Keio University

Thesis Abstract

No.

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Title of Thesis:

Consumption of Images: Country-of-Origin Image and the Perception Gaps caused by Global Marketing of Cultural Commodities

Summary of Thesis:

Globalization allows the for the consumption of goods produced around the world. It also allows for images to be created and viewed globally. Global marketing is advantageous to many markets and increases the number of possible consumers. However, with changing frames of reference, the perception of the image also changes. While this phenomenon did not unilaterally affect the marketing of most consumer goods, it could have a profound effect on the increasing global consumption of images. This is especially true in terms of countries and their soft power.

Most research has focused the country-of-origin and the quality of the commodities when comparing countries global markets. As more commodities become digitalized and image-based, a stronger knowledge foundation on how images are perceived globally is necessary to avoid misunderstandings.

In this dissertation, I show how images can be reinterpreted depending of their frames of reference or context changes. The first is a part of the research consisted of a global survey of American and Japanese school children and their impressions of a new children's character analyzed with SPSS. The second part was three observational research field-trips to Japanese marketing events with Japanese mascot characters called *yuru-chara.*

These two parts of the research combined to show where the gaps in perception are for image-based commodities between Japan and the United States of America, particularly with children's characters and *yuru-chara*. The results show that frames are a key point of context for consumers and the future production of images.

Key words: frames, character images, country-of-origin, perceptions, marketing