

The Study of the Advertising Media Effect Models in Japan:

PART II. The Academic Perspective of the Practice Operational Model

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Abstract

A very famous saying from the end of the 19th century attributed to Lord Leverhume, founder of the Lever Brothers Company, is, "Half of the money I spend on advertising is wasted. The trouble is I don't know which half." Even now many advertisers still consider how to invest advertising funds effectively and reduce the wasteful part of their advertising expenditures. Because the greatest portion of money is spent buying advertising time and space, media-related affairs are becoming more important in the advertising industry, regardless of the market. Media related professionals have achieved a high status in the advertising industry, and the current practices of media buying houses reflect advertisers' needs for professional media planning and buying services. Based upon the need to integrate and apply limited advertising resources in a way that produces the desired media effect, media practitioners dedicated themselves to developing media effect models in the 20th century.

Through a combination of theory and practice, this study analyzes media effect models in Japan from an academic perspective. In Part 1, the underlying philosophy of each practice operational model is discussed. Finally, in Part 2 these models are critiqued according to their effectiveness.

Key Words: Advertising, Media Planning, Media Planning Model.

In Part 1 of this research, three media planning models in the Japanese advertising industry were presented. In this paper, Part 2, a critique of these models is presented. Here is a comparison of the three media planning models discussed in Part 1.

Data Analysis II

1. The Basic Elements of the 3 Media Effect Models

Dentsu, Hakuhodo, and Asatsu DK are the three greatest advertising agencies in Japan. Both Dentsu and Hakuhodo have been in business for over 100 years, and all three of these advertising agencies' capitals are over 132 billion yen. In fact, these three advertising agencies compete with each other in Japan and abroad. Dentsu is famous because of its detailed integrated communication power, Hakuhodo is well-known because of its consumer research,

and Asatsu DK is famous due to its brand value creativity. All of them emphasize their media planning abilities and their applied media selection tools. These three agencies have developed their own media planning model systems operating in Japan. These are DiaLog (made by Dentsu); MACROS, MMMixer, and Super HAAP (developed by Hakuhodo); and DK MPSS (created by Asatsu). The basic functions of these three systems are discussed in Part 1.

The entire name of DiaLog is the Dentsu Intelligent System for Accountable and Logical Solutions. It is an optimal and effective media plan generating system. The structure of this integrated system consists of an optimizer and a simulator. The multimedia optimizer is applicable to television, radio, magazines, newspapers, OOH, and the Internet. Moreover, the simulator is an advertising effectiveness forecasting model.

There are three models for media selection at Hakuhodo; they are MACROS, MMMixer, and Super HAAP. The main function of MACROS is to evaluate the advertising vehicle. Likewise, the major task of MMMixer is determining the media mix and budget allocation. In addition, Hakuhodo's Super HAAP stems from HAAP (Hakuhodo Approach to Advertising Planning). The two key functions of the Super HAAP are optimization and simulation. There are lots of subsystems in Super HAAP that are distinguished by their media attributes. These are Media Mix HAAP, TV HAAP, Radio HAAP, SHIMBUN HAAP, and Magazine HAAP.

MPSS is embedded in the structure of brand value, which is the main approach of Asatsu DK. MPSS is a media planning assistant system, and it assists the media planner in developing a media strategy, conducting a pre-evaluation, monitoring the execution of the advertising, and post-evaluating the media plan execution. The systems of MPSS are divided into 2 groups, individual media and multimedia.

Although the three advertising agencies have their own particular approach regarding media planning in advertising practice, there are also the same basic elements in these different media planning systems. Basically, the basic elements of the media effect models are discussed as follows.

(1) Audience and Consumer Databases

Undoubtedly, these media planning models are based on complete databases. The databases provide relevant data, such as the purchase and usage of commodities, media contact, and individual attributes, as the basis of media research analysis. When reviewing these media planning models, the common ground is the use of the Video Research ACR database. Basically, the ACR is the raw data for the databases of these media planning models. A cross-section analysis of the ACR raw data can display the interactional relationships between the audience, the media, and the commodity. Therefore, the ACR is the comparative foundation of the media planning operations and is also the data source of media research in Japan.

