

INTERRELATION BETWEEN CULTURE AND ADVERTISING ART

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ABSTRACT

Advertisements are one aspect of mass communication and are influenced by culture as much as the programming or stories that they are enveloped in. In the advertising industry specifically , there is a debate whether advertisements are reflection of culture. The purpose of the study is to present an overview of relationship between cultural dimensions and Advertising.

Advertising and culture are closely related and cannot be easily separated: culture provide sources of content for Advertisements. All contents are derived from culture , including entertainment, news , education, family, business . Advertising shapes are cultural values on universal platform and The other side is also true; the cultural values shape up our advertising. In fact , both interact with each other. I assess the case for the Advertising art as a positive force in our society by looking it's cultural aspects including universal culture , life style etc.

Keywords - advertisements, culture , life style , society ,universal platform .

I.Introduction

The phenomenon of Advertising has long been a topic of research in several disciplines. One area that has attracted a great deal of consideration in several disciplines during the last two decades is the analysis of mass media advertising content to gain insights into how cultural factors affect advertising strategies and expressions; how cultural values, norms and stereotypes are reflected in advertising; how advertising creates meanings and affects the audience and the larger society over time. Art is a part of culture of any society that is always proceeded as tradition by society and thus art is immortal.¹ It has various forms and Advertising Art is one of them.

The value of Arts and culture to society has long been debated. We know that Arts and culture play an important role in promoting social and economic goals through local regeneration, attracting tourists, the development of talent and innovation, improving health and wellbeing, and delivering essential services. These benefits are 'instrumental' because art and culture can be a means to achieve ends beyond the immediate intrinsic experience and value of the art itself. However, we are conscious that there are intrinsic benefits of arts and culture experiences, such as aesthetic pleasure, which are seen as private and personal. These intrinsic benefits to an individual spillover to 'instrumental' impacts: 'These intrinsic effects enrich individual lives, but they also have a public spillover component in that they cultivate the kinds of citizens desired in a pluralistic society. These are the social bonds created among individuals when they share their arts experiences through reflection and discourse, and the expression of common values and community identity through artworks commemorating

events significant to a nation's (or people's) experience.' (McCarthy et al, 2004, The Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Value of the Arts)²

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vakratsas et. al, (1999),³ by reviewing two hundred and fifty journal articles and books gives certain insights about how advertising affects the consumer. They suggest that the hierarchy of effects is deeply flawed and propose that advertising effects should be studied in a space with affect, cognition and experience as the three dimensions that is determined by the context, which reflects goal diversity of advertising, product category, competition and other aspects of mix, stage of PLC and target market. They cite the latest developments in neuroscience research pointing out that the brain processes information in a parallel fashion and that consumer engage in cognition and affect simultaneously and 40 interactively. As there is parallel processing of information and stage-by-stage information processing cannot take place.

Indian advertising industry has been evolving at a rapid pace over the past few years due to the proliferation of means of communication and the emergence of new distribution channels. Indian advertising industry is being reshaped by regulatory and technological changes spanning various media platforms- radio, TV, Internet, print and outdoor. (Rocsearch, 2006).⁴ Advertising has been found to lead to general behavioral changes, even when that behaviour has nothing to do with the product that is advertised. Advertising often shifts the relative importance of consumer values (Feather,1990).⁵

Advertising, a traditionally high-profile management function since World War II (Tansey and Hyman, 1993) perpetuates a paradox. (Shao,1993) and (Shao and Hill,1994) analyzed advertising agency attitudes regarding various issues, including the legal restrictions of advertising of "sensitive" products, which can be controversial for the agency that handles the account. The products/services discussed in these studies were cigarettes, alcohol, condoms, female hygiene products, female undergarments, male undergarments, sexual diseases (eg. STD's, AIDS), and pharmaceutical goods. On the one hand, it is commonly touted by business and the academy as a major economic, social and competitive force in post-world war economies to inform consumers about available products and help guide them in the buying process (Pratt and James, 1994).⁶

Skepticism about advertising could be reduced through strong advertising regulations which is need of the hour Indian context(Calfee& Ringold,1994). Advertising ethics has sustained itself as a towering lightning rod for controversy; perhaps, because it is the most visible business tool today, exposing the public to thousands of messages each day, which are sometimes more than questionable (Treise, 1994).⁷ As the amount of advertising increases, it would appear that there has been an increase in the amount of controversial advertising shown in various media. Some of reasons for this include that society has become more complex, increased awareness of the harmful effects of some products and as agencies try to become more creative to "cut through the clutter" to gain attention and brand awareness (Waller,1999)⁸. However it was also argued that advertising was a western concept which slowly crept into all parts of the world and brought various affects on lifestyle, opinion and values of the people (Stearn, 2001).⁹

