketers are suggested not to keep debating the issue. Instead, they are suggested to move the research ahead into factors influencing global product customization and the degree of product customization (Cavusgil et al., 1993; Duncan & Ramaprasad, 1995; Leonidou, 1996; Viswanathan & Dickson, 2007). In respond to the suggestion, this study intends to empirically asses factors influencing global product customization.

2.2. Controversial Product

Some marketers, they do not purposely offer controversial products to the market. Instead, controversial products are created as the result of people’s perceived level of offensiveness towards those particular products (Wilson & West, 1981; Waller et al., 2005). Therefore, quite a number of everyday products are considered as controversial by consumers; and thus marketers find difficulty in marketing those products (Wilson & West, 1981).

The first prominent study of controversial product was done by Wilson and West (1981) that used the term of “unmentionable” to represent controversial. They defined unmentionable as products, services or concepts that for reasons of delicacy, decency, morality or even fear, tend to elicit reactions of distaste, disgust, offense or outrage when mentioned or presented in public. Later, this term is simplified into any objects that the existence is considered to be offensive, unmentionable and socially sensitive, either by all or certain group of people (Waller et al., 2005).

There are various examples of the unmentionable, counting inside are anything containing indecent language, nudity, sexiest images and subject too personal. Wilson and West (1981) grouped them into three categories; including controversial products, controversial services and controversial concepts. Furthermore, Waller, Fam and Erdogan (2004) also divided them into four different groups; namely social/political groups, addictive products, gender/sex related products and health and care products. In addition, providers of nudity issues and sexy images are also considered as controversial (Waller et al., 2005). Categories and examples of the controversial are summarized in Table 1.

Different people perceive controversial level differently. One product can be seen as fully offensive by a group of people, whereas seen as a conventional product by the rest. People’s demographics (e.g. gender and age), cultural background, religion and social norm, personal inhibitions as well as welfare are several factors contributing this variance (Wilson & West, 1981; Waller, 1999; Waller et al., 2004; Waller et al., 2005). For
instance, Waller (1999) defined that male and female have different opinion about things considered to be offensive. Females tended to be more offended than males by alcohol advertisement and sexiest advertisement (since females are usually the targets of sexist comments, images, etc.), whereas males were more offended by advertisements about male underwear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilson &amp; West’s (1981) - Three Groups of the ‘Unmentionable’</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Personal hygiene, Defense related products, Drugs for terminal illness, Birth control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Abortion, Vasectomy and Sterilization, Venereal disease treatment for mental illness, Material preparation for death, Artificial insemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>Extreme political idea, Emotional preparation for death, Unconventional sexual activities, Racial or religious prejudice, Terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waller et al. (2004) – Four Groups of the ‘Controversial’</td>
<td>Social/Political</td>
<td>Racially extreme groups, Religious denominations, Guns and armaments, Funeral services, Political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Addictive Products</td>
<td>Cigarettes, Alcohol, Gambling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender/Sex related Products</td>
<td>Female &amp; male underwear, Condoms, Female contraceptive, Female hygiene products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health &amp; Care Products</td>
<td>Weight-loss programs, Charities &amp; sexual disease drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waller et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Nudity/Sexist Images</td>
<td>Porn magazine, Porn movie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the context of cross-cultural scope, consumers’ from different countries perceive offensiveness and reasons for the offensiveness differently (Fam & Waller, 2003). Those who share the same cultural background will tend to share the same opinion on the ‘unmentionable’ (Fam & Waller, 2003; Waller et al., 2004). For example, a research examining people behavior toward the unmentionable in China, Taiwan, Malaysia and New Zealand concluded that Chinese, Malaysian and Taiwanese (representing Asian value) saw social/political groups and addictive products as the most offensive one, while New Zealanders (representing Western value) saw them as moderately offensive.

In summary, the aforementioned literature review concludes that culture and religion are two major factors affecting people’s perception toward the controversial products. Thus, the presentation of controversial products in different markets might better to be customized in accordance to host country’s culture and religion (Wilson & West, 1981; Waller et al., 2004; Waller et al., 2005). Marketers can apply similar product customization strategy in countries that share similar culture and religion background despite of its location (Waller et al., 2005).

