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Message strategies in Korean cosmetic surgery websites

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Gawon Kim entitled "Message strategies in Korean cosmetic surgery websites." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication and Information.

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Message strategies in Korean cosmetic surgery websites

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate message strategies used in South Korean cosmetic surgery websites. The paper uses Taylor's six-segment message strategy model to analyze the Korean sample websites. The outcome of the content analysis revealed that Informational and Transformational strategies were both equivalently used. Ration and ego strategies were the most frequently practiced within the Informational and Transformational divisions.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported that a Korean plastic surgery clinic in Seoul had violated the law by displaying a photo of a tower of jawbones in a jar (BBC, 2014). The jar contained almost 1,000 bone fragments of jaw, carved from different patients, onto which their names had been written. It was an attempt to boast about the skill and experience of the clinic's surgeon. The clinic was fined $2,750 for violating a medical-waste disposal law, but the shocking image clearly shows how far the cosmetic surgery industry is willing to go to promote its business.

Cosmetic surgery, also known as aesthetic surgery, is a subspecialty of a plastic surgery, which is the repair of defects of form for aesthetic reasons, as defined by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). When cosmetic surgery was first introduced, surgeons used it to improve the outcomes of reconstructive surgery. Recently, with the emergence of a belief that regards the body as a commodity within consumer society, cosmetic surgery has often been conducted solely for aesthetic purposes, and special clinics that deal only in cosmetic surgery have emerged (Adams, 2013; Andereck, 2007; Corrigan, 1997; Pitts-Taylor, 2007). Cosmetic surgery is currently so common that a total of 9,645,395 people worldwide had surgical procedures in 2014 with the sole aim of achieving beauty (ISAPS, 2014). Among them, Americans represent 15.4% of total cosmetic surgical procedure worldwide, followed by Brazilians, at 13.9% of the total. South Korea is ranked third at 4.6% (ISAPS, 2014).

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However, the greatest number of cosmetic surgery procedures per capita in the world is performed in South Korea, with more than 2,000 surgeons and 1,301 cosmetic surgery hospitals (ISAPS, 2014; NTS, 2015). The U.S. ranks fourth (Economist, 2013). Tam, Ng, Kim, Yeung, & Cheung (2012) found that 80% of Korean women showed interest in cosmetic surgery, and half of them had already undergone at least one procedure.

Compared to United States, South Korea is a collectivistic country, where people's self-image is formed only in comparison to others, and Koreans are said to be very self-conscious about their looks (Cross & Markus, 1991). One might walk around the streets of Seoul, the capital of Korea, and easily see Korean cosmetic-surgery advertising that contains provocative phrases such as "Where she had her rhinoplasty," "All the pretty girls know it," "I'm sorry, my daughter," or "My friend who suddenly got prettier... did she really just lose weight?" Phrases like these are commonly seen in public, playing with audiences' self-confidence and intensifying the sense of comparison already so common in Korean society.

Outdoor advertisements can be widely seen at bus and subway stations, both inside and outside of public vehicles, and on large billboards. A reality television show, sponsored by cosmetic-surgery hospitals, called "Let me in" (the pronunciation of 'me in' is the same as a Korean word meaning "beautiful person"), selects a winner and offers them free cosmetic surgery. A few months later, the winner, famous from the show, typically becomes the hospital's advertising model.