Besides the ACR, there are also other media planning data sources used by these three advertising agencies in Japan. Generally, these data sources have been developed specifically by the three advertising agencies for their clients' brands or products or as competitive information monitoring changing circumstances in Japan. The A-BMR of the ADK is a good example. Hence, the media planning models are not built in the air; the complete database is the foundation stone for operations in practice.

(2) Computer Operation Platforms

The development of computer systems for use in media planning operations is natural for the media planner. Due to the popularization of Microsoft's Windows Operation System, the media planning is often operated on the Window Platform. The analysis of the media circum-

stances and vehicles, the practice of the media planning, and evaluation of media effect are all operated at the same time. The media planner needs only to use a mouse to click a button on the screen of the computer, selecting the variables used in media planning. The computer calculates the order of the related media index and displays the result in table or graph form. In addition, the output can be transformed into a document for report writing. Moreover, these media planning models also can be run using a single database or integrated with another system through the network of the computer. Each of these three advertising agencies has its own powerful mega-server; the media planner can retrieve any information he needs using his personal computer connected with the server. In fact, the computer makes the complicated process of the media planning as simple as possible and performs all the complex calculations. The media planner needs only to operate this computer system skillfully with his or her media planning knowledge and past experience.

(3) Media Selection Optimizations

Basically, optimization is the ideal objective of media selection, and now this is easy to achieve through the use of high level statistics generated by the computer. The optimization of media selection means to get a perfect balance between the cost of advertising and its effectiveness. In other words, there is little or no waste of the limited media budget allocation.

In the past, the media planner selected media using his or her experience, but now the media planner can obtain relevant data to prove that his or her media selection is already optimized. These three media effect models also provide the mechanism of media selection optimization for single or multiple media planning. The media planner needs only to set specific objectives of optimization for his or her media selection; the media planning systems will then supply different media planning solutions according to different conditions. Then, the media planner adjusts one of the solutions as a reference for his or her media selection. Certainly, no one media selection plan is made by computer optimization only. The media planner must weigh certain conditions of optimization in light of the present media situation.

Obviously, the concept of the optimization is easy to accept for most clients; they at least believe the media planner does not conduct media selection arbitrarily. In fact, media selection optimization is a common standard used to evaluate media selection between the advertising agency and its clients.

(4) Media Effect Simulations

In addition to the core function of these three media effect models, a media effect simulation is fundamentally a condensed and convenient presentation of relevant advertising and media information revealed to the advertising clients yet kept secret from the competition. Clients are always curious about the return of their advertising investments. As mentioned previously, product sales alone cannot be the only index of the effect of advertising because clients are difficult to be persuaded to invest in an advertising campaign without any anticipated effectiveness. Therefore, advertising agencies make efforts to develop concrete indices to display the effectiveness of advertising investments for their clients. One function of these indices is to convince clients to accept the suggestions of the media planner, and the other is to have a benchmark to evaluate the effectiveness of the advertising campaign.

Although these three media effect models use different methods for conducting media effect simulations, they can still generate tangible indices for single or multiple media planning. These indices are of 3 types, as follows:

- Media Contact Indices:
 - Reach, Frequency, Duplicated Reach
- Advertising Contact Indices:
 - Reach, Frequency, Duplicated Reach
- Psychological Effect Indices:
 - Advertising Awareness, Advertising Comprehension, Brand Awareness, Brand Comprehension, Purchase Intention

While these indices certainly simulate media effect, they do not take advertising message effect into account. However, the result of a media effect simulation can be seen as a reference for media planning practice.

(5) Integration with Other Advertising Operation Systems

In current advertising practice, media planning is hard to conduct independently without considering the other operations of advertising. Not only should the media planner see the big picture of the entire advertising operation, but also the other people in the advertising agency should understand the operation of media planning practice. So, these three media planning systems serve more than just the media planner. The relevant indices that these systems offer can assist the entire advertising operation system. After the operation systems are integrated, these media analysis optimizing tools are just one part of the planning systems in these three advertising agencies.

