Effect of culture on effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing (a case study: Export companies of Tehran)

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Abstract

The aim of the study is investigation effect of culture on effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing. This study was a descriptive survey and the survey instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. Statistical society was all of experts in export companies of Tehran. Sample size (140 persons) determination is based on the Krejcie and Morgan table and cluster random sampling method was used. After data collection, data analysis was performed using SPSS. Results showed that Iranian customs and traditions affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing. Iranian religion affects effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing. Iranian Local art, music and Literature affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing.

Key Words: Culture, Advertisement, Modern Marketing

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Introduction

"Advertising", as we usually understand it in contemporary society, is a process of persuading a mass audience through the mass media to buy commercial products. It is distinguished from direct selling-the hawker of merchandise in a public market, on the other hand, and from "public service announcements" such as the times of church services, health warnings sponsored by non-profit organizations, etc., on the other.

Cultural and national artifacts or elements have become an important economic and marketing attraction (Edson, 2004). Nations and cultures all over the world are gaining importance, not only for the tourism industry, but for the experiences related to different cultures in which people might live. Indeed, cultures survive as long as they have marketable elements that are attractive to be consumed (Firat, 1995).

In marketing literature, there has been some research about cross-cultural studies related with advertising. For example, Callow and Shiffman (2004) studied print advertising between high and low context cultures. Also the effectiveness of comparative vs. non-comparative advertising has been studied in a cross-cultural settings (Jeon and Beatty, 2002; Shao et al, 2004). Furthermore, there are comparisons between advertising from the US and other countries like Britain (Caillat and Mueller, 1996), Japan (Mueller, 1987), China (Lin, 2001; Zhang and Neelankavil, 1997), and Hispanic/Mexican advertising (Roberts and Hart, 1997). Similarly, cultural studies deal with the national identities reflected in advertising. Examples include Thai identity (Jory, 1999), Canadian identity (Macgregor, 2003), and Russian identity (Morris, 2005). Also, other studies deal with the effect of language, for example Koslow et al (1994) studied the effect of the Spanish language as an important element for identification as Hispanic. In another study, Webster (1992) studied the effect of Hispanic subculture identification with the information search behavior.

In today’s competitive market advertising plays a very important role in ensuring success of international marketers. Advertising aims to communicate with both current and potential customers and hence it is important to take on board various aspects related to customers. These factors can be both macro economic factors as well as culture specific factors. Considering these various factors will help in improving the effectiveness of advertising. Advertising effectiveness can be classified into two classes – communication effectiveness and sales effectiveness. While sales effectiveness is more to do with how well sales are pushed in the market, communication effectiveness is highly important to ensure sales effectiveness is achieved. Communication effectiveness is all about how effectively a company has communicated its advertising message to its customers. This in turn will depend on customer’s recognition of advertisement and attitude towards advertisement. Consumer’s attitude towards advertisement in turn depends on cultural factors.
In simple terms, advertisement effectiveness is all about how well a company has advertised its product or service. Focus here is on the message the company is giving to its customers. A good advertisement should create awareness among customers, arise interest in them, create a desire among them to buy the product or service in question and finally persuade them to act in buying those.

Culture plays an important role on various aspects of human life. This influence is particularly more in case of international marketing aspects like product launch, consumer behaviour, advertising and others. Culture has been defined as collection of knowledge, belief, customs, morals, art and any habits acquired by people in a society over a period of time. Culture is influenced by both cultural factors and macro factors and distinguishing various aspects on the basis of these two factors is highly difficult. Another definition of culture has been given by Hofstede (2001). Hofstede (2001) defines culture as ‘collective programming of the mind, which differentiates the member of one group or category of people from those of another group’.

There are two important cultural frameworks by Hofstede (1976) and Hall (1976). While Hofstede (1976) have ranked countries based on five cultural dimensions, Hall (1976) did not do that. Instead Hall (1976) classified countries based on high context culture and low context culture. Countries with high context culture are the ones which there are many contextual elements that will help people in understanding the rules. This is in contrast to low context culture where people take few things for granted. People in high context use more nonverbal communication and they are more reserved and react inwardly (Hall, 1976). They also have strong sense of family and have high commitment to long term relationships. Most importantly, in countries with high context process is more important than product. These features are in contrast in countries with low context where preference is more towards product than process, are short term focused and have low commitment to relationships.