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Research on cosmetic surgery includes studying the motives behind consumers' decisions to undergo cosmetic surgery (Frederick, Lever, & Peplau, 2007; Park, Calogero, Harwin & DiRaddo, 2009; Sarwer, Wadden, Pertschuk & Whitaker, 1998; Sarwer & Crerand, 2004; Voelker & Pentina, 2011; Von Soest, Kvalem, Skolleborg & Roald, 2006), the related mental and physical health issues (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, Quinn & Zoino, 2006; Lirola & Chovanec, 2012;Von Soest, Kvalem, Roald & Skolleborg, 2009), the exposure of cosmetic surgery to teenagers whose minds and bodies are not yet mature enough to make decisions about surgeries (McGrath & Mukerji, 2000; Pearl & Weston, 2003; Zuckerman & Abraham, 2008), the influence of media (Mazzeo, Trace, Mitchell & Gow, 2007; Moon, 2015; Swami, 2009), and gender and racial issues affecting consumers' interest in cosmetic surgery (Brooks, 2010; Goodman, 1995; Gupta, 2012; Hunter, 2011; Lirola & Chovanec, 2012; Smirnova, 2012; Slevec & Tiggemann, 2010). Research has revealed that frequent exposure to media concerned with body image, a commonly-used tactic in cosmetic surgery advertising (Hennink-Kaminski & Reichert, 2011), has a great negative influence on the audience's mental health that may lead to eating disorders and body dissatisfaction, and creates a positive attitude toward cosmetic surgery (Mazzeo, Trace, Mitchell & Gow, 2007; Moon, 2015; Swami, 2009). Mazzeo, Trace, Mitchell & Gow (2009) argue that this influence seems especially strong among white Caucasian females and points out the need for international sampling for further study. Some studies on cosmetic surgery do find positive outcomes such as the one by Soest, Kvalem, Roald, & Skolleborg (2009) that argues that cosmetic surgery enhances people's self-esteem and helps them get over depression. Most studies focus on

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North American culture, and the lack of international studies demands additional research in this area. Thus, this research broadens the study beyond North America and focuses on cosmetic surgery advertising in Korea, one of the Asian countries with massive exposure to cosmetic surgery advertising and cosmetic surgery procedures.

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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Cosmetic Surgery

Cosmetic surgery is a type of plastic surgery that reforms normal shapes of the body to enhance one's appearance or self-esteem while plastic surgery is performed to reconstruct defects of body or function to enhance functionality, mental illness, trauma etc (Hennink-Kaminski, Reid, & King, 2010). In the United States, plastic surgery, the root of cosmetic surgery, expanded after the end of WWII. After the war, many suffered from horrid injuries and surgeons felt the need to develop a type of surgery that could restore patients' looks and functionality. Some questioned, however, whether it was ethical to perform unnecessary surgery purely for aesthetic reasons. The disciplines of psychology and psychiatry argued that mental health was as important as physical health and that cosmetic surgery could play a significant role in curing mental illness (Haiken, 1997; Sullivan, 2001). Thus, some physicians today consider unsatisfactory appearance as a kind of disease and perform cosmetic surgery to treat people with no other injury than anxiety, depression, and low-self-esteem issues, as well as traumatized patients with physical injuries (Askegaard, Gertsen & Langer, 2002; Haiken, 1997). Because cosmetic surgery is an optional procedure and does not produce health benefits, it became clear for surgeons working in this specialty that they had to find a way to attract patients. Therefore, cosmetic surgery advertising developed tactics like discounts and promotions, common methods used by commercial marketers in a highly competitive market

(Hennik-Kaminski, Reid & King, 2010; Sullivan, 2001). Historically, the American Medical Association (AMA), which enforces the Code of Medical Ethics, considered it unprofessional and unethical for medical professions to advertise their services, so it banned all advertising by physicians. From 1957 to 1976, however, it loosened this prohibition and held that physicians should not solicit patients but nonetheless permitted businesses to advertise a restricted amount of information, such as location, type of practice, business hours and contact information (Hennik-Kaminski & Reichert, 2011; Sullivan, 2001). In 1975, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) argued that this prohibition hampered the competitiveness of the market and in 1982 the Supreme Court ruled that the medical professions have the right to advertise as long as they state the truth and do not mislead the audiences.

Korea has adopted America's social structure in many areas including laws on cosmetic surgery advertising. Since the 1950s, medical advertising in Korea has been regulated (강민지 & 이경현, 2014). Until the 2000s Korean law restricted medical advertising, considered unnecessary and unethical, in its advertising object, content, objective and media type. The purpose of these regulations was to protect consumers, i.e. patients, and to protect competing medical organizations by preventing the development of too much competition. Since medicine was a profession that requires specialized knowledge and skilled techniques, it was important for consumers to be able to make rational decisions about medical services. Therefore, medical professions could only advertise in newspapers and magazines, a maximum of twice a month, and only in cases of opening or closing a business or informing patients about the relocation of practices. In

