

Analysis on Non-profit Advertisements Based on Cultural Difference Between China and United States

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Abstract. The research field of consumer behavior is not a new one. In fact, many researchers have conducted surveys and experiments in this field. Also, the topic on how advertisement influences consumer perceptions has been explored. It is obvious that culture background and social economic status are different between developed countries and developing countries. This can vary consumers' perception and behaviors. Non-profit advertisement will influence consumer's perception and behavior on the basis of cultural background. Thus, it will also be extremely crucial for non-profit advertisements to study cultural differences to learn more about consumers.

This study focuses on cultural background, aiming to find the differences on how different non-profit advertisement between China and U.S., and provide useful strategies to plan non-profit advertisements.

1. Definition of Culture

From the perspective of consumer behavior, the common belief, values, customs and their influences on consumption are the focal points in a certain culture. Culture is a unity that the majority social members have learnt, shared and been used to direct their belief, values and customs in a certain society. Varied cultures have their own nationality and collectiveness. In the world, different countries have created varied national cultures based on their specific nature environment and unique historical conditions. Thus, diverse culture leads to different consequences when consumers make buying decisions. Also, their consuming behavior has its special features.

2. Features of Culture

2.1. Icon

Culture has its quality of icons, which refers to a certain symbolic system to convey culture. When it comes to China, most of people will relate it to the Great Wall, dragon, and the Imperial Palace, so these are sorts of symbols that carry the meaning of Chinese culture.

Due to cultural background, the same icon may represent different meanings in many countries. For example, in China, people all dislike the number of four, which pronounces "Si" (means die) in Chinese language, while people from Western culture have not shown any hated feeling about it. Also, the majority of people are ignored to talk about death in China while it is not an avoidable topic for westerners.

2.2. Sharing

It refers to the fact that specific belief, value and behavior are necessarily shared among the majority of social members. Individuals from different communities can be closely connected by culture. Therefore, culture is a material and spiritual fortune that is created by a nation and shared by the most of people in the society.

2.3. Acquisition

It is known that all sorts of culture can be learnt rather than inborn or inherited. Individuals who grow up in a certain society can learn its special culture. Feeling of hungry and thirsty is nature of human being, which cannot be called as "culture". However, manners of having dinner, for example,

are varied all over the world. Westerners are used to enjoying steaks by knife and fork while Chinese usually take rice as their main food using chopsticks. The difference is rooted from culture. People from different countries or regions have diverse beliefs, values and customs, which are also developed in the environment where they live in.

3. Culture Diversion Leads to Different Non-profit Advertisements

3.1. Non-profit Advertisement

Non-profit advertisements refer to ones that provide public service for free and convey certain information to the public without the goal of profit. It reflects a certain cultural value and can influence people's conception and behavior^[1]. In the globe, there are thousands of non-profit advertisements. Those ads can be a way to persuade people to protect environment, keep healthy condition and prevent mental illness, etc.

3.2. Collectivism or Individualism

In traditional Chinese culture, collectivism has been attached more importance than individualism while western countries, especially United States, put much emphasis on individualism or heroism. In 1994, to prevent forest fire, a non-profit advertisement was created in America. "Only YOU can prevent forest fires", as the slogan, was widely accepted by Americans, which included 95% of adults and 77% children^[2]. Thus, the advertisement played a critical role in the process of fire prevention. In contrast, an advertisement advocating grass protection stresses, "protecting green grass is everyone's duty" in China. Chinese culture focuses on "everyone". In fact, similar advertisements can be easily seen everywhere in modern China.

3.3. Be with Nature

Environment protection is a golden rule for all human being in the world. All of authorities stresses to reduce greenhouse gas emission, to plant more trees and to prevent river pollution. We, as humans, have the same goal. However, when we see non-profit advertisements on this issue, we can find countries take different angles to persuade their people^[3].

In china, ads emphasize, "being harmonious with nature". For example, in one of river protection advertisements, the slogan calls on people "to put on a new green dress for our mother river!" In contrast, Americans tend to fight with nature. "Sometimes there is only one thing that can stand up to change air pollution, and that is the law. Earth justice uses the law to fight for the environment and we are winning!"

3.4. Past or Future

In traditional Chinese culture, China is a past-oriented country while U.S. is a future-oriented nation. It is known that China has more than 5000 years history, and it has much ancient civilization. Due to different historic culture, Chinese people cherish "old days" while Americans like to foresee future. In the modern China, the non-profit advertisement with slogan, "Don't forget history!" can be seen everywhere. Compared with Chinese, Americans believe future is more critical and hopeful. In one of non-profit ads, they say, "Without geography, our children are not ready for the world. That is why we created my wonderful world".

4. Strategies to Make Effective Non-profit Advertisements

Non-profit advertisements have unique characteristics. To create a better advertisement, people must deeply understand its features. Accordingly, how to make an effective non-profit advertisement is also based on analysis of features.

4.1. Non-profit: People can be Educated

It is clearly that non-profit is the critical difference between the commercial advertisements and non-profit ones. The goal of those ads, whether issued by governments or social agencies, must be

nonprofit. Those ads convey information to the public for free in order to attract people's attention on some hot social issues^[4].

When making ads, people have to consider its ability to educate people. Information involved in the ads must be meaningful, and also avoid any words with profit.

4.2. Local Culture: People are More Likely to Accept Domestic Culture

Culture is one of crucial characteristics belongs to non-profit advertisements. Local people can understand those ads with suitable cultural expression easily. In contrast, if ads go against a certain cultural background, it not only cannot convey useful information, but also lead to conflict or misunderstanding, which may damage the relationship at home and abroad.

4.3. Sociality: Ads must Involve the Common Issues

Compared with commercial ads, non-profit ones are more sociable, which means the majority of people may care the issues involved in those ads, or the problems are the common ones that most of people are faced with. Some problems are surely serious, but if they are only entwined with few people, those problems are hard to be made^[5].

4.4. Popularity: Most People Have to Understand It

In general, the target audiences of non-profit advertisement are the majority of people in the society. People, with different ages, have different education levels and social status. Thus, all the non-profit ads must be easily to read and understand. Difficult words or expressions should be avoided.

Culture is the most critical factors, which cannot be ignored to analyze differences between countries. To make an effective non-profit advertisement, people must consider its features, especially based on local cultural background.

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