Are They Really That Different From Us: A Comparison of Arab and American Newspaper Advertising

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This study examines cultural values reflected in U.S. and the Arab world newspaper advertisement. A total of 1245 newspaper advertisements from Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and the United States were analyzed. The findings indicate that there are some similarities between the Arab World and the U.S. that may allow for subtle changes in cultural values and advertising strategies. The findings also indicate that there are some cultural values that have more of a religious significance than others.

Introduction

Since the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, the world has been greatly divided between the West and the Middle East. Differences in cultural and religious values have been fiercely debated and in most cases the differences have been magnified while the similarities have been ignored. Although globalization indicates that we may now have come closer than ever to McLuhan’s (1964) vision of a global village, the magnification of these differences and the recent clashes may suggest otherwise.

Leung et al. (2005) argue that national culture has become an increasingly important factor for companies engaged in business activities across country borders. Firms now must operate in an era of increasing globalization, so understanding of national culture is a crucial factor for success. Keegan (1989) argues that the understanding of cultural differences is often considered a prerequisite for successful international advertising because consumers grow up in a particular culture and become aligned with that culture’s value system, beliefs and perception processes. Several studies have shown that consumers are more inclined to respond to advertisements that are congruent with their culture (Boddewyn, Soehl, and Picard 1986; Buzzell 1986; Harris 1984).

Scholars (Durgee, O’Connor, and Veryzer 1996) argue that one of the most powerful ways to understand consumers is through the study of their values and value systems. The value system consists of sets of beliefs, attitudes and activities to which a culture or subculture subscribes. These cultural values are reinforced by rewards and punishments for those who follow or deviate from these guidelines (Rokeach 1973). At the personal level, values determine virtually all types of behaviors, from simple purchasing to religious ideologies (Pollay 1983). In the marketing and management literature, cultural values are recognized as having influence on consumer motivations and product choices (Tse, Wang, and Tan 1988). Several researchers believe that values are predictors or antecedents of behavior (Conner and Becker 2003; England 1967; England and Lee 1974), and aid in the understanding of culture (Feather 1975; Rokeach 1968, 1973). Conner and Becker (2003) argued that values influence attitudes which in turn influence behavior. Thus, behavior is determined by values. Although value systems are found in every society, significant differences exist between nations. These differences originated because each society place a different priority on each cultural value or principle. For example, the U.S is viewed as a society that values individualism while Mexico is viewed as a society that values collectivism. These priorities contributed to the creation of cultural differences among societies that set them apart from each other and make each society’s culture unique. As a result, these cultural values play a vital role in how people behave from choosing what to or not to do and how to do it. Thus, cultural differences can be understood by comparing the value systems of different cultures because each culture has its own unique set of priorities, rules and principles that facilitate group members and in their adaptation process to the environment (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961).

This literature review suggests that we may have a better way of understanding cultural and even religious differences via the study of advertising content.
This argument is made based on the premise that if advertising content reflects society’s cultural and religious beliefs, we can understand those values through the study of advertising content.

Several scholars (Albernethy and Franke 1996; Al-Olayan and Karande 2000) identified the need for more studies comparing advertising content across countries, especially the neglected parts of the world such as the Arab countries. Abernethy and Franke (1996) pointed out that some parts of the world have been severely neglected in international advertising research such as the Arab world. More recently, Taylor (2005) examined international advertising papers published between 1994 and 2004 and found 44% of them were about Asia, 22% about Europe, 22% about developing countries and 12% about global in general/multiple counties. Taylor’s study reveals how the Arab region has been severely neglected in international advertising research. It is probably safe to assume that the recent events of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Denmark newspaper publication of the cartoons depicting Prophet Mohamed as a terrorist, the war in Iraq and its effects are all indications of a lack of understanding of the Arab culture. Therefore, we argue that studies dealing with the Arab (Muslim) culture are desperately needed.

The primary purpose of this study is to shed some light on the Arab (Muslim) culture and to compare it to that of the United States by investigating the similarities and differences of the manifestation of cultural values in contemporary United States and the Arab world newspaper advertising. Specifically, this study investigates the types of cultural values conveyed in newspaper advertising in a representative sample of the Arab world, including: Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates and the United States.

Albernethy and Franke (1996) found many more studies of magazine (56) and television (44) advertising than of newspaper (10) advertising. The study of the newspaper media is important particularly in the Arab world for the following reasons. Martin (1998a) stated that newspapers have been the backbone of the Arabic media and print media has had the dominant share of advertising dollars. Although newspapers have been the backbone of the Arabic media (Martin 1988a), this medium has not received as much attention in the marketing discipline as other print media such as magazines. Most of the literature done in international advertising focused on Europe and some parts of Asia such as China, Japan and Korea. The Arab world clearly has been neglected and it deserves more attention due to the important role it plays in the global market (Al-Olayan and Karande 2000).