2003, however, the Korean FTC and the Ministry of Health and Welfare announced that the government had amended the medical law, allowing hospitals and medical professionals to advertise. Thus, it is now possible for Korean medical professionals to advertise on television and radio, including illustrations of the name of the business, its specialties, hours of operation, years of experience and a brief introduction of the surgical procedure. Consequently, audiences receive a massive amount of aggressive marketing from cosmetic-surgery hospitals everyday (박영진, 2015). Price promotions, before-and-after pictures, group discounts, and online advertising are tactics commonly used these days. Among the large amount of cosmetic surgery advertising, some researchers have argued that advertising may deliver misleading messages and create social problems, such as promoting distorted body images and targeting vulnerable audiences; therefore, more accurate guidelines for the cosmetic-surgery advertising may be called for (Adams, 2010; Borah, Rankin & Wey, 1999; Del Giudice & Yves, 2002; Gabriel et al., 1997; Mahé, Aymard & Dangou, 2003; Pitts-Taylor, 2007; Sarwer, Wadden, Pertschuk & Whitaker, 1998). A necessary first step is to identify the current strategies of Korean cosmetic-surgery advertisers.

Ethical issues in cosmetic surgery advertising

Since consumers have a limited number of sources of information about reliable cosmetic surgeons, they may rely instead on promotional tools such as advertising (Yu, Jeong, Baek & Joo, 2010). Some cosmetic-surgery advertising in both countries may mislead audiences, even though highest courts in the U.S. and Korea have ruled that physicians'

advertisements must be truthful and not misleading. Cosmetic-surgery advertising that promotes risky surgery may be deemed unethical because it violates medicine's most significant traditional value to "do no harm" (Morreim, 1988). Cosmetic surgery may produce physical harm such as bruises, pain, and in severe cases, even death. Thus, cosmetic surgery is often blamed for unethically exposing audiences to danger for which there is no medical justification. Advertising, the tool used to promote and create the demand for the surgery, also bears some ethical responsibility for this exposure (Morreim, 1988). Also advertising of cosmetic surgery may promise unrealistic results (Sullivan, 2010). Cosmetic-surgery advertisements may lure customers with before-and-after pictures and vague or ambiguous wording that seems to promise beautiful results. Neither a positive outcome from surgery nor beauty, however, can be realistically promised.

Cosmetic-surgery advertising may also pose a threat to health by distorting body images. Sarwer, Wadden, Pertschuk & Whitaker (1998) identified the relationship between body image and cosmetic surgery, and Hennink-Kaminski & Reichert (2011) argued that cosmetic-surgery advertising relies heavily on sexual appeal. More than 70% of U.S. advertisements featured naked models that were mostly white females. The problem with body-image-based cosmetic surgery advertising is that it may negatively affect people's health. Faced with the spread of unrealistic ideals of thinness, people may try to lose weight, resulting in eating disorders and body dissatisfaction. Promoting an unnatural skin tone, either light or dark, can lead to severe skin cancer, and idealizing certain facial and body types may lead to dissatisfaction, depression, and anxiety. These

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advertisements suggest that people should dislike their faces and bodies, and to remedy this dissatisfaction by doing something potentially harmful to their bodies. As a result, people may undergo risky surgeries that could cause bruises, pain, and other side effects.

Another significant ethical issue with cosmetic-surgery advertising is that it targets vulnerable audiences such as women and adolescents. First, women are considered vulnerable to cosmetic-surgery advertisings because of cultural ideals of femininity. Sontag (1997) argues that appearance and sexual attractiveness are important values for women, whereas men are freer from those values. Thus, many women focus daily on correcting perceived physical defects (Smith, 1990). This phenomenon is reflected in Korea; research supports the claim that women are more discriminated against based on their appearance than are men (강민지 & 이경현, 2014; 엄현신, 2007; 조재현, 2007). Accordingly, it is inevitable that women feel vulnerable to the promising words of cosmetic-surgery advertising, given the cultural circumstances that coerce them into aspiring to an unrealistic standard of beauty. Second, adolescents are also particularly vulnerable to the messages of cosmetic-surgery advertising because they are often especially sensitive about their body image and are self-conscious about their looks (McGrath & Mukerji, 2000). They are immature and therefore easily influenced by parents, peers and sociocultural influences like media messages, television characters and celebrities (Herbozo, Tanleff-Dunn, Gokee-Larose & Thompson, 2004). Due to adolescents' immature physical and psychological state, it is unethical to expose them to cosmetic-surgery advertising that can harm them both mentally and physically. This set of problems leads to the question of what is being said to the audience. Because of these

ethical issues in cosmetic surgery, this study uses Taylor's six-segment message strategy to determine what messages cosmetic surgery advertising delivers.