In respond to factors influencing people perception toward controversial produces as explained above as well as the lack of the researches analyzing the issue, the author also feels the need for analyzing the relationship between factors classifying controversial product and controversial product customization strategy, so as to make marketers be acknowledged with the way they should penetrate the market.

Some of the existing researches on controversial products have used and discussed about adult magazine (Attwood, 2002; Wongsurawat, 2006), which is also known as porn magazine. Adult magazine is perceived to be controversial since it is sexually oriented, in which the content is dominated by photographs of attractive women and or men along together with other illustration of nudity and sexual activities, such as oral sex, sexual intercourse and other various forms of such activities. Adult magazines may also enclose articles of serious nature; e.g. science, computer, culture and politics. Nowadays, most of adult magazines available in the market are aimed toward male as male populace the vast majority of the market1.

Several famous adult magazines have gone global, such as Playboy and Penthouse. As previously suggested, the presentation of adult magazine as a controversial product should be adjusted in accordance to local markets’ culture and religion (Wilson & West, 1981; Waller et al., 2004); and hence, it will lead to some discrepancies in the content of magazine among countries. In what way and to what extent the content differs are two problems need to be investigated. However, no existing studies on global adult magazine discussing about these two problems can be found. Most of the existing researches were discussing about effect of pornography offered by adult magazines on individual’s life (Attwood, 2002; Wongsurawat, 2006) and content of the magazine that mainly focus on the images (Winick, 1985; Bogaert et al., 1993). Thus, this study intends to respond to the first problem that is the way the content of adult magazines differs among various nation-specific editions, especially the articles, by focusing on adult magazine targeting male readers.

This study uses Playboy magazine (hereinafter written as Playboy) as the illustration because Playboy contains images of sexy and nude attractive models as well as illustrations on sexual activities as well as political and social issues, and has been offering different editions for different countries in addition to the flagship magazine in the USA since 30 years ago. As of 2007, Playboy is available in twenty-three countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine and Venezuela, through a franchise system. Playboy provides various lifestyle related articles including fashion, sports, consumer goods and public figures as well as short fictions by top literary writers and specifically focuses on stylized images of nude women. It offers a guide for men to a revolutionary yet healthy attitude toward sexuality (Dolinger, 2001). Furthermore, Playboy is always completed with the Playmate centerfold section, a three-page pinup of a featured monthly model together with the model’s background information. Though, nude images in Playboy are still categorized as ‘soft-core’ in comparison with its followers such as Penthouse. Playboy also has been known to express liberal opinions on most major political issues.

2.2. Culture’s influence on Global Product Decision

Among various factors, culture has been found as a focal point of much existing researches on global products strategy. Culture defeats the possibility in applying product standardization strategy (Cavusgil et al., 1993; Power & Loyka, 2007; Baack & Singh, 2007), especially for consumer goods, printed medium (Ghemawat, 2001) as well as controversial products (Wilson & West, 1981). Given that culture is identified as the primary determinant of consumer behavior toward controversial goods in different countries (de Mooij, 1998; Hsieh et al., 2004), this study will only incorporates culture as the key factors influencing global controversial product customization.

Most of the existing studies have been using Hofstede cultural dimensions as basis to determine cultural differences between countries (An, 2007; Baack & Singh, 2007; Soares et al., 2007). In that, four aspects of cultural dimensions: (1) power distance, (2) uncertainty avoidance, (3) individualism/collectivism and (4) masculinity/femininity, were proposed. Even though Hofstede’s cultural index score were based on work-related values and applied to human resources management, the results were validated with numerous cross-cultural studies of product standardization (Power & Loyka, 2007; Baack & Singh, 2007), product usage (de Mooij, 1998), consumer innovativeness (Soares et al., 2007) and brand image (Roth 1995, Hsieh et al., 2004). It is thus the author finds the relevancy in employing Hofstede cultural dimensions as factor influencing product customization in this study.