2. The Differences Between the Media Effect Models

Although these three media operation models are very similar to each other, there are three differences that exist between these three media operation models.

(1) Database Sources

Beside the raw data of the ACR, each agency owns a database source. These three advertising agencies provide relevant, detailed information specifically for their clients about advertising campaigns for the clients' brands and their competitors. When targeting the Tokyo area, these three advertising agencies repeatedly conduct surveys and compare the data with the existing ACR data source. Hence, these different database sources influence the characteristics of the three media models.

(2) Individual Media Planning Programs

As mentioned before, these three media models also include individual media planning programs as well as multiple media planning systems. These three advertising agencies offer the service of media planning to their clients for some major media. However, it is obvious that Asatsu DK, in contrast with Dentsu and Hakuhodo, seems to attach more importance to television media planning.

(3) Media Effect Simulation Indices

Lastly, these three media planning models can provide media effect simulation indices for an established media plan. Here is the comparison of the media effect simulation indices offered by the three media planning models.

Basically, Table 3 illustrates the differences of the media effect simulation indices between the three advertising agencies. Although these three media planning models all supply media effect indices about media contact, advertising contact, and psychological effect, the

Table 3 A Comparison of the Media Effect Simulation Indices

Indices/Agencies	Dentsu	Hakuhodo	ADK
Media Contact Indices	Reach Avg. Frequency Frequency Distribution TRP (=Reach + Avg. Frequency) Duplicated Reach	Reach Effective Reach	Reach
Advertising Contact Indices	Ad Reach	Ad Reach	Ad Reach
Psychological Effect Indices	Ad Comprehension Brand Awareness (aided level) Brand Comprehension	Ad Comprehension Brand Awareness Brand Comprehension Purchase Intention	Ad Comprehension Brand Comprehension Purchase Intention

Dentsu model seems to emphasize media contact indices but does not refer to purchase intention in the psychological effect indices. In fact, these media effect simulation indices are based on an enormous database created from basic surveys of the audience and consumer. These three advertising agencies have their own survey methods which support the media effect simulation systems. Therefore, the differences in these media effect simulation indices reflect not only the differences of the standard of media effect evaluation but also the differences of the reference database. Moreover, these differences display the differences of media effect definitions between the three advertising agencies in Japan.

3. Applications of These Media Effect Models

As mentioned in the literature review, any instrument that exists in the advertising industry always has as its value the value of its application for the clients. A media effect model is not an exception. The application of the media effect models are discussed in the following sections.

(1) Competitive Niche

Competition is very intense in the advertising industry, regardless of the economic conditions. Therefore, advertising agencies always make efforts to offer advanced services for their clients. These media planning models are also competitive niches for these three advertising agencies, especially during the current economic depression in Japan. Under the depression, clients are highly concerned about the efficacy of their advertising investments. Because the media plan encompasses a great portion of the advertising budget, these advertising agencies naturally should provide the relevant logical reasoning regarding the media selection plan for their clients. In order to compete with other the agencies, each of these three advertising agencies individually develops its media planning operation system to correlate with the media planning services they offer. Under the premise of efficiency and the effectiveness, these three advertising agencies operate their media planning systems for their clients in Japan.

(2) Quantitative Management of Advertising Investment

Most advertising clients spend lots of money on advertising campaigns every year. In addition to the sales of their goods, they are mostly concerned with the actual impact of their advertising investments. However, the circumstances around an advertising campaign are complicated, and there are lots of uncontrollable variables that exist in the market. It is difficult for most advertising agencies to offer relevant, quantitative data indicating the actual

contribution of the advertising campaign. The media planning models seem to be the best solution for these advertising agencies to conduct quantitative management of advertising investments for their clients. Basically, the media planner can use the media planning system to offer several media selection suggestions and display the possible media effect of the advertising investment for his or her client. Through this media planning mechanism, the media planner becomes an investment analyst in the advertising market. The related media effect indices are the best indicators for the successful impact of advertising investments. When advertising investment can be counted in quantitative terms, the advertising budget is not only an additional cost for the goods but also a long-term investment in brand reputation.