Taylor's Six-segment message strategy

Taylor's six-segment message strategy model has been used to examine the strategies in diverse areas such as health communication, new media communication, and studies of gender (1999). Communication messages can be categorized as informational or transformational (Carey, 1975). Informational messages (transmission) rely on a logical appeal, and transformational messages (ritual) are based in an emotional appeal (Puto & Wells, 1984). Based on this model and the FCB grid, Taylor classified strategies into six categories (1999): Ego, Social, Sensory, Routine, Acute need, and Ration.

Ego, social, and sensory appeals are placed on the right hand of the sphere and they use an emotional approach. Ego refers to a strategy that appeals to an audience's personal fantasy, self-image, or feeling of uniqueness. Social strategy associates the audience with a group or a community. It gives the audience a sense of belonging. Ego and social appeals are often used together because sometimes people depend on others in order to feel unique. The sensory strategy refers to a message's use of sensory information, such as color, music, or taste, suggesting the small pleasures in life. The right side of the wheel is entirely focused on emotional appeals.

Conversely, the left side of the wheel includes the ration, acute need, and routine appeals. Ration strategy uses logic to persuade the audience. It offers logical reasons, such as product benefits, features, and prices, to persuade the audience to purchase the

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advertised product or service. Acute need reflects a message that appeals to the consumer's immediate need for a product or service. Frequent brand exposure and brand familiarity will help consumers choose the advertised brand when they are in acute need of a product of its type. Lastly, routine is a strategy that appeals to consumers for the daily or regular use of its product or service. Inexpensive products or services, requiring a low involvement level on consumer's mind, generally use this strategy.

Many studies have applied Taylor's six-segment message strategy wheel to analyze the frequency and efficacy of advertising appeals including that of Ahn, Wu & Taylor (2013), who applied it to cosmetic-surgery advertising in the United States. Their analysis of 100 cosmetic surgeons' websites revealed that the two views of communication, informational and transformational, were equally distributed among samples. Interestingly, however, while ego, social, and sensory appeals were all used in the transformational hemisphere, only ration was used on the informational side of the wheel. Among ration, ego, social, and sensory, ration was the most commonly used strategy, which accounted for nearly half the total sample. Ego and sensory were the second-most-often used tactics, used among one out of four websites. This study follows the methodology of Ahn, Wu & Taylor (2013) to analyze the message strategies in Korean cosmetic surgery advertising.

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Research Questions

The primary purpose of this research is to identify strategies in South Korean cosmetic surgery websites. The study uses Taylor's six-segment message strategy wheel model to identify those strategies. In addition, it also analyzes the image to advance the given strategy. Thus, the research questions are:

> **RQ1**: What message strategies appear in Korean cosmetic surgery websites?
>
> **RQ2:** What image is used with the message appeal?

CHAPTER THREE
MATERIALS AND METHODS

Websites are effective tools for advertising and many surgeons use them to promote their businesses (McMillan, Hwang & Lee, 2003; Meyers, 2001; Yu, Jeong, Baek & Joo, 2010). The sampling method of Ahn, Wu & Taylor's (2013) study was also employed for this study. Their research covered 10 major cities in the US (New York; Washington; DC; Dallas; Philadelphia; Atlanta; Chicago; Los Angeles; Phoenix; Boston; and Detroit) and analyzed 100 websites. Researchers collected samples from ASPS, which provides surgeon information, contact information and websites. From there, 10 cosmetic-clinic websites per city were selected by random sampling. For this study, samples were collected from Seoul, a major city in South Korea. Initially, a total of 100 websites was chosen from among the many cosmetic clinics in Seoul.

