



## **The National Cultural Factors in Cross-cultural Communication of Advertising**

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**Abstract:** Advertising, as a dissemination carrier of commodity information and cultural information, must have a unique national character in cross-cultural communication. If you just follow the standards of your own nation and have insufficient understanding of the culture of the importing country, it will cause conflicts and disputes due to the improper creation. Reasonably using the communication power of national cultural elements helps brands open up the international market and promote cross-cultural communication.

**Keywords:** Advertising, cross-cultural communication, ethnic factors.

### **1. Introduction**

The advertising industry belongs to the cultural and creative industry, and culture is an important content to promote its development. With the rapid development of economy and society, people's consumption needs have changed from satisfying material needs to pursuing a sense of spiritual value. Product function is no longer the first choice for consumption. Among many of the cultural elements, national culture is undoubtedly the first factor to be considered in cross-cultural communication. On November 6, 2018, during the Double Eleven Shopping Festival on Tmall, an Indian song and dance advertisement was produced by Indian actors, aiming to warm up the future Indian market in a friendly way. The rich exotic and vivid scenes in the video fully expressed the atmosphere of the shopping festival. The advertisement which is extremely infectious and impressive is also a good form of inter-textual advertising.

### **2. National culture helps the spread of advertising culture**

National culture is a culture that has been inherited and carried forward from generation to generation and has its distinctive characteristics. It is a precious spiritual

wealth of a nation. In the creation of cross-cultural communication, modern advertising attaches great importance to the integration with national culture, absorbing the content of national spirit, national customs, and national habits. While enriching creativity and performance, it also highlights national ideas, wisdom and style. The value of freshness, exchange and sharing of resources, to achieve deep touch and resonance in transnational communication. With the formation of the global competition pattern of enterprises, advertising must go to the international market and be recognized by the international community. Culture is an influential factor that cannot be ignored. Advertising can only inject conformity into advertising creation on the premise of in-depth understanding and understanding of national culture. Only with the connotation of consumer psychology, consumer concepts, and lifestyles in the country, can it conform to the demand and open up the international market. Only advertisements based on national culture are advertisements with international core competitiveness.

In recent years, Thai advertising has repeatedly won international advertising awards for its unique creativity and performance techniques. Its advertising performance and achievements have shocked the advertising industry around the world. Thai advertising may be humorous funny or humorous tears. Cohen, chief creative director of Ogilvy & Mather Advertising Thailand said: "Many years ago, we thought we were an undeveloped country and there was nothing to be proud of. If we fell on the street, we won't blame the government for uneven roads, but laugh at ourselves. First there is suffering, and then we survive with humor." [1] Thailand's special historical background and geographical location make its national culture have not only the subtle and gentle side of Eastern culture, but also the optimistic and humorous aspects of Western culture. The diversified culture is directly or indirectly reflected in the advertising creation, which has achieved the unique and distinctive national characteristics of Thailand's advertising creativity. There is something called "soul" in Thai advertising, that is, Thai culture and its local elements, which are not only different from the West, but also understandable for Westerners, and "package" their local elements with international expressions.[2] Nowadays, Thai creativity is becoming more and more popular all over the world. It can be said that the correct handling of the relationship between excellent national culture and advertising is an important reason for the success of Thai advertising. Integrating national culture into the cross-cultural communication of advertising helps to create advertising characteristics and enhance the influence of national culture.

### **3. All ethnic cultures have a common core of civilization**

The culture of any country or nation is not only an organic part of world culture but

also the precious crystallization of human civilization. The physiological structures and life habits of human beings are similar, and the basic needs are not far apart, which also determines that human culture has the basic common ground.[3] People's physiological needs, security needs, desire for family, love, friendship, human affection, national affection, patriotism, love for humorous and light things, pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty, criticism of fake, evil and ugliness, and the desire for peace are all the same emotionally and psychologically regardless of nation, race, or skin color. Coca-Cola's "thirst feeling makes the four seas become one family", TANG Guozhen of the United States "you have a cup", and IBM's "four seas' solution to one family" all realize humanity based on basic human needs and common emotions. A certain kind of commonality in advertising has also achieved a greater possibility of cross-cultural communication in advertising. Anthropologist Taylor Levitt believes: The cultures of all countries in the world are developing in the direction of convergence. Advertising culture should seek to lead the concept of cross-cultural consumption from the perspective of common human experience and common culture, so as to realize the international promotion of products. Adidas' slogan "Impossible is nothing" represents contemporary people's psychological tendency to not be afraid of difficulties and challenges and to move forward courageously; Pepsi-Cola's "We Will Rock You" commercial shows the young generation of consumers' passion for sports, pursuit of fashion, and passion. All these show that the success of the advertising operations of the world's top large companies is inseparable from the grasping and using of the common characteristics of national cultural psychology and national cultural factors.