**The Arab Culture**

In order for us to discuss the Arab culture, we must first define what an Arab is? Ethnic terms as these are difficult to define, and Arab is not among the easiest. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, defines Arab as someone who identifies as Arab on genealogical, political, and/or linguistic grounds (i.e., those who trace their ancestral origins back to the Semitic tribes of the Arabian Peninsula). Lewis (2002) argues that Arabs might be defined as nation. He argues that they are not a nationality in the legal sense. So one who calls himself an Arab may be described in his passport as a national of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, or any other of the group of states that identify themselves as Arab. Although some states in the Middle East have adopted the word Arab in their nomenclature, their citizens are not designated as Arabs. Examples include Arab Republic of Egypt, United Arab Emirates, and Syrian Arab Republic. Lewis (2002) argues that there are Arab states and a league of Arab states but there is no single Arab state of which all Arabs are nationals. Does this mean Arabism is not real because it does not have a legal content? According to Lewis (2002), a gathering of Arab leaders many years ago defined an Arab in these words: “Whoever lives in our country, speaks our language, is brought up in our culture and takes pride in our glory is one of us.” Lewis (2002, p. 2) quotes Sir Hamilton Gibb’s definition of an Arab as, “All those are Arabs for whom the central fact of history is the mission of Muhammad and the memory of the Arab Empire and who in addition cherish the Arabic tongue and its cultural heritage as their common possession.” It should be noticed here that both definitions incorporate the Arabic language, culture and the Muslim faith (the first one makes that implicitly by referring to it as our glory).

This “Arab” issue makes the Arab culture even more complex. Ein-Dor et al. (1992) provided a categorization of culture according to the degree of stability of the individual factors. The authors argue that factors inherent to the culture over time that dominate the culture and very resistant to change are classified as “constants.” Examples include language, currency, geography, social norms and traditions. Factors that can be more easily changed include GNP, education level, and technology and are termed “changeable.” This study focuses on the constants parts of the Arab culture.

Because the Arab world consists of a large number of independent countries that have their own distinct history and experiences, it is impossible to generalize about all or most cultural values across the Arab world. There are, however, beliefs and attitudes that are shared
by many Arabs that cross national and social class boundaries (Wilson 1996). Wilson (1996, p. 69) provides the following summary regarding the Arab culture:

Everyone loves children; that age automatically confers wisdom; that men and women have vastly different personalities and characteristics; that a person’s dignity, honor, and reputation are of primary importance and must be protected at all costs; that one must always behave in a way that will create a good impression on others; that loyalty to one’s family takes precedence over personal needs; that piety is one of the most admirable traits in a person; and that there should be no separation between “church and state”—religion should pervade all aspects of life.

Without a doubt, the literature portrays Islam as the dominant component of the Arab culture and society because the language, social structure, and economic philosophy are fully grounded in Islam and Islam is considered a complete way of life (Kavoossi 2000; Lawrence 1998). Because there is a fine line between what is religious and what is cultural in the Arab world, the two often get mixed up. Shari’a (Islamic Law) is viewed as a comprehensive code governing all areas of a Muslim’s life such as duties, morals and behavior, individually, and collectively including commerce (Luqmani, Yavas, and Quraeshi 1987). The Shari’a provides guidance as to the values Muslims should hold, such as truth, justice, individual freedom, honesty, social obligations, collective responsibility, the roles of men and women and the role of buying and selling. Thus, the Shari’a prescribes all that one should do (Coulson 1964), and, therefore, the cultural value system of the Arabs is derived from and guided by the Islamic religious beliefs (Anastos, Bedos and Seaman 1980).

Most Arabs are Moslem (Hofstede 1994; Kabasakal and Bodur 2002) who are influenced by the Koran in conducting their daily activities (Ali 1996), and religious beliefs are a constant reminder of what is considered culturally acceptable. Thus, one of the characteristics that distinguish between the followers of Islam from followers of some other faiths is that religion influences every aspect of a Muslim’s life. A survey in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, revealed that most respondents were united in their belief that Islam structures the daily life of people and that Gulf society and identity are woven with Islam (Rice and Al-Mossawi 2002). Egyptians considered religion to be the most important value after health (Rice and Al-Mossawi 2000).

Variations in the Arab Culture

It will be naïve and misleading to assume that there are no variations among Arab countries. Although Arabs have many common traits, they also differ in numerous respects such as conservatism (Nydell 1987), wealth, and education level (Lamb 1987). Among those significant differences that are applicable to this study: conservatism, language, level of education, and religious affiliation. For example, dress in the Arab countries ranges from wearing a bikini to being completely covered. This contrast can be found between Lebanon, where about 50% of the population is Christians and affiliate themselves with the West in several respects, and Saudi Arabia, where Islamic values are held to the highest degree. In Saudi Arabia, women are required by the law to cover up, while in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and others such a requirement does not exist. This is not to say that covered up women are not found in those countries because this is dependent on each family and person’s way of life, commitment to Islam and interpretation of the teaching of Islam.

There is also a significant difference in the spoken and written Arabic language. Although the Arabic grammatical system and written language are uniform across all Arab countries (Al-Olayan and Karande 2000), there are as many as 20 different spoken dialects. Almaney and Alwan (1982) argue that the Arabic dialects fall into five geographical categories:

I. North African (Western Arabic): Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, Libyan, Mauritanian; these dialects have been significantly influenced by Berber and by the language of the colonists.

II. Egyptian/Sudanese: most commonly understood throughout the Arabic world due to the popularity of Egyptian movies, television and radio programs, and musical arts.

III. Syrian or Levantine: Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian, Palestinian.

IV. Arabian Peninsular: Saudi, Yemeni, Adeni, Kuwaiti, Gulf, Omani; considered the most pure.

V. Iraqi.

For example, it is common for Egyptians to have a difficult time understanding the spoken Arabic of Saudis, Lebanese, Bahrainis and those of many other Arab states. Although the Arabic grammatical system and written language are uniform, significant differences still exist in the spoken communication.