(3) Standardization of the Media Planning Operation

Reviewing these three media planning operation systems, one could find that media planning practice is already standardized in Japan. Seen in the selection of a relevant database, the media selection optimization, and the media effect simulation, these three media planning models display common elements of computerization in Japan. These models have simplified the complicated process of media planning in the advertising industry and provide the standard of operation practice for media planners.

Moreover, the media planners can use these media planning systems to communicate with their clients about media selection issues. Obviously, these media planning systems have become the basic media planning practice tools in Japan. These media planning models integrate the many miscellaneous media planning procedures into a single operation platform. Even a junior media planner can quickly become familiar with the media planning operation through these media planning systems.

4. Critiques of the Media Effect Models

In light of the above discussion about the media planning models, some critiques about the models follow.

(1) Instrumental Rationality

As mentioned above, these media planning models have standardized media planning operations and provide the standard for evaluating media effect. These models have the implication of instrumental rationality, a thinking process that is not influenced by personal emotion. Reason alone searches for the best interest under cautious consideration conducted without personal prejudice of the advantages and disadvantages of various factors. A synonym for rationality is objectivity. Instrumental rationality means the instrument is the scale of judgment. When people use the instrument to evaluate the subject, the result of the evaluation does not depend on personal conjecture or fleeting imagination. Therefore, these three advertising agencies have developed these media planning models as instruments for media planning using the principle of instrumental rationality. When media planners operate these media planning systems during media planning practice, the media effect simulation is based on the instrumental rationality. Finally, their clients can also make decisions relying on the underlying logic of these systems.

(2) Concretization of Media Planning Procedural Knowledge

Most of the knowledge in advertising practice is procedural knowledge. This kind of knowledge is mostly learned from experience. Hence, the professional experience is especially emphasized in the advertising industry. The skill of media planning is the integration of relevant media operation knowledge. Most of the textbooks about media planning offer

more content knowledge than procedural knowledge, so programs in academic schools can only provide students with the rough concepts about media practice. Sometimes the students have difficulty experiencing the reality of media planning practice from textbooks or lessons in class.

Fundamentally, these media planning models are the concretization of media planning procedural knowledge. Although these media planning models are merely instruments for the media planning practice, they do encompass the whole gamut of media planning procedures. These media planning systems can readily be used to simulate different media selection mixes step by step, and media effects are visible after the simulation. Therefore, these media planning models are representations of media planning practice, and they are a living media planning textbook for media planners.

However, there are some shortcomings in these media planning models. These weaknesses are discussed below.

(3) Definition of Media Effect

Every instrument has its limitations, and these media planning models are not exceptions. As mentioned in the literature, there are advantages and disadvantages in any model, and this paper sheds light on problems in the framework of the media planning models. Essentially, these media planning models contain the function for the media effect simulation, and they all have their own definitions of the media effect. The media effect simulation indices define the media effect in three parts: media contact effect, advertising contact effect, and psychological effect. Generally, there is no controversy that the media contact effect is essentially the media effect. Obviously, these media planning models also consider the psychological effect in the media effect as well. However, this basic hypothesis seems to overestimate the real effect of media selection. In fact, the advertising effect equals the message effect multiplied by the media effect. In addition to the media contact effect, the two other media effects, the advertising effect and the psychological effect, are also influenced by the message effect. It is unreasonable to simulate the media effect without considering the message effect.

