

New Trends in Advertising Research

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Part 3

Advertising & Culture

Culture, taken as a collective phenomenon shared with the people we live or have lived with within the same social context, is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from the people from another group (Hofstede, 1991, p. 5). Thus, each culture develops its social linguistic processes according to the logic of its functioning in a way that will match those processes with each mental collective programme. Advertising uses this type of logic: in order to be understood and/or efficient it has to fit its messages to each mental programming of each culture.

Bearing these dimensions in mind has not always been the rule of global advertising as far as multinationals are concerned. Nevertheless, lately, adaptations of global advertising campaigns to national cultures are becoming a reality, mainly when dealing with levels of efficiency concerning economies with a great impact on the return of investments. These adaptations have to take a variety of dimensions into account, either those supported by the languages that they use, or others supported by the values and ideologies in which each culture bases itself.

We selected six studies on advertising and culture to be included in this book. These studies show how a variety of factors, such as the importance of the linguistic dimension; the cultural differences between the East and the West; and the cultural differences in Europe could affect the messages in advertising. The studies included in this book make use of a wide range of research designs: experimenting, interpretative study, content analysis, survey, and literature studies.

Piotr Chelminski and Nuria Alonso examine the current magazine advertising approaches towards Hispanic consumers in the U.S. from a multicultural and sociolinguistic perspective in order to assess whether code switching, often used by bilingual individuals, is also used by advertisers. Results show that, in most cases, advertisers do not apply code-switching or other mixed symbolism in their advertising messages toward this market.

Olaf Werder develops the content analysis of 493 commercials both from Spanish-language and English-language televisions to identify whether the lack of some cultural differences and the existence of others reflect a dual identity of the Latino

population. Those messages need to be considered within the context of commercial messages so that the context and content of the communication might be relevant.

Barbara Muller and Shintaro Okazaki replicate Mueller's (1987) content analysis with the purpose of exploring cultural values reflected in Japanese and American Advertising. A total of 456 U.S. ads and 442 Japanese ads were collected. Results show that Japanese advertisers have turned to a more direct and persuasive selling approach – while still maintaining a tradition of Japanese subtlety. American ads have moved away from a hard-hitting and aggressive strategy to a more benefit-oriented strategy with a distinctly softer touch. Japanese advertising seem to have become more «American», while, on the other hand, American advertising may have become somewhat more «Japanese».

Sandra Diehl, Ralf Terlutter and Barbara Muller, propose a conceptual framework for cultural influences on the perception and evaluation of a standardized international advertising message incorporating a performance-oriented appeal. They applied a survey and collected data from 693 consumers to test that conceptual framework in the United States, Germany, France, Spain, and Thailand. The results from the study do support the model and show that these appeals could be used in international advertising.

Barbara Muller, Hong Cheng, K. Wulfemeyer and James Rada propose an exploratory investigation about food commercials aired during children's television programs in China and the United States, with particular attention to the frequency, type, and content of such messages. The results reveal similarities and differences in the food commercials, more food commercials aired during U.S. children's programs than during Chinese programs. Chinese commercials tended to feature healthier products, such as milk, tonics, and bottled water, whereas U.S. commercials tended to push the consumption of fast foods, sugary cereals, and ice cream or candy. Both «General Health and Nutrition Claims» and «Contains Specific Nutrients and Substances» claims were used significantly less frequently in Chinese commercials than in the U.S.

Rob le Pair and Margot Mulken propose a study to identify the effectiveness of complex metaphors contained in advertising messages and identify the impact of different cultural backgrounds. The study was conducted in the Netherlands, France and Spain and 374 responses were collected. They found out that participants did not experience the same degree of increasing complexity as was predicted by the theoretical framework of Phillips and McQuarrie (2004). Fusion was perceived as less complex than Juxtaposition by the Dutch and Spanish respondents, whereas the French respondents reported no differences in complexity among the four categories.

HOFSTEDE, G. (1991). *Cultures and Organizations, software of the mind*, McGraw-Hill, London.
PHILLIPS, B., and E. MCQUARRIE, (2004), «Beyond Visual Metaphor: A New Typology of Visual Rhetoric in Advertising», in *Marketing Theory*, 4, 1/2, 111-134.



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New Trends in Advertising Research presents a wide spectre of recent studies and works whose aim is to demonstrate how advertising works drawing special attention to the role of culture, the advertising content, new technologies, and to the way advertising agencies develop appropriate practices to make advertising campaigns efficient.

The book has 29 chapters framed in five parts. The first part – *How Advertising Works* – presents six studies that show dimensions of messages conception, the organization of motivations, the imply-benefit attributes, and how celebrities can contribute to the effectiveness of messages. The second part discusses effects of *Product Placement and Sponsorship*. The third part – *Advertising & Culture* – presents six studies that show the way in which cultures and subcultures may influence advertising and advertising effects. The fourth part on new *Technologies of Information and Communication (TIC)* includes five studies on new advertising platforms. The last part presents seven studies on *Content and Context Factors in Advertising*.

The book addresses itself to the advertising professionals, to advertising communication researchers, as well as to graduate and undergraduate students of advertising and communication, who want to be informed about the latest research within these areas.