There is a significant difference of education level among the Arab states. For example, the literacy rate in Egypt is 71.4% and 50.2% in Yemen compared to 86.7% in Bahrain.
and 93.3% in Kuwait (World Fact Book 2010). Level of education impacts the amount of written information transferred to the public. It also impacts the level of spoken language because the use of complex or classical Arabic may be too difficult for illiterates to understand.

Finally, there are differences in religious affiliations. For example, 100% of the population in Saudi Arabia is Muslim compared to 50% in Lebanon and about 90% in Egypt. Although the Arab culture has a strong impact on all Arabs, religious affiliation causes differences. For example, it is unlikely to find a Christian who wears the hijab (what Muslim women use to cover their heads and other parts of their bodies). It is common that Christians associate with the West and hold some Western values which at times may conflict with the Islamic values.

The above examples have been given to help the reader understand that although there are significant similarities among Arab states, there are also significant differences. These differences can be attributed to level of education, wealth, religious affiliation and country history. It is important that these differences be pointed out to avoid the mistake of stereotyping. To illustrate, it is illegal to advertise condoms in Bahrain, while it is common to do so in Lebanon (Rice and Al-Mossawi 2002). These differences play a central role in determining what is considered culturally acceptable and culturally taboo. This is not limited to what is legal and what is not. For example, although the use of the left hand to serve someone tea in Saudi Arabia resulted in the alienation of a tea company (Lugmani et al. 1980), it is unlikely that such an outcome will be obtained in Lebanon.

### The American Culture

The America culture is different from the Arab culture in many ways. The American value system is based predominantly on Christian beliefs. Specifically, Americans can be described as informal, direct, competitive, high achievers, independent and individualistic, questioners, and punctual (Bakhtari 1995). Americans are a heterogeneous group who live at a fast pace, believe in direct methods of communication, are practical and egalitarian, live as a nuclear family, reject fatalism, and like to achieve through their own efforts (Wilson 1996; Lee 1980).

Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts, and Earnshaw (2002) suggest that the United States still bears the idealism of the eighteenth century settlers but also modeled its democratic system on French liberalism and equity. We will not go into greater detail about American culture due to the familiarity that most readers likely have with the subject.

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research effort focuses on two main research questions. What are the types of products that are commonly advertised in U.S. and Arab newspapers? What are the main cultural differences and similarities between the United States and the Arab World? We selected a group of cultural values (Tradition, Beauty Enhancement, Respect for the Elderly, Harmony with Others, Interdependence, Thriftiness, Competitiveness, Attitude toward Nature, and Attitude toward Enjoyment) for investigation to answer the latter question. These cultural values were chosen based on the preceding discussion of the cultural values and similarities between the Arab world and the U.S. These cultural values were chosen because they fall into the more “constant” values that are not easily changed. These cultural values relate some more than others, to tradition and that is the cultural value we start with. This group of cultural values should not be viewed as conclusive for there are many other cultural values that could be investigated. Since both Arabian and American cultures draw heavily upon the local predominant religion, it is important to understand what the predominant local religion teaches about the subject to better understand how it may have influenced the local culture.

### Tradition

According to Cheng and Schweitzer (1996), traditional society is static with little specialization, a low level of urbanization, and low literacy. Traditional society is depicted as having an authoritarian political system, whereas modern society is characterized by wide participation on the part of citizens. Moreover, traditional society is bound by the cultural values established by old customs and conventions, while modern society is culturally dynamic and oriented to change and innovate.

By this definition, Arab society is very traditional in many respects. For centuries, Bedouin tribes have been known for their gracious hospitality to lost desert travelers. Arabs value honor and honesty and are willing to go to great lengths to avoid losing face (Ali 1996). As stated by Prophet Mohammad, “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be hospitable with his or her guests” (ipaki.com). The Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society reported that a number of Arab young women have been killed by their families in Denmark to protect the honor of the family. This illustrates how tradition in the Arab society may take precedent over secular law and family ties.
Although the American culture has an element similar to the Arab culture where people are proud of the founding fathers and what they have done to build their country, Americans tend to focus more on the future than on the past. With lessons such as the parables of the talents, Christians are taught to have a strong work ethic—in fact, previous generations remarked upon the “Protestant work ethic”—and to look forward to the future. Modernity and progress is highly valued in US culture and clenching to certain traditions merely for the sake of tradition strikes many Americans as backward and restrictive. Therefore,

