

Effects of Culture in Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This study is the effects of culture in Advertising. Advertising is a marketing communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell a product, service or idea. Sponsors of advertising are typically businesses wishing to promote their products or services. Advertising is differentiated from public relations in that an advertiser pays for and has control over the message. Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, Keywords: Effects, culture, advertising.

arts, laws, customs, capabilities and habits of the individuals in these groups. Advertising is a non-personal form of promotion that is delivered through selected media outlets that, under most circumstances, require the marketer to pay for message placement. Finally, advertising might not even promote choice after all. By subtly manipulating its audience, it may in fact stifle choice. Much advertising is subliminal, drip feed, all about creating positive associations without prompting conscious thought.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising may be one of the most important marketing tools available to corporate sector today but it is certainly not the most ethical one. The reason advertising has come under attack from various sections of the society is because of the images it projects and the way they ultimately affect all of us. If we carefully analyze advertising campaigns and techniques, we would notice that advertising is intricately connected with the principle of consumption. Consumers would buy anything that advertisements say is good for them including culture and values. In much the same way as a consumer would be forced to buy a product, media today is being used to effectively transform cultural values and sell images that are often misleading. Associate a good-looking guy with a cigarette and you send a message to the public- smoking is the "in" thing. Even though we all know smoking is injurious to health, we would still be tempted to give it a try based on the images that advertisements project. In PBS's Merchants of Cool, critics thrash advertising for promoting false values.

Media critic Mark Crispin Miller criticizes advertising techniques because of the way they influence culture and create anxiety among youth. He says: "You know, advertising has always sold anxiety and it certainly sells anxiety to the young. It's always telling them that they are not thin enough, they're not pretty enough, they don't have the right friends, or they have no friends...they're losers unless they're cool."

Advertising is a marketing communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell a product, service or idea. Sponsors of advertising are typically businesses wishing to promote their products or services. Advertising is differentiated from public relations in that an advertiser pays for and has control over the message. It differs from personal selling in that the message is non-personal, i.e., not directed to a particular individual [1]. Advertising is communicated through various mass media, [2] including traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, outdoor advertising or direct mail; and new media

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such as search results, blogs, social media, websites or text messages. The actual presentation of the message in a medium is referred to as an advertisement, or "ad" or advert for short. Commercial ads often seek to generate increased consumption of their products or services through "branding", which associates a product name or image with certain qualities in the minds of consumers. On the other hand, ads that intend to elicit an immediate sale are known as direct-response advertising. Non-commercial entities that advertise more than consumer products or services include political parties, interest groups, religious organizations and governmental agencies. Non-profit organizations may use free modes of persuasion, such as a public service announcement. Advertising may also help to reassure employees or shareholders that a company is viable or successful.

Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities and habits of the individuals in these groups. Humans acquire culture through the learning processes of enculturation and socialization, which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies. A cultural norm codifies acceptable conduct in society; it serves as guideline for behavior, dress, language, and demeanor in a situation, which serves as a template for expectations in a social group. Accepting only a monoculture in a social group can bear risks, just as a single species can wither in the face of environmental change, for lack of functional responses to the change [3]. Thus in military culture, valor is counted an ideal behavior for an individual, as are duty, honor, and loyalty to the social group are counted as virtues, or functional responses in the continuum of conflict. In the practice of religion, analogous virtues can be identified in a social group.

Advertising is a non-personal form of promotion that is delivered through selected media outlets that, under most

circumstances, require the marketer to pay for message placement. Advertising has long been viewed as a method of mass promotion in that a single message can reach a large number of people [4]. But, this mass promotion approach presents problems since many exposed to an advertising message may not be within the marketer's target market, and thus, may be an inefficient use of promotional funds. However, this is changing as new advertising technologies and the emergence of new media outlets offer more options for targeted advertising. 4Ps of Marketing Product: The product aspects of marketing deal with the specifications of the actual goods or services, and how it relates to the end-users needs and wants [5]. The scope of a product generally includes supporting elements such as warranties, guarantees, and support. Pricing: This refers to the process of setting a price for a product, including discounts. The price need not be monetary; it can simply be what is exchanged for the product or services, e.g. time, energy, or attention. Methods of setting prices optimally are in the domain of pricing science. Placement (or distribution): refers to how the product gets to the customer; for example, point-of-sale placement or retailing. This third P has also sometimes been called Place, referring to the channel by which a product or service is sold (e.g. online vs. retail), which geographic region or industry, to which segment (young adults, families, business people), etc. also referring to how the environment in which the product is sold in can affect sales. Promotion: This includes advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and personal selling. Branding refers to the various methods of promoting the product, brand, or company. These four elements are often referred to as the marketing mix, which a marketer can use to craft a marketing plan.