Two out of four dimensions discussed by Hofstede are uncertainty avoidance and masculinity versus femininity. Uncertainty avoidance is simply described as the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede, 2001). In order to avoid any ambiguous situations, people in high uncertainty avoidance culture will look for more information during the decision making process (Soares, 2007). Researches on consumer behavior indicate that people from high uncertainty avoidance country will prefer clear and informative advertisements (Thai & Chan, 2001) to help them reduce the perceived risk during purchase decision process (Hofstede, 2001).

The other dimension is masculinity, with femininity in reverse. Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender role are clearly distinct (Aberle et al., 1950, Hofstede, 2001). Men in this society are supposed to be assertive, tough and focus on material success, while women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. As the opposition of masculinity is femininity, a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede, 1998; 2001). This dimension is frequently applied in cross-cultural research related to gender role, such as the portrayal of female models in advertisements (Schroder et al., 2002; Saad, 2004; Khairullah & Khairullah, 2005).

3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK & HYPOTHESIS

3.1. Research Framework

As previously mentioned, this study focuses on culture as the influencing factor because culture has been founded as an important factor on global consumer products’ customization strategy, especially for controversial product (Wilson & West, 1981, Ghemawat, 2001). As the cultural factors, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions is

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2http://www.playboyenterprises.com/home/content.cfm?content=t_template&packet=00077802-06C6-1C74-8FEA8304E50A010D&artTypeID=000A2BE7-0596-1C74-8FEA8304E50A010D, August 2007
applied due to its relevancy and validity on a cross-cultural marketing study (Hofstede, 2001; An, 2007; Baack & Singh, 2007; Soares et al., 2007). Those cultural factors are postulated to influence a controversial magazine, especially the article.

Additionally, this study will also include several variables; i.e. “Civil Liberties” and “Size”; as covariates. “Civil Liberties” is used because country’s level of liberalization is expected to affect information disclosed on the mass media (Laza, 2007). “Size” of the article is expected to influence the disclosure of information cues on the articles.

Figure 1 - Relationship between Cultural Factors and Controversial Magazine Article Customization

Figure 1 illustrates the effects of cultural factors on a global product’s customization decision, namely article, with a global controversial magazine as the target. The relationship shows in the framework is used for developing hypotheses described in the following section.

3.2. Research Hypothesis

These following paragraphs will explain two hypotheses related to the articles of a controversial product.

Article
Adult magazine may offer various articles range from political, social issue, culture and entertainment that can be written by either local or foreign writers. Those foreign written articles can be taken from other countries’ edition, a step of standardization strategy. Decision to present local or foreign written articles on each edition should contingent upon the target readers’ preference and acceptance level of foreign topics. Here, the author postulate that publishers’ decision on this regard is in relation to the national markets level of uncertainty avoidance.

By nature, people from high uncertainty avoidance cultures are more reluctant to accept new things brought by other culture than that of their counterpart (Hofstede, 2001), and hence, it is postulated that adult magazine readers from high uncertainty avoidance culture are more favoring local written articles than foreign written articles. Therefore, the first hypothesis is stated as:

**H1.** A global adult magazine presents more local written articles in countries characterized as high uncertainty avoidance.

A global adult magazine usually provides both fiction and nonfiction with topic range from sexual activities, political and social issue as well as entertainment. Decision to present number of fiction and/or nonfiction should contingent upon the target readers’ preference and acceptance level of fiction and nonfiction. Here, the author postulate that publishers’ decision on this regard is in relation to the national markets level of masculinity/femininity. As argued by de Mooij (1998), people from masculine cultures are more concerned with data and facts, thus favoring nonfiction, whereas people from feminine culture are more interested in the story behind the facts, thus preferring fiction. Therefore, the second hypothesis is stated as:

**H2.** A global adult magazine presents more fiction in countries characterized as high feminine.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

4.1. Sampling and Data Collection

This study collected Playboy sample from four countries, including American, Dutch, Indonesian and Japanese editions. American edition is selected since it is the origin of Playboy and for representing western culture.
Indonesian Playboy and Japanese Playboy are chosen as a representative from Asian culture, whereas Dutch Playboy is selected to represent the European culture. Nine issues are collected from each country. The issues are selected in accordance to the issues available in Indonesia between 2006 and 2007; and hence, cross-sectional comparison of four countries can be conducted under the same time frame (Table 2).