Table 1
Operational Definitions of Cultural Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Value</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Enhancement [a]</td>
<td>The advertising highly suggests that the use of a product will enhance the loveliness, attractiveness, elegance, or handsomeness of an individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition [b]</td>
<td>This value encourages individuals to compete with others or the self. In advertising, the emphasis is on distinguishing a product from its counterparts by aggressive comparisons. While explicit comparisons may mention the competitor’s name, implicit comparisons may use such words as “number one, leader.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriftiness[c]</td>
<td>The inexpensive, affordable, and cost-saving nature of a product is emphasized in the advertising content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward Enjoyment [c]</td>
<td>This value encourages the individual to pursue temporary happiness and to enjoy life. The advertising suggests that a product will make its user wild with joy. Typical examples include the capital fun that beer or soda drinkers demonstrate in some advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony with Others [d]</td>
<td>This value emphasizes the importance of having good interpersonal relationships. It also suggests that people should be in harmony with others and avoid anything that might damage the relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence  [b]</td>
<td>The emphasis here is on the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of an individual. This value also addresses the self-improvement, self-freedom, or individual accomplishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence  [d]</td>
<td>The emphasis of this value is on the individual in relation to others typically in the reference group. Individuals are depicted as integral parts of the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward Nature[a]</td>
<td>This attitude reflects two distinct ways of viewing nature. Both constructs may include a respect for nature, but oneness with nature indicates more of an appreciation for nature as it is while mastery over nature indicates a belief that nature needs to be managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition[b]</td>
<td>The experience of the past, customs, and conventions are respected. In advertising, the qualities of being historical, time-honored and legendary are venerated, e.g., “With eighty years of manufacturing experience”; “It is adapted from ancient Chinese prescriptions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for the Elderly [b]</td>
<td>The advertising displays a respect for older people by using a model of old age or asking for the opinions, recommendations, and advice of the elders.</td>
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</table>

[c] Adapted from Pollay (1983)  
[d] Adapted from Yau (1988)

H1: Arab newspaper ads will manifest more traditions compared to their U.S. counterparts.

Beauty Enhancement

One of the main cultural differences between the United States and the Arab world is how woman should appear in society. Support for our thesis that this cultural difference rests upon the local predominant religion may be found in Arabia itself. For example, dress in the Arab countries ranges from wearing a bikini to being completely covered. This
contrast can be found between Lebanon where about 50% of the population is Christians and affiliate themselves with the West in several respects and Saudi Arabia where Islamic values are held to the most stringent interpretation. In Saudi Arabia, women are required by the law to cover up while in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and others such a requirement does not exist. This is not to say that veiled women are not found in those countries because this is dependent on each family and person’s way of life, commitment to Islam and interpretation of the teaching of Islam.

The cultural differences in modesty in dress reflects both the local predominant religion as well as the percentage of people in the country that follow it. This Koran passage provides some guidance as to how Islamic women should appear in the public:

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what ordinarily appear thereof that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers... (Koran 24:31).

Arab society is expected to adhere to the teachings of Islam. (Al-Olayan and Karande 2000) and follow its guidelines. Various scholars interpreted the preceding Koran passage differently: most scholars interpret this message to mean that women may show only their hands and face to men outside of their immediate family. Stricter scholars interpret the message to mean women should be completely veiled. For example, Saudi women are not allowed to walk in the streets with their faces uncovered.

Contrast the Koran’s commands to all Islamic women with the Bible’s words on the subject. The New Testament has no specific instructions on how unmarried Christian women should dress outside of the church. The Apostle Paul provided guidance for how women should dress while attending church and the Apostle Peter provided some general guidelines for married women:

Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God ... (NKJV, 1 Peter 3:3-4).

Since Muslim women have a much stronger religious command toward specific types of modesty in dress than Christian women, one would expect this to be reflected in advertising. Indeed, this is the case. Al-Olayan and Karande (2000) found in 83% of Arabic magazine advertisements showing women, women were wearing long clothing, compared to 29% in U.S. advertisements. It is clear that this Islamic restriction may pose an advertising dilemma for advertisers who would like to use female sex appeal to sell to men (e.g., automotive ads using nubile women to sell sports cars). It is also apparent that advertisers will have to be more cautious in showing women using women’s products (e.g., American razor ads showing women how nice their legs will look if they use the specified product would not be culturally appropriate in Saudi Arabia).

What is not clear is if women who have to show more modesty in dress in public are still as interested in beauty enhancement as women who expect to be seen by men in addition to their fathers and husbands. Likewise, even if these Islamic women are as interested in beauty enhancement, can advertisers effectively use newspaper ads to market their goods without the ability to show women actually using the product? While the first question is outside the scope of this research project, we can more feasibly measure the relative importance of marketing beauty enhancement goods to women under various cultural conditions by measuring the percentage of television ads that attempt to sell these goods. Given the additional complexities of advertising these goods in an Islamic society, it is expected that

H2: The focus on women’s beauty enhancement will be less in Arab newspaper advertising compared to their U.S. counterparts.

H3: There will be differences among the Arab countries regarding the cultural value beauty enhancement.

Respect for the Elderly

Arabs have much respect for parents and elders (Nydell 1987; Kabasakal and Bodur 2002). For example, an Arab would never make derogatory statements about deceased relatives or show any disrespect to his parents because of their immense loyalty and respect for parents and elders. The following Koran verses makes it clear that respect for parents and the elderly is strongly desired by God.

And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents—his mother bears him with faintings upon faintings and his weaning takes two years—saying: Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual coming (Koran 31:14).

And We have enjoined on man doing of good to his parents; with trouble did his mother bear him and with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months; until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years, he says: My Lord! grant me that
I may give thanks for Thy favor which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do good which pleases Thee and do good to me in respect of my offspring; surely I turn to Thee, and surely I am of those who submit (Koran 46:15).

While a review of American popular television shows may give the appearance of a significant difference between American and Arabian views on this issue, the historical and Christian cultural norm is for Americans to respect their parents and the elderly. The fifth commandment states:

Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you (NKJV, Deuteronomy 5:25).