As Ahn, Wu & Taylor (2013) did, this study used the first page of a website as the basis for the analysis, following the precedence of previous content analyses (Ahn, Wu & Taylor, 2013; Bucy, Lang, Potter & Grabe, 1999; Ha & James, 1998). They suggested that the entrance to a website is a significant factor for the audience in the decision of whether to continue browsing or to stop. Thus, the first page of each of the 100 Korean cosmetic surgery clinic websites was examined, with the exception of the cases where the first page was a visual aid or guide that directed the audience to the main page of the website. Pop ups were removed to analyze the actual first screen of each website. Each website, however, contained more than one visual and text that advertised the business's services. Even though the quantity of selected websites was limited to 100, each image on

the first page was considered a respective sample. As a result, 600~700 samples were initially produced. The dominant image with text from the website was difficult to determine in several websites; many websites showed large images in slideshows, so it was impossible to choose one objectively out of a collection of identically sized slideshow pictures. Thus, the sample was reduced to 48. Using sponsor links of South Korea's biggest Internet search engine Naver, 48 sample websites were selected. Keywords included different areas of Seoul with 'Cosmetic surgery hospital'. Dominant images were collected from each sample. The 48 sample websites provided 261 images for the analysis. These samples were coded according to the codebook, which used Ahn, Wu & Taylor's work (2013) with little modifications. Two coders, who were fluent in both English and Korean, worked separately to assess the data with the codebook. An intercoder reliability check was conducted after training and achieved acceptable agreement of 86% (Cohen's Kappa).

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics were used to determine which message strategy was the most frequently used in South Korean cosmetic surgery advertising.

RQ1: What message strategies appear in Korean cosmetic surgery websites?

In 261 images from 48 websites, ration strategy was the most frequently used strategy. It appeared in 112 images, which constituted 42.9% of the images. The strategy entailed the provision of a lot of information regarding the surgeon's skills or technology, with emphasis on safety. Ego strategy followed with 97 images (37.2%), then social strategy with 33 images (12.6%). Images that fell under ego strategy mainly did not offer much informative copy regarding the procedures. In comparison, those that employed social strategy featured copy that engaged in comparisons and showed celebrities or endorsers. Only 10 images (less than 4% of the total) employed sensory strategy. Then came routine strategy and acute need strategy, the least used strategies: Each one applied to less than 2% of all the samples. Many images that emphasized human models' body parts were categorized as employing sensory strategy, with copy including descriptions of how some body parts appeared or felt (for instance, "slim" and "soft"). Images that focused on quick and easy procedures were categorized as employing routine strategy, while those that focused on reconstructive procedures were categorized as employing acute need strategy. The proportion that accounted for transformational strategies (which included ego, social,

Figure 1. Examples of each message strategy in Korean cosmetic surgery websites. This figure shows how each message strategy was illustrated in Korean cosmetic surgery websites.

Table 1

Message strategies used in Korean cosmetic surgery websites

Communication message	Message strategy	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Transformational	Ego	97	37.2	37.2
	Social	33	12.6	49.8
	Sensory	10	3.8	53.6
Informational	Routine	5	1.9	55.6
	Acute need	4	1.5	57.1
	Ration	112	42.9	100.0
	Total	261	100.0	

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and sensory strategies) was 53.6%, and that which accounted for informational strategies (which included routine, acute need, and ration strategies) was 46.4%. The frequencies of these two larger strategies (informational and transformational) were similar, but ego strategy and ration strategy took the bulk of the two larger strategies' sphere.

RQ2: What image is used with the message appeal?

To answer the second research question, three aspects of each image were analyzed. First was the main model of the image, second was the attractiveness of the model, and third was the popularity of the model.

The most frequently used dominant images were those of consumer models (72.8%) that appeal to consumer with their appearance and those of medical or healthcare models, which were pictures of hospitals and doctors (23.8%). Of the images with consumer models, those which had only female consumer models constituted 87.8%, those which had only male consumer models constituted 5%, and those with both male and female consumer models constituted 6.8%. Moreover, of the 186 images that showed consumer models, 150 showed models whose appearances were appealing. In other words, they could easily have been considered to indicate the appearances of people after they had undergone cosmetic surgery procedures (80.6%). Furthermore, 35 images directly revealed before and after pictures of their models (18.8%). Only one website used a before image alone; it did this to show how unappealing fat tummies were and to recommend liposuction. When they showed appealing models, business websites were likely to use celebrities. One out of five (20.8%) websites used celebrities as endorsers.