Several studies have also obtained a relationship between self reported exposure to advertising and the endorsement of materialism which affects consumer values (Paek and Pan,2004).¹⁰ In addition, advertising often

gives idealized images of people, which leads to uncertainty in the eyes of the viewer as well as negative health effects (e.g. bulimia or anorexia) whenever such artificial images set up implausible standards of living beyond reach of regular population (Elliott and Elliott, 2005).¹¹

It is found that younger consumers have more positive beliefs and attitudes toward advertising and those with higher levels of education tend to have more positive attitudes and beliefs. Initiative Media and BBC World (2002) conducted a study on consumers' attitudes towards advertising in India and its relevance to media. They found that positive attitude towards advertising is more prevalent amongst women, middle and lower social class (Waller, 2005)¹²

Advertising is the medium that conveys an organization's communications about its offerings to the market available for a sale, and hence, it possesses the innate ability to influence the consumer. In all fairness, advertising tries to create a positive attitude towards the brand, the respective offering, and the organization. It carries the message of the product, service and image characteristics of the company to the consumer. Collectively, advertisers should adhere to a code of moral and professional ethics when executing their functions (Coyne and Traflet, 2008).¹³

O Barr (2008)¹⁴ points out that after liberalization of Indian economy in 1991, consumerism raised after multinational corporations (MNCs) entered in the social cultural fabric of India. Rising consumerism in India in many great aspects of economical, social, moral as well as personal usefulness emerged, and this point the country needs to review advertising strategy.

Advertising is the life blood of all business organization, without which the products or services cannot flow to the distributors or sellers, and on to the consumers or users. There have been increasing efforts to protect the public interest by regulating the content and the reach of advertising (Devi, Kanchana and Sebastina, 2010)¹⁵.

Advertising is considered as a source of information for all types of sectors like economy, social and other factors in the marketing world (Cohan, 2001).¹⁶

III. CULTURE

Culture is derived from Latin word "Cultura" meaning "cultivation" and was first used by Romans; however Germans practiced sociological meanings of culture two hundred years ago under the name of "kulturgeschichte" (Burke, 2008). Sir Edward Burnett Taylor, an English anthropologist in 1871 gave one of the earliest definitions of culture, which is used today as well. He defined cultures as; "Complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, Customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society (Taylor & Samovar: 2009, p 9). The definition by Taylor is accepted and applicable now a day as well and it is quite broad as it includes "any other capabilities and habits". Cultures differ from each other on basis of beliefs and values. Different cultures have different values and values which are important in one culture (group of people) may not be as important in another culture. So cultures affect the marketing behavior and urge the business organizations to promote their products and services according the certain/specific culture for promotion of products and services (Jain, 1993) Jens Allwood provide very simple and effective definition of culture as, "culture refers to all the characteristics common particular group of people that are learned and not given by the people" (Allwood: 1985). According to Jens Allwood a culture has four dimensions i.e. Patterns of

thoughts, behaviors, artifacts and nature. Another definition of culture by Hofstede is; "...the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others." (Hofstede, 2005:4) It is social environment through which culture is learned and derived rather than inheritance and genes. Each culture has different coding of mind depending upon group of people which belong to that specific culture and the coding levels differentiate according to different cultures. For example each culture has different gender roles, social class, dressing/dressing by profession, habits of eating. A culture can be identified as "corporate culture", "national culture" or "age culture". However this research is based on national level of culture. (Hofstede, 2003; Mooij, 1998)¹⁷.

IV. CULTURE AND ADVERTISING

How communication works and how advertising works is culture-bound. In one culture, advertising is persuasive by nature; in another, it is meant to build trust between companies and consumers. Thus, models of one culture cannot be projected to other cultures. The basic difference is between communication styles. Different verbal and nonverbal communication styles can be recognized in both interpersonal and mass communication, and culture clusters can be defined where one or other style prevails. This is related to the way people process information. For some, pictures contain more information than words; for others, the only way to convey meaning is verbal. People look at how advertising works from the perspective of their own culture, which may indeed be very different from the perspective of their counterparts in other cultures.¹⁸ Therefore, understanding of the local culture is very important if advertising has to work effectively.