Table 2 - Sample List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Edition</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Year 2006: April, June, July, September, November, December</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2007: January, February, April</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Year 2006: April, June, July, September, November, December</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2007: January, February, April</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Year 2006: April, June, July, September, November, December</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2007: January, February, April</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The USA</td>
<td>Year 2006: April, June, July, September, November, December</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2007: January, February, April</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the data resources, data for variables related to Hofstede’s cultural dimension are taken from Hofstede’s cultural dimension index score, whereas Civil Liberties is taken from ‘The Economist Intelligence Unit democracy index 2006’. The later index is frequently used for investigating the relationship between democracy and various economy and social variables (Laza, 2007). The other variables are gathered from coding the magazine’s content as summarized in Table 4.

4.2. Coding Scheme and Procedure

In order to test the hypotheses developed in previous chapter, content-analysis approach has been used. This method has been widely used in international marketing research for measuring information content from a recorded communication medium, such as articles in newspaper as well as advertisement in magazines and television (Abernethy & Franke, 1996; Schröder et al., 2002).

Some argue that content analysis is vulnerable to bias due to methods used in collecting as well as interpreting or analyzing the data (Schröder et al. 2002, Gummesson, 2005). However, the problem can be eliminated if the consistency and persistency during the coding process is maintained; once the problem is eliminated, this approach can make a meaningful contribution to theory development and testing (Schröder et al., 2002).

The coding process firstly started by dividing the content of the magazine into three elements; i.e. article, image and advertisement. In the article part, coders count the number of articles in a magazine and measure the size of every article. Next, the coders determine whether an article is written by local or foreign writer. Finally, coders group the content into eight different categories: advertisement, comic, department, fashion, features, fiction, forum, interview and pictorial; according to the presentation of American edition, where Playboy is originated.

Table 3 - Summary of Variables, Description and Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Written Article</td>
<td>Translated = 1; Otherwise = 0</td>
<td>Coding result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Fiction = 1; Otherwise = 0</td>
<td>Coding result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>A country's level of uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>Hofstede's Culture Dimension Index Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity/Femininity</td>
<td>A country's level of masculinity/femininity</td>
<td>Hofstede's Culture Dimension Index Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Max = 10 (the highest liberties); Min = 1 (the lowest liberties)</td>
<td>The Economist Intelligence Unit democracy index 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Size per article</td>
<td>Coding result</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variables used in this research along together with the description and resources are summarized on table 3. The coding process is done by two researchers. Inter-coder agreement is made before the coding process takes place in order to maintain the consistency that important for content analysis research (Abernethy & Franke, 1996). The coders, will meet periodically to discuss problems occur during the process. The coding decision would be based on an agreement made by both of the coders. If no single consensus is made between coders, a third person will be invited and the final decision is made based on the major opinion.

4.3. Analytical Model

This study uses regression model to test the hypotheses. Hypotheses related to article, namely H1 and H2, are tested using Logit Regression. In this case, the dependent variables include “Local Written Article” and “Fiction”. Country’s level of “Uncertainty Avoidance” and “level of Masculinity” are used as independent variables respectively. And a control variable; i.e. “Civil Liberties”, is incorporated.

5. FINDING & DISCUSSION

5.1. Hypotheses Testing

H1 stated that a global adult magazine presents more local written articles in countries characterized as high uncertainty avoidance. In testing this hypothesis, American edition is excluded since only one translated article found.

Based on the data gathered from Playboy, the result (Table 4) shows that there is a significant and negative correlation between local written article and a country’s level of uncertainty avoidance (z score = -4.46, \( p < 0.01 \)). Given the effect of other variables held constant, the higher a country’s level of uncertainty avoidance is, the lesser the number of local written articles in that country’s Playboy. Although the coefficient is significant, the result does not support the prediction. Thus, H1 is rejected.