(4) Creativity in Media Planning

These three media planning models are convenient tools for a media planner to conduct media planning practice. These models also serve the needs of media planning operations and provide the standard of media planning for media planners. When these new operation instruments appeared, the thinking process of media planning was changed. In actuality, media planning is not only a science of analytic instruments but also an art requiring creativity on the part of the media planner. Creativity always comes from the breaking the existing rules and this obviously goes against the operation of media planning models. The optimization of media selection is based completely on quantitative data. Though these media planning models emphasize (and may even overemphasize) quantitative data analysis, sometimes the creativity of media planning comes from the inspiration of the media planner without reference to quantitative data. Sometimes a media planner's creativity comes from the consideration of the message content. If media planners depend upon media planning systems too much, media plans would end up being very similar due to the media planning models operation system.

(5) Differences Between Reality and Simulations

While these media planning models are able to offer elegant optimizations of media selection based on media effect simulations, in fact these media effect simulations come from analyses of data from the past. This means that the media effect simulations are a represen-

tation of reality, and differences exist between reality and the simulations.

The circumstances of the media are always changing, and the audience and the consumer are unpredictable. Databases used by these media planning models are composed of data about the past behaviors of the audience or the consumer. The media effects simulated by these media planning models are unable to completely reflect every possible condition that could happen in the future. Therefore, a media effect simulation is a kind of supposition about future reality. A post-evaluation is still needed to compare the difference between a simulation and reality. Nonetheless, media effect simulations are still useful for media planners in making media selections. However, the media planner should recognize the difference between a simulation and reality, and he or she should have some reservations about media plans suggested by the media planning models.

Conclusion

1. Conclusion Overview

As discussed in the literature review, this research is an exploration of the media planning models from an academic perspective. In this conclusion, insights from the three media planning models will be presented. Then, suggestions for academics and practitioners are indicated, and limitations in the research are also discussed.

(1) Academic Perspectives of the Media Planning Operation Models

As seen in the analysis, these three media planning models in Japan conform to the needs of media planning operations. As mentioned in the literature, the orientation is for them to be new application tools in media planning. The models are related to advertising strategy, advertising measurement, audience data (viewer data / media measurement), and branding / brand equity. Besides being media planning aids, they are specific measurement tools for the media effect. Their focus is the measurement of the media effect and the results of media planning. Even though at the moment the applications of these media planning models are generally limited to immediate practice, these media planning models simplify the procedure of audience information processing. They positively affect the work of the media planner, and advertising campaigns are based on the results of media planning operations. The results of these media planning models are the input for branding or advertising.

It goes without saying that the attributes of the media planning models discussed above possess all the characteristics of advertising practice. Basically, academicians are concerned with general theories about advertising and conduct research about advertising response, affect, and attitudes. Much of this research may apply only to theory and not necessarily to current practice. Nonetheless, this research starts from an academic perspective and intends to advance the understanding of media planning operation systems. After the examining these three media planning models, this research project has analyzed the structure of these media planning models, has compared the similarities and the differences among the three media planning models in Japan, and then has proposed applications and related critiques about the models.

From an academic perspective, these three media planning models demonstrate the potential of the application of procedural knowledge and enlighten academics about important aspects of media planning practice. These media planning models are not just magic tricks media planning practitioners use for hoodwinking their clients in the advertising industry. There are many relevant ideas included in these media planning operation systems. They

deserve serious consideration and further study from academic researchers in order to provide understanding of relevant theories for media planning in the advertising industry.

(2) Learning from the Experience of the Media Planning Models in Japan

These three media planning models are not simply constructed out of thin air; there is a lot of thought put behind these models. These models especially seem to be the paradigm of advertising operation practice in the 21st century. Advertising is a business combining creativity and science, so it is an interdisciplinary industry using a broad base of knowledge. As a result of the development of computer operation systems, many kinds of information technology are applied to advertising practice. Information technology facilitates the integration of advertising operations, and it has become easy to access relevant information from different disciplines at the same time in the advertising industry. These media planning models are the best tools for addressing the conditions described above.

Actually, there are three key points that can be learned from the experience of these 3 media planning models in Japan. Firstly, the Japanese advertising industry attaches great importance to data. Diligent efforts can be seen in data collecting, data processing, and data integration. Besides collecting ACR data, these three advertising agencies have dedicated themselves to trying to know the audience and the consumer as well as possible through detailed data collection. Therefore, these substantial data sources have become the basis of advertising research and are the foundations of the media planning models.