Both Arabian and American historical and religious cultures advocate a respect for parents and the elderly. Therefore,

H4: Arab newspaper ads will manifest respect for elders in the same proportions as their U.S. counterparts.

**Harmony with Others**

Another characteristic of collectivistic societies is that they value harmony with others. Thus, Arabs are encouraged at an early age to learn to live in harmony with one another. Islam stresses that people within the Muslim faith should learn to get a long and strive for unity and harmony. One of the many Koranic verses stresses that people should speak well to others, “…. and speak well to the people…” (Koran 2:83).

While the American culture is individualistic and the focus is on the individual rather than on the group, Jesus provided numerous examples how Christians need to look out for others and be peacemakers. For example, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). Likewise, Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is so integrated into American culture that most states have “Good Samaritan” laws that protect individuals with good intentions from legal liability. The only time Christians are expected to be “disharmonious” is when local governments place their laws over what Christians understand to be God’s laws (for example, if the government forbade people to be Christians on penalty of being thrown to the lions, Christians would elect to be thrown to the lions vs. repudiate their beliefs). While the Arabic countries see harmony with others as a group imperative and Christians generally see harmony as an individual responsibility, the overall result is similar. Thus,

H5: The cultural value “harmony with others” will be manifested the same in the Arab newspaper ads as it is manifested within U.S. ads.

**Interdependence**

Hosfstede (1991) reported that the United States was the most individualistic country among the 53 countries analyzed, with a score of 91 on a 100-point scale. The Arab world, however, scored 38 on this individualistic dimension. Members of Arab culture have a high need for affiliation and value mutual dependence (Yousef 1974). Success is measured by what one does for his family rather than individual earnings or achievement. Consequently, loyalty to one’s primary group is an integral part of Arab culture. This sense of loyalty is exemplified by this Arab proverb: “I against my brother; my brother and I against my cousins; I, my brother, and my cousins against the outsider” (Bates and Fratkin 2003, p.272). This group loyalty can be seen in societies such as the Egyptian society where family members are strongly encouraged to marry their own relatives to keep the well being of the family intact. Hofstede (2001) argued that the Arab culture is a collectivistic culture where members of the Arab society tend to depend on each other. Thus,

H6: Arab newspaper ads will manifest the cultural value “interdependence” more than their U.S. counterparts.

H7: U.S. newspaper ads will manifest the cultural value “independence” more than their Arab counterparts.

**Thriftiness**

Islam stresses that people be thrifty and not waste what they have. It is stated in the Koran that God loves not the wasters (Koran 7:31). Likewise, a common theme throughout the Bible is one of good stewardship. Part of being a good steward is being economical, and the Bible is full of examples about the foolishness of living beyond one’s means (e.g., the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32). Thus,

H8: The cultural value “thriftiness” will be manifested in the same proportions in the Arab and the U.S. newspaper ads.

**Competitiveness**

According to Hofstede (1984), the Arab world is a highly collectivist society. Ibn Khaldun (1967) ad-
dressed the concept of asabiyya in the Arab countries as a type of solidarity among the group that is based on blood or a strong bond of mutual affections among the members of the group, which make them willing to fight and die for one another. Moaddel (2002) argues that this solidarity was the key factor in the Bedouins’ military prowess and driving force that enabled them to overcome city-dwellers and establish royal authority. This illustrates how collectivism existed in the Arab world many years ago. One can argue that the collectivist concept in the Arab world has been strongly impacted by the teachings of Islam.

Al-Olayan and Karande (2000) argue that behavior in the Arab world toward others is influenced by messages in the Shari’a, which encourage people not to compete at the cost of harming others. Prophet Muhammad stressed this issue by stating, “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself” and that “A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands” (quoted in Al-Olayan and Karande 2001, p.72). Thus, it is expected that competing advertising will be less prevalent in the Arab world because doing so may cause harm to a Muslim.

Similar charitable concepts are found in Christian culture. For example, Jesus told people, “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (NKJV, Mathew 5:44). However, where the Arabs interpreted their religious charge as support for collectivism, Americans tend to treat this religious imperative as an individual instruction. This is evident in Hofstede’s scores that showed the United States to have the highest score for Individualism. The US Federal Trade Commission even encourages the use of competing advertising (Cutler and Javalgi 1992). Thus, while Arabs are culturally conditioned to find internal competition negative, Americans may see internal competition as a positive. This leads to,

H9: Compared to U.S. newspaper ads, Arab newspaper ads will use fewer (competitive) comparative ads.

**Attitude toward Nature**

Researchers have found that certain cultures tend to value oneness with nature while others value mastery over nature and that this cultural difference is reflected in advertising. For example, Japanese (Mueller 1987) and Chinese (Chen and Schweitzer 1996) ads have a greater tendency to illustrate the importance of oneness with nature when compared to U.S. ads. Both constructs may include a respect for nature, but oneness with nature indicates more of an appreciation for nature as it is while mastery over nature indicates a belief that nature needs to be managed.

The Koran teaches that Allah’s (God) creation is not to be altered, which implies that man is to respect and accept nature as it is. “Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know” (Koran 30:30).

The Islamic belief on this issue is much different than the Christian worldview. In the very first chapter of the Bible, Christians are told to manage the earth.

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (NKJV, Genesis 1:27-28).