| Dependent Variable: Local Written Article | Coef. | z     | P>|z| |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| Independent Variable:                      |       |       |     |
| Uncertainty Avoidance                      | -0.034889 | -4.460 | 0.000 *** |
| Control Variable:                          |       |       |     |
| Civil Liberties                            | 0.8738324 | 7.290  | 0.000 *** |
| Size                                       | -0.0010303 | -0.050  | 0.962 |
| Constant                                   | -2.946735 | -4.910  | 0.000 |
| Number of Observation                      | 1407   |       |     |
| LR chi²(3)                                 | 101.27 |       |     |
| Prob > chi²                                | 0.0000 |       |     |
| Pseudo R²                                  | 0.1008 |       |     |

\* p<0.1. \**p<0.05. \***p<0.01

H2 stated that a global adult magazine presents more fiction in countries characterized as high feminine. There are a total of 1,299 pieces of articles being gathered, excluding Japanese edition and Dutch edition since no fiction exists in these two issues. The result (Table 5) shows a significant and negative correlation between fiction as a type of articles and a country’s level of masculinity (z score = -3.72, \( p < 0.01 \)). On the other words, type of article and country’s level of femininity is positively correlated. Thus, H2 is supported.
### 5.2. Discussion

#### Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede (1998) argued that level of uncertainty avoidance influences people’s tolerance level toward the unknown. Uncertainty avoidance also affects people’s information exchange behavior, innovativeness and preferences on advertising appeals (Soares, 2007). Following this fashion, country’s level of uncertainty avoidance should have led Playboy’s editor to offer more local written articles in country characterized as high uncertainty avoidance. However, this study finds a reverse result. In a country with the lowest uncertainty avoidance index in this study, American edition turned out to disclose the most local written article. One reason to explain this result is the fact that the USA is where Playboy originated, Playboy has been in this market for more than 50 years, and thus, Playboy has cultivated more local authors. Yet, in the other country (e.g. Indonesia), Playboy is relatively new, short of local writer, and thus, use more foreign written articles.

Nowadays, people are easily getting exposed to foreign information due to current technology development. This condition supposes to make people be more tolerant and be more insensitive toward foreign information despite of their aversion toward ambiguity or uncertain condition. The exposure might also change people’s perception from rejecting into favoring foreign information, or even feel the need to keep up with the latest foreign information. As such, this situation might allow Playboy’s editors to reveal more foreign written articles in an edition of country characterized as higher uncertainty avoidance.

Decision in disclosing more foreign written articles might also be influenced by Civil Liberties (Table 4). In a least liberal country, local people are supposed to be less desirable to express themselves; particularly if it is considered to be an unmentionable act. This condition made local people hesitated to submit their ‘controversial’ works to ‘controversial’ media, so the editors of Playboy might have less local resources and decided to use more foreign resources.

#### Masculinity/Femininity

The result of this study shows that masculinity/femininity influences the presentation of fiction. It is found that more fiction was appeared in Indonesian edition, which has a relatively low level of masculinity. This result is consistent with de Mooij (1998) indicating that people from masculine cultures are more concerned with data and facts, thus favoring nonfiction, whereas people from feminine culture are more interested in the story behind the facts, thus preferring fiction.

### 6. LIMITATION & FUTURE RESEARCH

As does empirical study, this research has several limitations that present opportunity for further research. The limitations are including: (1) small sample size, (2) lack of information on performance indicators, such as market share, sales volumes or sales income, and (3) the finding might be subject to type of product.

First, budget, time and language proficiency constraints lead to small sample size used in the current study. As such, the result of the study could be biased and the second research gap, which is measuring degree of customization across market (Cavusgil et al. 1993; Duncan & Ramaprasad, 1996; Leonidou, 1996; Viswanathn & Dickson, 2007), could not be done. Future research can add more national editions from other countries as the sample unit for being able to investigate the second research gap in standardization/customization topic.
Second, this study is lack of information on performance of the magazine in each market. Thus, the effectiveness of product customization strategy could not be measured (Roth, 1995). Future research on similar study can attempt to find information on product performance.

Third, this study was targeting a global controversial magazine. Thus, the relationship between cultural factors and the magazine in this study might be subject to change when applied in a similar study targeting global conventional magazine. Therefore, it is worth to have a further investigation on the relationship between cultural factors and a global conventional magazine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