While online advertising has been proven to be highly successful, it is still not used for many sectors such as for B2B (business to business) marketing and at that, many users today use ad blockers, pop-up blockers and even flash blockers.

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Still, if you want to watch that video of how a group of friends built a submarine from two bathtubs, a toilet seat, washing machine door and other items, you have to sit through the advert [6]. It's logical that when I get an advert or search results for Digimax Dental or shoes from Zappos, it is most certainly the case that I have been doing online searches related to shoes and dentists [7] [8]. These are not coincidences but the direct result of remarketing tools. However, the results of my searches will mean that friends of mine and I have nothing to share in terms of funny online adverts we might view and later share. Everything today is so localized and subject-specific that in many respects remarketing tools, even though deemed a success by many experts, in my estimation, they fundamentally fail

Advertising affects our perceptions and values so much that what we have in the shape of culture today is simply an advertisement-induced version of culture that lacks authenticity and gives rise to images which are anything but genuine. Advertisements no longer give us a chance to develop our authentic self; rather all of us try to be like one of the persons we see in advertisements [9]. Culture is a like dropping an Alka-seltzer into a glass you don't see it, but somehow it does something" [10]

With the advent of Internet technologies we simply haven't seen the same knock-on effect where advertisements are becoming part of popular culture discussions. Targeted advertising is a good way of advertising. It's that Google remarketing Campaigns use IP addresses which means that adverts based on my precise location will end in my search results being different to another user in the same country, but on the opposite side of the country or with a different search history and browsing pattern. It also show ads to people who have previously visited a website or used a particular mobile app. Similarly, dynamic remarketing takes targeted advertising one step further and shows previous visitors ads that contain products and services they viewed on a specific site

creating unique ads for each potential customer [11]. This process involves machine learning technology which analyzes individual behaviors in order to uncover which creative elements will hook an individual's interest in the product or page in order to return and make a purchase. Dynamic remarketing is what is currently considered the most sophisticated, but not necessarily the best.

The Impact of Culture in the World of Advertising

Culture affects everything we do. This applies to all areas of human life from personal relationships to conducting business abroad. When interacting within our native cultures, culture acts as a framework of understanding. However, when interacting with different cultures this framework no longer applies due to cross cultural differences. Cross cultural awareness aims to help minimize the negative impact of cross cultural differences through building common frameworks for people from different cultures to interact within. In business, cross cultural solutions are applied in areas such as HR, team building, foreign trade, negotiations and website design.

Cross cultural solutions are also critical to effective cross cultural advertising. Services and products are usually designed and marketed at a domestic audience. When a product is then marketed at an international audience the same domestic advertising campaign abroad will in most cases be ineffective [12]. The essence of successful advertising is convincing people that a product is meant for them. By purchasing it, they will receive some benefit, whether it be lifestyle, status, convenience or financial. However, when an advertising campaign is taken abroad different values and perceptions as to what enhances status or gives convenience exist [13]. These differences make the original advertising campaign defunct. It is therefore critical to any cross cultural advertising campaign that an understanding of a particular culture is acquired. By way of highlighting areas of

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cross cultural differences in advertising a few examples shall be examined.

Language in Advertising

It may seem somewhat obvious to state that language is key to effective cross cultural advertising. However, the fact that companies persistently fail to check linguistic implications of company or product names and slogans demonstrates that such issues are not being properly addressed.