The Christian theme of good stewardship strongly influences how Christians perceive nature. Christians believe that management of the earth is not just a good idea, but that they are commanded to be good stewards of the earth and to master it. Thus, H10: Arab newspaper ads will manifest the cultural value “oneness with nature” more than their U.S. counterparts.

H11: U.S. newspaper ads will manifest the cultural value “mastery over nature” more than their Arab counterparts.

**Attitude toward Enjoyment**

Both religions warn people not to indulge themselves in the enjoyment of this life at the expense of their afterlife. For example, the Koran states, “O my people! this life of the world is only a (passing) enjoyment, and surely the hereafter is the abode to settle” (Koran 40:39). Likewise, Jesus taught, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” (NKJV, Mark 8:36). However, both religions encourage men to take joy in life. “This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24). Lin (2003) argued that some values tend to be more universal than specific. For example, all human beings strive for the feeling of enjoyment. So long as a culture has progressed beyond a substance economy, economic differences should not have an impact on the desire for enjoyment. Thus, we hypothesize that
H12: U.S. newspaper ads will manifest the cultural value “enjoyment” in similar amounts as their Arab counterparts.

Methodology

Sampling Method

Newspapers were selected based on the following criteria. First, the newspaper needed to be either the leading newspaper or one of the leading newspapers in each country. Second, the newspaper had to be a daily newspaper. Because not much information is available to help in the evaluation of each newspaper in the Arab countries included in the analysis, a consultation with the embassy of each country was conducted and the following newspapers were selected: Al-Ahram from Egypt, Al-Nahar from Lebanon, Al-Watan from Kuwait, Al-Watan from Saudi Arabia, Al-Bayan from U.A.E, U.S. Today, and NY Times from the U.S.). A total of 1245 ads are analyzed where 150 ads were taken from each Arab country and 495 were taken from the United States.

Coding Procedure

Three U.S. undergraduate students coded the U.S. ads. Three bilingual Middle Eastern students, two graduates and one undergraduate, coded the Arab sample. All coders were trained prior to coding. The coders were provided with a detailed guidance as to how the coding categories should be done. Following previous research (Al-Olayan and Karande 2000), the percentage of agreement among the three coders was calculated. The inter-rater reliability was calculated using the percentage of similar classifications for all ads. Intercoder reliabilities are reported in Table 2. Duplicate ads were eliminated to increase product category.

Results

Table 3 presents a detailed description of the distribution of sample advertisements according to product category. The most frequently advertised product in the Egyptian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese and U.S.A newspaper sample is automobiles with 18%, 16.6%, 9% and 7.0%, respectively. The most frequently advertised product in the Saudi newspaper sample is watches with 20.6%, while the most frequently advertised product in the U.A.E. is health/insurance with 14%. Alcoholic products (2%), cellular phone (9%), and food (4%) appeared more frequently in the Egyptian sample than in any other. Tobacco products (2.6%) appeared more frequently on the Lebanese sample than in any other, while cosmetics (7.3) appeared more frequently on the Kuwaiti sample than any other. In the Saudi sample, credit card (4.6%), hair care (8%) and watches (20.6%) appeared more frequently than in any other sample, while in the U.A.E. sample, health/insurance (14.0%) appeared more frequently than in any other sample. Finally, medicines (3.2%) appeared more frequently in the U.S.A. sample than in any other. For a detailed description of the sample distribution, see Table 3.

To answer research question one, we used descriptive statistics and MANOVA to examine the differences between the United States and the Arab world newspaper advertisements. Table 4 provides a description of the mean averages of each cultural value. Each cultural value was measured using a scale that ranged from 1-3 with 1 indicating the absence of the cultural value and 3 indicating a strong presence of the cultural value. As Table 4 indicates, the cultural values that had the highest manifestation in the U.S. sample are enjoyment (mean=1.65) and beauty enhancement (mean=1.6). The cultural values that were least manifested in the U.S. sample are respect for the elderly (mean=1.05), oneness with nature (mean=1.06) and interdependence (mean=1.07).

The cultural values that appeared most often in the Egyptian sample are enjoyment (mean=1.67), thriftiness (mean=1.44), and nature (mean=1.23). Respect for elders (mean=1.02) and interdependence (mean=1.02) had the least appearance. In the Lebanese sample enjoyment (mean=2.10), interdependence (mean=1.53), economy (mean=1.43), and beauty (mean=1.38) were the most manifested cultural values, while respect for the elders (mean=1.02) and competition (mean=1.05) were the least manifested cultural values.

The sample from Kuwait contained more of beauty (mean=1.48), mastery over nature (mean=1.39) and enjoyment (mean=1.28), and less of harmony with others (mean=1.00) independence (mean=1.00), interdependence (mean=1.01), and competition (1.01). On the other hand, the Saudi sample included more of enjoyment (mean=1.53), beauty (mean=1.38), economy (mean=1.32), and less of respect for elders (mean=1.00), mastery over nature (mean=1.00) and oneness with nature (mean=1.00). Finally, the United Arab Emirates sample included more of thriftiness (mean=1.69), beauty (mean=1.60), enjoyment (mean=1.22), and interdependence (mean=1.20) and less of competition (mean=1.00), natural (mean=1.00), respect for elders (mean=1.00), and interdependence (mean=1.00).