Due to the importance of the topic, the purpose of the study is Investigation Effect of culture on effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing in export companies of Tehran.

**Methodology**

The present study is a descriptive one. Theoretical bases of the study were collected by reputable sites, books and related articles. The information and data for hypothesis testing were gathered by a researcher-made questionnaire. Statistical society was all of experts in export companies of Tehran. Sample size (140 persons) determination is based on the Krejcie and Morgan table and cluster random sampling method was used. In this study, Validity and reliability of the questionnaire was approved. Validity of the questionnaire was accepted by expert opinion of university and reliability of that was calculated by Cronbach's alpha and the value of that was 0.81.
Before completing the questionnaire by the participants, basic description of the study and its objectives as well as additional details about the questions presented to them. Enough time to complete the questionnaire was provided to participants. Write the name and characteristics of participants for the questionnaire was not compulsory, so they can fully express their opinions. After gathering information from the questionnaires, the data were analyzed and results are discussed with the findings of previous studies. All of data were analyzed by SPSS software.

**Results**

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of participants. As showed by the table, males with 62.9% participants are the highest sex of participants. Master participants with 50% make the most and participants with job experience Higher than 20 years are highest in the group of job experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>%37.1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>%62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>%21.4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>%50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>%28.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>%28.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 years</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>%25</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>%32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 11-20 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher than 20 years</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>%42.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>%28.5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>%32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher than 45 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>%39.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Does Iranian customs and traditions affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing?

Since the test statistics is lower than table critical value at 95 percent and corresponding confidence interval shows positive, this means the positive effect of customs and traditions on effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing.
Table 2: The mean comparison based on the one-sample t test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Confidence intervals 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customs and Traditions</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Lower bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Does Iranian religion affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing?

Since the test statistics is lower than table critical value at 95 percent and corresponding confidence interval shows positive, this means the positive effect of religion on effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing.

Table 3: The mean comparison based on the one-sample t test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Confidence intervals 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Lower bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Does Iranian Local art, music and Literature affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing?

Since the test statistics is lower than table critical value at 95 percent and corresponding confidence interval shows positive, this means the positive effect of Local art, music and Literature on effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing.

Table 4: The mean comparison based on the one-sample t test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Confidence intervals 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local art, music and Literature</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Lower bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

As shown by table 2, Iranian customs and traditions affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing. These results are similar to reports of Knapp & Hall (2009). Cultural differences often lead to notorious misunderstandings. For example, some cultures perceive certain simple gestures as positive (e.g., a thumbs-up signals approval in American and European cultures), whereas others view them as negative (Islamic and Asian cultures consider the same gesture offensive).

Based on table 3, Iranian religion affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing. These results are similar to reports of Bitner, and Gremler(2002). Recurring market failures when launching products in non-Western regions of the world illustrate the importance of understanding cross-cultural differences regulating international consumers and markets. Brands and markets are increasingly global, but understanding of consumer perceptions and consequent marketing strategies are still culturally bound (De Ruyter, Van Birgelen, & Wetzel, 1998; Zeithaml,) impeding effectiveness. Extensive cross-cultural consumer research suggests that cultural differences account for variation in consumer reactions to several phenomena, including perceptions of advertising and brands (Pollay, Tse, & Wang, 1990; Sung & Tinkham, 2005), consumer evaluations of and reactions to service (Zhang, Beatty, & Walsh, 2008), utilitarian versus hedonic consumption (Lim & Ang, 2008), and consumerism in general (Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989).

As shown by table 4, Iranian Local art, music and Literature affect effectiveness of advertisement in modern marketing. These results are similar to reports of Engelen and Brettel, (2011). Cross-cultural marketing literature mainly describes observed differences in behaviors across cultures. This article goes beyond mere description of cross-cultural differences in consumer behavior to address the roots of these differences, that is, the existence of fundamental cross-cultural differences in pre-behavioral processes.
References