Ford Pinto Translation

The advertising world is littered with examples of linguistic advertising blunders. Of the more comical was Ford's introduction of the 'Pinto' in Brazil. After seeing sales fail, they soon realised that this was due to the fact that Brazilians did not want to be seen driving a car meaning 'tiny male genitals'. Language must also be analyzed for its cultural suitability. For example, the slogan employed by the computer games manufacturer, EA Sports, "Challenge Everything" raises grumbles of disapproval in religious or hierarchical societies where harmonious relationships are maintained through the values of respect and non-confrontation [14]. It is imperative therefore that language be examined carefully in any international or cross cultural advertising campaign

Communication Style in Advertising

Understanding the way in which other cultures communicate allows the advertising campaign to speak to the potential customer in a way they understand and appreciate. For example, communication styles can be explicit or implicit. An explicit communicator (e.g. USA) assumes the listener is unaware of background information or related issues to the topic of discussion and therefore provides it themselves [15]. Implicit communicators (e.g. Japan) assume the listener is well informed on the subject and minimises information relayed on the premise that the listener will understand from implication. An explicit communicator would find an implicit communication style vague, whereas an implicit communicator would find an explicit communication style exaggerated.

Colours, Numbers and Images in Advertising

Even the simplest and most taken for granted aspects of advertising need to be inspected under a cross cultural microscope. Colours, numbers, symbols and images do not all translate well across cultures. In some cultures there are lucky colours, such as red in China and unlucky colours, such as black in Japan. Some colours have certain significance; green is considered a special colour in Islam and some colours have tribal associations in parts of Africa. Many hotels in the USA or UK do not have a room 13 or a 13th floor. Similarly, Nippon Airways in Japan do not have the seat numbers 4 or 9. If there are numbers with negative connotations abroad, presenting or packaging products in those numbers when advertising should be avoided. Images are also culturally sensitive [16]. Whereas it is common to see pictures of women in bikinis on advertising posters on the streets of London, such images would cause outrage in the Middle East.

Cultural Values in Advertising

When advertising abroad, the cultural values underpinning the society must be analysed carefully. Is there a religion that is practised by the majority of the people? Is the society collectivist or individualist? Is it family orientated? Is it hierarchical? Is there a dominant political or economic ideology? All of these will impact an advertising campaign if left unexamined. For example, advertising that focuses on individual success, independence and stressing the word "I" would be received negatively in countries where teamwork is considered a positive quality. Rebelliousness or lack of respect for authority should always be avoided in family orientated or hierarchical societies. By way of conclusion, we can see that the principles of advertising run through to cross cultural advertising too. That is - know your market, what is attractive to them and what their aspirations are. Cross cultural advertising is simply about using common sense and analyzing how the different elements of an advertising campaign are impacted by culture and

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modifying them to best speak to the target audience [17] [18].

Relationship between advertisement and Culture

Advertising and culture are somewhat intertwined. as consumers may not patronize products that are not in line with their pre-existing attitudes. Culture may be defined as ideas, beliefs, objects and activities that help characterize a group of people. These cultural characteristics have a certain meaning to people who are part of the culture. Advertisers draw from these meanings and reflect them in their advertisements to make them more appealing [19]. [20] further avers that culture is reflected in advertisements through its images. Advertising affects our perceptions and values so much that what we have in the shape of culture today is simply an advertisement induced version of culture that lacks authenticity and gives rise to images which are anything, but genuine. Advertisements no longer give us a chance to develop our authentic self; rather, all of us try to be like one of the persons we see in advertisements [21].

[22] avers that:

When considering a marketing campaign for your business or if you are in the advertising and marketing field, understanding the impact of culture and race upon the consumer attitudes of products and services is the first step to creating the perfect advertisement for any business. Within the cultural context of advertising and marketing, the first key issue to address is whether the sector of individuals you aim to market are considered of high, context or of low context. This is to say that, An Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication Studies Relationship Between Advertising and Culture: Views from Jos, Nigeria 157 individuals who are of high context generally will

respond well to advertisements and marketing strategies with implied meaning and non-verbal cues, whereas the lower context target of individuals will require direct, Verbally expressive marketing campaigns. In addition to context classification, your marketing or advertisement campaign must also include considerations to the timing of your advertisement display as many cultures or ethnic groups work and play in different variables than tradition American workers.