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Many of the images that featured consumer models used ego strategy most frequently, while those that featured medical models used ration strategy most frequently. Accordingly, the after pictures of consumer models used ego strategy the most, while the before and after pictures used ego and ration strategies equally. Interestingly, the one and only before picture, out of 261 samples, was from an image that employed acute need message strategy.

Unlike the findings of Ahn, Wu, and Taylor (2013), these findings indicated that there was almost no image of nature on Korean cosmetic websites. The former study found that the frequent use of natural objects on American cosmetic surgeons' websites emphasized natural results. As for Korean websites, they tended to use the word 'natural' rather than images of objects such as leaves or flowers.

Table 2

Contents featured in website image

Content	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Female consumer model	167	64.0	64.0
Male consumer model	10	3.8	67.8
Medical model (Doctor/Hospital)	62	23.8	91.6
Other	9	3.4	95.0
Female and male consumer model	13	5.0	100.0
Total	261	100.0	

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to explore current South Korean cosmetic surgery website advertising using Taylor's six-segment message strategy wheel. It ultimately showed similar results to the study by Ahn, Wu, and Taylor (2013).

Ahn, Wu, and Taylor (2013) found that the most frequent message strategies that the websites of American cosmetic surgeons employed were ration, ego, and sensory strategies. In the South Korean case, the most frequently used message strategies were also ration and ego strategies. A difference between the two studies was that sensory strategy was not as popular on South Korean cosmetic surgery websites as it was on American surgeons' websites. Cultural difference could explain this. Ahn, Wu, and Taylor (2013) revealed that the use of sensory strategy often involved body parts such as the breast or waist, thus promoting one of the popular cosmetic surgery procedures in the United States. However, most South Korean cosmetic surgery procedures focused on the face and head (for instance, eyelid surgery or rhinoplasty) (ISAPS, 2014). Breast augmentation or abdominoplasty, which was the most frequently performed procedure in the United States, was not as popular in South Korea (ISAPS, 2014). This explains why South Korean websites used sensory strategy to a lesser extent and supports Ahn's, Wu's, and Taylor's argument that sensory strategy accompanied promotions for body part surgery.

Like the findings in Ahn's, Wu's, and Taylor's study (2013), consumer model was the most featured image in South Korean cosmetic surgery websites. Out of 186

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images that included consumer models, 91 used ego strategy, while 51 used ration strategy to appeal to the audience. When images employed ego strategy, attractive models who were assumed to have undergone cosmetic surgery were very often apparent. Images used ration strategy to persuade the audience by showing the before and after pictures of the consumer models or by explaining the procedures through which the attractive models got their looks. Social strategy was the next frequently used strategy after ration strategy, and ego strategy was mostly used in the comparison of one's appearance with others'. Another instance of social strategy involved the use of popular celebrities. Routine strategy and acute need strategy were only used with consumer models, and they were used very rarely (3.4%). Moreover, medical models, and their new high-tech operation devices were featured frequently. Most of the time, the relevant strategy was rational strategy. However, a few images of doctors and hospitals used social strategy to emphasize care for the patients.

The analysis demonstrated that South Korean cosmetic surgery websites applied various message strategies. Moreover, regardless of the message strategy used, it appears that advertising may produce a greater demand for cosmetic surgery. Ration strategy provides information about a given cosmetic surgery procedure. It shares information such as the hospital's technology, the doctors' experience, and the advantages of the surgical procedure (for instance, no pain, no bleeding, and a short procedure and recovery time). However, more than half of the websites used other strategies (57.1%) instead of ration strategy (42.9%). Since the sources were limited in the cosmetic surgery field, consumers tend to rely on advertising (Yu, Jeong, Baek, & Joo, 2010).