This study also utilized the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to examine the differences of
Table 2
Cultural Values Intercoder Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Value</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Beauty                  | Egypt: .82 Lebanon: .80  
                        | Kuwait: .79 Saudi: .80  
                        | U.A.E.: .74 U.S.A.: .88 |
| Competition             | Egypt: .90 Lebanon: .93  
                        | Kuwait: .97 Saudi: .96  
| Economy                 | Egypt: .74 Lebanon: .72  
                        | Kuwait: .77 Saudi: .74  
                        | U.A.E.: .71 U.S.A.: .91 |
| Enjoyment               | Egypt: .82 Lebanon: .76  
                        | Kuwait: .84 Saudi: .83  
                        | U.A.E.: .86 U.S.A.: .87 |
| Harmony with Others     | Egypt: .92 Lebanon: .96  
                        | Kuwait: .99 Saudi: .95  
                        | U.A.E.: .94 U.S.A.: .93 |
| Independence            | Egypt: .90 Lebanon: .98  
                        | Kuwait: .98 Saudi: .90  
                        | U.A.E.: .98 U.S.A.: .90 |
| Interdependence         | Egypt: .98 Lebanon: .88  
                        | Kuwait: .96 Saudi: .97  
                        | U.A.E.: .83 U.S.A.: .96 |
| Natural                 | Egypt: .86 Lebanon: .97  
                        | Kuwait: .94 Saudi: .90  
| Tradition               | Egypt: .94 Lebanon: .90  
                        | Kuwait: .93 Saudi: .90  
                        | U.A.E.: .90 U.S.A.: .92 |
| Veneration for the Elders| Egypt: .97 Lebanon: .98  
                        | Kuwait: .98 Saudi: .98  

cultural values manifested in the U.S. and the Arab countries. MANOVA is deemed appropriate because it allows for multiple comparisons and allows for post hoc tests to be conducted avoiding the problem of inflated alphas (Field 2000).

Hypothesis 1 postulated that Arab newspaper advertising will manifest more traditions compared to their U.S. counterparts. To the contrary, the U.S. scored significantly higher than all the other Arab countries on this value. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not supported.

H2: The focus on women’s beauty enhancement will be less in Arab newspaper advertising compared to their U.S. counterparts. Table 4 provides the comparison results between the United States and each of the Arab countries. The U.S. is compared to each one of the Arab countries included in the sample. Table 4 indicates that the U.S. scored significantly higher than Egypt, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. The U.S. also scored higher than Kuwait, but the difference was not significant. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 stated that there will be differences among the Arab countries regarding the cultural value beauty enhancement. Saudi Arabia is probably the most restrictive country when it comes to women appearance in public. Lebanon is on the other extreme of the spectrum with women having a lot of freedom to dress as they please. Comparing these 2 countries and the rest reveals that there was no significant difference; therefore, hypothesis 3 was not supported.
### Table 3
Distribution of Newspaper Advertisements on Product Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Kuwait</th>
<th>Saudi</th>
<th>UAE</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alcohol</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>5 (1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Automobiles</td>
<td>27 (18%)</td>
<td>14 (9.0%)</td>
<td>25 (16.6%)</td>
<td>10 (6.6%)</td>
<td>10 (6.6%)</td>
<td>35 (7.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cellular Phone</td>
<td>14 (9.0%)</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>10 (6.6%)</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>7 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coffee/Tea</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Credit/Card Banking</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>7 (4.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>14 (2.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cosmetics</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>11 (7.3%)</td>
<td>6 (4.0%)</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>11 (2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Computer/Printer/Software/Internet</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>6 (4.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>7 (4.6%)</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>21 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. HairCare</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>5 (3.3%)</td>
<td>12 (8.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Health Insurance</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>8 (5.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>21 (14.0%)</td>
<td>5 (1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Laundry/Soap</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Medicines</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>16 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. TV/VCR</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>10 (2.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Tobacco</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2 (0.04%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Toothpaste</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Watches</td>
<td>6 (4.0%)</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6)</td>
<td>31 (20.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>26 (5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Contraceptive</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Food</td>
<td>6 (4.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>4 (2.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>9 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Other</td>
<td>78 (52%)</td>
<td>111 (74%)</td>
<td>88 (58.6%)</td>
<td>71 (47.3%)</td>
<td>111 (74%)</td>
<td>334 (67.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4
MANOVA Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Values</th>
<th>USA N=150</th>
<th>Egypt N=150</th>
<th>Lebanon N=150</th>
<th>Kuwait N=150</th>
<th>Saudi N=150</th>
<th>U.A.E. N=150</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Enhancement</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.14**</td>
<td>1.38**</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.38*</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.10**</td>
<td>1.05**</td>
<td>1.01**</td>
<td>1.04**</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriftiness</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.44**</td>
<td>1.43**</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.69**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.10**</td>
<td>1.28**</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony with Others</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.00*</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.00*</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.53**</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Nature</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.23**</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.04**</td>
<td>1.06**</td>
<td>1.05**</td>
<td>1.06**</td>
<td>1.08**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Elderly</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery over Nature</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.31**</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
<td>1.39**</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oneness with Nature</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.18**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at the 0.05 level (p< .05)
** significant at the 0.01 level (p< .01)
Hypothesis 4 indicated that Arab newspaper ads will manifest respect for elders in the same proportions as their U.S. counterparts. There was no significant difference between the U.S. and the Arab countries on this cultural value. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5 stated that the cultural value “harmony with others” will be manifested the same in the Arab newspaper ads as it is manifested within U.S. ads. The only Arab country that scored higher than the U.S. was Egypt. The U.S. scored slightly higher than the rest of the Arab countries; however, the difference was not significant. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported.