[23] argues that:

Advertisements are one aspect of mass communication and are influenced by culture' as much as the programming or stories that they are enveloped within. In the advertising Industry specifically, there is debate about whether culture is reflected in advertisements. It is not likely that advertisements escape cultural influence, but the trick is to find the source. Identifying cultural dimensions found to be correlated with content should be useful in understanding the world's people, and helpful for educators, Government and other policy makers and businesses. For marketers, it could mean gaining more confidence. That new products and marketing messages will be accepted and understood. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between cultural dimensions and particular characteristics of advertising. From these

perspectives. mass media and culture are closely related and are not easily separated: culture provides mass media with sources for content. All content must be derived from culture. including entertainment. News and advertisements; otherwise it could not be understood.

Modern advertising language creation was deeply affected by socio cultural influences; socio-cultural beliefs. Thought patterns from philosophy ethics. life idea four aspects that have an impact on advertising language creation. Thus, [4] 'avers' that marketers must understand consumer behavior before advertising products. According to [15], is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and .the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, service experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the .impacts that these processes, have on the consumer and society. It blends elements from psychology sociology, social anthropology and economics. These mediating factors render advertising a contributory agent in a process of reinforcing the, existing conditions. Thus, Advertising messages cannot be the sole cause of audience change" It must work with the following variables to have effect on the consumer;

- i. **Selective Exposure:** Individuals expose themselves to selected messages and because of this it is difficult for other messages to have effect on them. People seek out those information which only cater to their own interests, beliefs and boost their own ego while avoiding those ones that are contrary to their own dispositions and attack their self image. It is in line with this that [8] opines that selective exposure or attention is the process by which people only expose themselves or attend to those media messages consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs.
- ii. **Selective Retention:** It assumes that people remember best" and

longest, those messages that are consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. People tend to retain messages that are useful to them when they are exposed to a certain medium. The mass media audiences do not retain everything; they only retain and remember the important details and as such, it becomes difficult for those ones not retained to have any effect on them. Two people cannot have the same interest.

- iii. **Selective Perception:** This predicts that people will interpret messages in a manner consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. People tend to perceive and then decode communication messages in the light of their previous experiences and current dispositions, needs, moods and memories. Only to find little changes in sales figures. if the messages are not in line with the pre-existing attitudes of the consumers. Follow-up research will often show that the promotional activities never got through the consumers' perceptual filters. In other words, if the public is convinced that the product is worthless, no amount of advertising will change that perception. Thus, it is important to remember that even though a great deal of money is spent on advertising, the success or failure of advertising to persuade us to buy things is far more complex than one might believe.
- iv. **Selective Attention:** Because the eye processes information much faster than the brain can interpret, the human brain has to select which information to pay attention to at any given time. In order to avoid confusion, physiological impairments or needs (bad eye sight, hunger), physical hardships (heat in a crowded lecture room), boredom from fatigue," hostile orientation towards information or source can also severally or in

combination, affect the span of attention during lectures and

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CONCLUSION

Finally, advertising might not even promote choice after all. By subtly manipulating its audience, it may in fact stifle choice. Much advertising is subliminal, drip feed, all about creating positive associations without prompting conscious thought. If we consciously sat down and decided to objectively analyze whether we preferred Coke or Pepsi, we'd probably conclude that we didn't care and that it doesn't matter. An active choice, in this instance, is bad for the brand. Instead, advertising "operates darkly, beyond the light of consciousness", in the words of Agnes Nairn and Cordelia Fine. "Intuitive brand judgments are made instantaneously and with little or no

apparent conscious effort on the part of consumers" says one ad agency. "Intuition is now well accepted as a powerful driver of brand choice and brand affiliation." So if advertising circumvents our thought processes and subtly encourages further debt, selfishness, and a cavalier attitude to the environment, then maybe we do need to think of it as evil. Or if that seems a little dramatic, at least we ought to be more aware of advertising, more clearly about where the limits lie. And we certainly need more public debate about the ethics of advertising, which is ultimately what this report is calling for.

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