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Implications

This study has implications for researchers in academia and for those in the practical field. It broadened the use of Taylor's six-segment message strategy wheel in the field of cosmetic surgery and successfully applied it in international studies. It also applied the model to online settings by capturing every first page of the sample websites. Furthermore, it tested a way in which web content could be analyzed. Where the practical field is concerned, the study's outcome shows which message strategies are currently in frequent use. The study provides guidance on the strategies that practitioners used and on the images that accompanied the strategies.

Limitations & Future Studies

This research has some limitations and suggests ideas for future research. First, the size of the sample is fairly small. The total number of images analyzed was 261, but the initial number of websites selected was 48. Although a systematic sample was drawn, there are more than 400 cosmetic surgery hospitals in the Gangnam area alone (and this is a small part of South Korea). Thus, future studies may use bigger samples to analyze websites.

Second, this study analyzed the dominant images on the surgeons' websites. However, there was more content to analyze on the websites. Observation during sampling revealed that South Korean cosmetic surgery websites had many pop-up ads upon entry and content that pushed strong promotions such as those regarding price information, offers to bring a friend and get one free, and discounts for certain groups or

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situations (such as graduating students or consumers born during certain months). Examining the pop-up ads and other website content is another area worthy of research.

Third, in South Korea, cosmetic surgery advertising appears in many places. Television, radio, billboards, social media, and cell phones are all channels for cosmetic surgery advertising. Websites are promotional tools that require consumers to come to the source, but television, radio, billboards, social media, and cell phones are media that expose advertising to people even if they do not want it. Therefore, given that these media constitute very different environments from websites, it would be interesting to see what strategies they used.

Another avenue that this study opens up for research is the extension of the present research results with a survey or qualitative interview. The sample acquired from this study can be used to ask participants which strategies attracted them or helped them make decisions. It is obvious that ration strategy provides the most information, but other strategies may affect people to a greater extent. Thus, efforts to extend this research would involve participants and their thoughts on cosmetic surgery advertising.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX: Coding Book

Creative Message Strategy	
1. Ego • Appeal to self-actualization of consumer image • Image-based execution with little or no factual information	Example: • Model picture • "Because confidence suits you"
2. Social • Valuing others' thoughts • Emphasizing significant others, such as family, partner, etc. • Use of celebrity endorsers	Example: • "Our patients are connected! Being part of 'our family' means you can reach us" • "You deserved to be treated like family"
3. Sensory • Five senses emphasized • Sensory gratification	Example: • Images of pleasing body parts (e.g., breast, waist, etc.)
4. Routine • Emphasizing habits • Appeal to convenience and trivial interests	Example: • "Within one hour (lunch time), you'll notice significant improvement"
5. Acute need • Requiring immediate action • Serving a cue in an urgent situation • Cases of re-operations	Example: • Disfigurement from automobile accidents leads to need for procedure
6. Ration • Providing a large amount of information (safety, surgeon technique, high tech devices, price, etc.) • Emphasizing competitive advantages	Example: • Detailed information about the surgeon and his/her service

Used image
1. Female Consumer model: Face and body parts of female models 2. Male Consumer model: Face and body parts of male models 3. Medical model: Images related to doctor, hospital's exterior and interior, and surgical instruments 4. Other 5. Male and Female Consumer model: Both male and female models used together

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Used model
1. Before: Pictures of unappealing person before surgery 2. After: Pictures of appealing person after surgery 3. Before-After: Pictures that compared a model's before and after picture after he/she went through surgery

VITA

Gawon Kim was born on April 7th, 1990 in Seoul, South Korea to parents 김길남 and 이혜자. She spent her childhood in Korea and attended schools there. After graduating Han-Young Foreign Language high school, she entered Kookmin University where she was given an opportunity to attend Texas State University for a year as an exchange student. She came back to Korea afterwards, graduated from Kookmin University with a Bachelor's degree in Advertising and decided to go back to U.S. to continue her study. She began her Master's program in the School of Advertising and Public Relations of the University of Tennessee in 2014, with concentration in advertising and plans to graduate in May 2016. Gawon will attend Louisiana State University to pursue her Ph.D. degree in August 2016 in hopes to fulfill her dream of getting a career in the academia.