Hypothesis 6 stated that Arab newspaper advertisements will manifest the “interdependence” cultural value more than their U.S. counterparts. Data analysis revealed that only Lebanon and U.A.E. had a score significantly higher than the United States. Similar to the United States, Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia scored low on this cultural value; therefore, there is only a partial support for hypothesis 6.

Based on the individualistic nature of the American culture, hypothesis 7 speculated that U.S. newspaper advertisements will manifest the “independence” cultural value more than their Arab counterparts. The U.S. scored significantly higher than Lebanon, Kuwait and UAE. Therefore, hypothesis 7 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 8 posits that the cultural value “thriftness” will be manifested in the same proportions in the Arab and the U.S. newspaper ads. Each of the Arab countries included in the sample had a significant higher score than the U.S. United Arab Emirates Therefore; hypothesis 8 was not supported.

Hypothesis 9 stated that compared to U.S. newspaper ads, Arab newspaper ads will use fewer (competitive) comparative ads. Coders were instructed to look for any type of comparison (direct and indirect) because previous research showed that the Arab countries tend to use indirect comparisons. This study reveals that the use of comparative advertisements is seldom used in the Arab countries. The United States scored significantly higher than each of the Arab countries sampled; therefore, hypothesis 9 was supported.

Hypothesis 10 stated that Arab newspaper advertisements will manifest the cultural value “oneness with nature” more than their U.S. counterparts. The only Arab country that scored significantly higher than the U.S. was Egypt. The rest of the Arab countries scored similar to the U.S.; therefore, hypothesis 10 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 11 indicated that U.S. newspaper advertisements will manifest the cultural value “mas-
the *Middle East Broadcasting Journal*, was quoted as saying, “If you look at 10, 20 years ago, the Middle East was one of those few places where parents and children enjoyed the same music—and today there is that generation gap that is forming for the first time in the Middle East.” In addition, Aljazeera net (2005) reported that a sociology professor in Egypt concluded that the breaking down of family ties in the Arab World was due to the increased number of satellite channels and video clips, which is promoting a different life style and culture. Another possible explanation is that the Arab society like many other societies is now focused on the modern and particularly technological innovations. Finally, it might be that advertising agencies do not see value in focusing on traditions.

Another surprising result in this study is the cultural value “beauty enhancement” appears to be an important one in the Arab culture. Although recent reports by CNN (2006) indicated that the number of women covering their heads in many Arab countries is increasing, this does not seem to diminish the need for women to look beautiful. This suggests that Arabs seem to differentiate between the desire for women to look beautiful (for those permitted to see them in Saudi Arabia and other conservative parts of the Arab world) and the need to dress modestly. On the surface, seeing all these women covered up may suggest that beauty enhancement products may not find a good market in the Arab world. On the contrary, this study suggests that this is a value that Arabs care about and it is reflected in the number of ads directed at women for such products.

Although it is believed that respect for parents and elders is particularly resonant in the Arab World (Al-Hejailan 1996; Kabasaki and Bodur 2002; Nydell 1987), this study reveals that this cultural value was not utilized in newspaper advertising. On the surface, this may be surprising, but when we look deeper into the Arab culture and how advertising is viewed, this finding may not be so surprising. It is possible that because respect for parents and the elderly is so resonant in the Arab World, marketers chose not to include them in advertising to avoid risking any pretrial that may be viewed as disrespectful. For example, an elder that is depicted in a humorous advertisements may be viewed as being portrayed disrespectfully because the Arab people are not suppose to make fun of the elderly.

This study reveals that some aspects of the Arab culture are still in existence such as not to directly compete with others. Hill and Shao (1994, p. 352) stated, “Historically, anthropologists note that traditional societies (notably in developing countries but also in rural parts of advanced markets) are controlled through religious and social conventions.” They also noted, “in many religions (e.g., Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism), religious and social duties are indistinguishable.” A company that engages in comparative advertising in the Arab world may be taking a huge risk because the Arabic consumer is not used to it. The advertisement as a result may lead to confusion between the advertised brands. This is not to say that the Arabic consumer is not sophisticated but to say that the Arabic consumer has not been used to seeing comparative advertising. Although legislation is one of the factors that can potentially influence ad content, Al-Olayan and Karande (2000) argue that legislation pertaining to the regulation and censure of ads is scarce in the Arab countries. Therefore, guidelines for advertising have to be drawn from cultural orientation. The lack of legislation was found in an earlier study by Lugmani, Yavas and Quraeshi (1987), who found little regulation of advertising in Saudi Arabia. Based on our study and previous studies, international advertisers are advised to give consideration to both regulation and cultural influences, such as those discussed in this study, when determining ad content. It is possible that comparative advertising might be perceived as unethical or immoral in the Arab world. Therefore, it is advised that the differences in ad content should be considered in light of possible differences in regulation and attitudes toward comparative ads between the United States and the Arab world, as well as intra-Arab country differences in regulation.

Lin (2003) argued that some values tend to be more universal than specific. This was apparent in the cultural value enjoyment where it was emphasized both in the Arab and United States newspaper ads. This is one area that advertisers can capitalize on where they should identify those cultural values that seem to be more universal than specific.

### References