Secondly, the three advertising agencies have individually developed their media planning models while trying to reduce possible influences from other uncertain factors in the media planning process. In the meantime, these media planning models have also become their niches in competition with the other agencies. Through these media planning operation systems, the agencies and their clients are able to manage media practice, reducing unnecessary controversies in the gray area of media selection. This means that the three advertising agencies in Japan already have a reasoned logical approach to media planning practice. This logical reasoning, which is acceptable to the agencies and their clients, has become the new operation standard for media planning in the advertising industry.

Thirdly, these three media planning models can provide actual media effect indices that explain the potential effectiveness of media plans for the clients. These media effect indices also include the psychological effect of media plans. These impressive indicators come from relevant research data accumulated year to year. Although this research raised some questions about the application of these psychological effect indices, the media effect simulations have made much progress in media planning operations by putting advertising effect theories into practice.

2. *Suggestions from This Research*

In the following sections, this research offers some suggestions for both academic researchers and practitioners.

(1) Suggestions for Academic Researchers

Many academic researchers neglect the progress of advertising operation know-how in the advertising industry when they conduct the advertising research. For most of them the main research consideration is theory construction. As mentioned in the literature review, academics and practitioners have different orientations. In reality, advertising theory must always relate to advertising practice. Differences only exist in the perspectives about advertising. As a result, the following are two suggestions for academics.

First, the field of media planning related operations is a new research area in advertising theory. Researchers should enthusiastically explore theories related to the media effect. Second, there are lots of advertising related experiences that can be learned from advertising practice in Japan. Even under the current economic depression there are many well constructed operational systems in the Japanese advertising industry. The media planning models are just the one example. These three advertising agencies possess great knowledge that can be a plentiful research source for academics.

(2) Suggestions for Practitioners

For practitioners this research also proposes the following three suggestions. First, these media planning models attempt to provide definitions of the media effect. In fact, there are lot of controversies surrounding these supposed media effects. It is hard to isolate the media effect without considering the advertising message effect especially when the media itself also is a part of the message. Moreover, the media is not only the message vehicle; the media itself has an effect on the audience's attitude toward the advertising itself and to the brand. How to measure these subtle media effects is also a challenge to the media researcher. Second, media planning models are necessary tools used by the media planner when facing competition in the advertising industry and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of advertising investments. However, the media planner's intelligence is a more competitive tool than these media planning systems because media creativity has an advantage over data analysis. The insight of media planning comes from a well-prepared human mind, not a computer analysis report. Third, a media effect simulation is not reality. Gaps still exist between the simulation and reality. How to close this gap is an important issue for the media planner. Any predictive hypothesis has inevitable error; the point is how to minimize this error. Practitioners still need to work to provide solutions to this issue.

3. Limitations of This Research

Any research always has its limitations, and this research is not an exception. These limitations are not so much excuses for the errors in the research as they are starting points for the next research project.

(1) The Standpoint of This Research

Because this research is a primary survey about these 3 media planning models, its findings are not intended to be all encompassing. Sometimes the purpose of academic research is to provide just a general understanding. For this reason practitioners are often suspicious of the practical value of academic research. While there are lots of concepts about the media planning models in this research, the substantial operation procedure of media planning model construction needs involvement on the part of media planning professionals.

(2) Limitation of Related Information About These Media Planning Models

Japanese advertising enterprises are much like castles. It is extremely difficult to have access to their operation systems and employees because these are their competitive niches among the other advertising agencies. Therefore, there are no published reports comparing advertising operation systems in Japan. The relevant information provided by these advertising agencies is limited. So, researchers need to select the information to be considered in the research by carefully using research ethics. Therefore, a researcher is only able to observe some general characteristics about media planning models and develop concepts about these media planning models using limited information. How to obtain the trust of these advertising

agencies is an integral part of any advanced research in the future.

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