#### **4. Recognize the existence of cultural differences and avoid problem advertisements that cause ethnic disputes**

Although human beings have a common core of civilization, but different countries have their own unique national cultures, including the differences in religious beliefs, moral concepts, language barriers, and aesthetic habits will all lead to cultural differences. Consumers cannot fully understand and accept foreign cultures, and the same advertisement will have different understandings in different contexts. In the cross-cultural communication of advertisements, it is necessary to fully understand the customary taboos of the target country's cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and lifestyles, recognize the differences between cultures, and avoid problematic advertisements that may cause cultural disputes.

In 2018, Dolce & Gabbana launched a video on the theme of "Eating with Chopsticks" before the upcoming Shanghai Show. In the picture, an Asian model is holding chopsticks and performing eating Italian food with an arrogant expression,

exaggerated posture, and strange voice. The chopsticks are referred to as small stick-shaped tableware. The whole story is full of ridicule, causing a great uproar in Chinese public opinion. As a result of the forced cancellation of the Shanghai Big Show, e-commerce platforms such as JD.com, Tmall, and NetEase Koala have removed Dolce & Gabbana's products. In the end, the brand lost the Chinese market and suffered heavy losses. In 2004, two advertisements in "China Automobile Advertising" magazine caused controversy. One was a print advertisement for Toyota overbearing cars, "You have to respect the overbearing". In the picture, a stone lion raised its right paw to salute the overbearing car; the other was Advertisement for the Toyota Cruiser, in Hoh Xil no man's land, the Toyota Cruiser drags an army green truck with a rope. The former is reminiscent of the stone lions on the Lugou Bridge, and the latter is directly regarded as a green military truck made in China. The Lugou Bridge is the place where Japan's national war of aggression against China began, and the army is the force to defend the country. Two sensitive Symbolic elements are suspected of being insulted, and Chinese audiences strongly condemn the advertisements for hurting national feelings. Finally, Toyota withdrew the two advertisements and apologized to the Chinese. The American Camel cigarette advertisement "I would rather travel thousands of miles for the camel." The subtext is that smokers would rather walk to the soles of their shoes to wear them in order to buy camel cigarettes, but on the TV screen, a smoking man sits on stilts and sits in front of the temple. The holes in the soles of his shoes are particularly eye-catching. After the advertisement was broadcast in Thailand, the whole country was indignant, because the Thai Buddhist culture believes that it is disrespectful to shine the soles of the shoes in front of the temple in the Buddhist temple and even the holy place. The same problem occurs in the Japanese Sony advertisement: In the advertisement, the Buddha Shakyamuni closed his eyes and settled, but for a while, his heart sprouts, his eyes opened, and he kept swaying with the music. The slogan was "Sony, let the Buddha move." The creativity of these advertisements is not bad, but they have led to conflicts and diplomatic protests. [4] In the cross-cultural communication of advertising, if you do not understand the local history, culture, customs, and violate local values, religious beliefs, policies and regulations, it will lead to the emergence of problematic advertisements and affect international relations.

## **5. Adapt to the global development trend and create more advertisements that convey friendly and goodwill**

During the epidemic of COVID-19, some countries in the international community reached out to each other to fight it together. In the process of donating medical supplies, some heart-warming advertising slogans appeared, such as "Mountains and

rivers are in different places, wind and moon are in the same sky", "Green hills are the same as clouds and rain, and the moon never shines on the two townships", "The snow melts in the Liaohe River, and the flowers bloom in the Fushan Mountains; we are in the same spirit and we hope that spring comes" etc. which aroused widespread heated discussions. These sentences not only provide warm comfort, care and encouragement to the recipient countries, but also convey a kind of mutual respect, mutual learning, and the kindness of "You are affectionate and I am interested", which makes the audience find it new and fresh. At the end of 1993, Marlboro's Lunar New Year advertisement, on the Loess Plateau, a group of honest men, stepping on the drums, beating the sky-shaking gongs and drums, the strong national characteristics and cultural heritage make the Chinese feel kind and natural, and it is consistent with the majestic, masculine, and wild temperament in Marlboro's men's world,[5] so that it has reached communication with Chinese consumers on the national cultural level, and the Marlboro brand image has also vividly entered the hearts of Chinese consumers. In addition, advertisements by international companies such as Toyota Motor "There must be a road to the mountain, and there is a Toyota car if there is a road", General Flour Company of the United States "Cooking cakes is as easy as cooking rice", and Nestle Coffee "Tastes great" All start from respecting the historical traditions, social customs, and living habits of the national culture of the target country, and achieve good communication effects through the respectful and friendly creativity and expression. Advertising in cross-cultural communication should be based on the traditional culture of the nation, further standardize and upgrade the national advertising style, making a road of advertising cross-cultural communication with distinctive national characteristics.

## **6. Summary**

Advertising must not only serve to deliver product information and open up the international market, but also shoulder the responsibility and mission of cross-cultural communication. It is necessary to recognize the influence and restriction of national cultural factors on advertising creation, and to have a deep understanding of advertising works the cultural connotation behind it. Under the guidance of cross-cultural communication strategies, people should realize creative innovation in advertising, promotes brands to open up the international market and the "cultural exchanges and mutual learning of civilizations", and forms a "community of human destiny", with the help of national cultural elements.

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