Although the phenomenon of advertising has been studied for several decades,. In recent years, the study of cultural advertising has become a subject of increasing importance because of several important positive cultural developments:

4.1. Cultural universalism

Universalism may refer to current reality when it constitutes some kind of universalist interpretation of reality, or to the future when it is a project of organizing new civilizational order. Consequently, we have two approaches: realistic and ideological (idealistic). Realistic approach indicates so-called generalities, which are the elements constituting currently and really existing universal civilization. What may be understood by generalities is the form of human activity manifesting itself in many cultures (science, technology, art, sport) or values uniting the whole mankind (love, truth, human work, universal human rights, basic ethical rules). Realistic universalism may also have philosophical background indicating ontological messages, supporting the existence of universal human community, universal culture, history and civilization. Idealistic universalism is at most the desire or postulate of building common community connecting people from various cultural circles, nations and ethnic groups¹⁹. Global media is spreading this universalism through Advertising art. Media guru McLuhan is known for coining the expression "the medium is the message" and the term global village, and for predicting the World Wide Web almost thirty years before it was invented²⁰ and now, international mass communication system has proved this term-"Universalism" actually. Where we can see various countries and their cultural interdependency along with economic ,political and social coordination. Today, media and various

techniques of communication has crossed the geographical barriers and exchanging the information throughout the world and advertising is playing an important role in this media world. Two new channels has started in past 2 decades- Cable T.V. and internet.

Advertising has 3 major parts-Advertiser, Ad-agency and Media. Ad agencies associates various multinational companies on a common universal platform for global consumers with the help of marketing and Advertising. A common consumer behavior is developing on universal platform because of growing international marketing and advertising. 524.5billion us dollars is spent on advertising in 2016 worldwide, which is suppose to reach 547.37billion by the end of this year(2017).²¹

Economic and cultural development is growing up because of rapid growth of advertising . Same products and their common advertisements are broadcasted on a common universal platform, which has caused a universal culture²² . Here ,we are taking the term universalism as common communication among various cultures of the world²³ but usually there are different peoples of various cultures in various countries ,those have their own thoughts ,beliefs ,religion, language and behavior. Then ,how does common communication reach to them and how do they take this, it all depends on above features of a particular culture.

This is the only reason that multinational companies use global brands and for them they use common marketing strategies. Global brand means- same name, presentation and same creative strategies used in all over the world²⁴. Coca-cola is the best example of the product of global brand. Revlon, IBM, Apple, Marlboro, ,BMW, Mc Donald ,Rolex etc. are the companies uses global brand.

Do Addidas, Amazon ,Colgate Palmolive co., Henkel, Honda motor co. ,Hundai motor co. ,Johnson & Johnson , Kellogg's co. , L'Oreal, LG electronics , Microsoft corp. , Nestle , Nike, Nissan motor co., Renault , Unilever, Tata motors , Volkswagen, Vodaphone group are the few world's largest advertisers(2016)²⁵.

Multinational companies follow the same advertising standard to all market domains (universally) ,which follow the concept that ; though different countries has different cultures but they have common desires and needs on human background and marketing and advertising is flourishing on these backgrounds and thus the common products and their same advertisings are developing the universalism on global platform²⁶.

4.2. Advertising as a tool of cultural education

Culture is a basic part of human nature. It also determines a person's wants and behavior. Culture is learned . there is a socialization of a child right from the time it comes in to the world. The child acquires a basic set of values ,perceptions ,preferences and behavior. The socialization is done through the institution of family, school, church ,friends etc. Advertising shapes are cultural values and the other side is also true; the cultural values shape up our advertising. In fact ,both inter-act with each other.

We have several cultural values as Indian. We want to be successful. We want to be efficient . we are oriented towards our family. For the sake of our family, we can postpone our own gratification. We like to be youthful etc. Indian advertising ask us to save for the marriage of our daughter or for the education of our child . we are other centered, and not self centered. So, the advertisements reflect these cultural values of ours . besides, there are advertisements for the well-being of the family, for the betterment of a child, for a gift to loved one etc.

We as a cultural group prefer advertisements of products like incense sticks (agarbatti), bindi (shilpa), kajal (lakme), ornaments (tribhuvandas bhimji), shaloo (marriage sarees), bidies (smoking device), for fun (thumbs-up), hospitality (rasana), health (chyavanprash), long hair (keokarpin, parachute), complexion (vico turmeric). So the advertisement we see are steeped into our cultural ethos.

But at the same time, some advertisements makes us receptive to the denim and pop culture. We change our cultural values under the influence of these advertisements. But core cultural values are not affected much by the advertising. It does affect the subsidiary cultural values²⁷. But this is sure that through these advertisements we informed about new ways to make our culture better and get introduced to other cultures also when we see advertisements of global brands. For e.g. When we see the advertisement of Mc-Donald that time we also see their restaurants, their interiors, building construction, their attire etc. Thus advertisements educate us about cross cultures on global platform.

4.3. Improvement in life style

Advertising has a lasting impact on the life styles and values of society because it receives wide publicity and influences the buying habits of people, who make the life style and values of society. Buying behavior is widely influenced by advertising. This behavior is one of the sensual component of life style and the values of society. If the buying behavior performs a negative role, the values of the society would be in jeopardy. The society observes changes in the traditional values. The accepted norms and design of society are changed and new norms and patterns of behavior are established. On the other hand, if the buying behavior is positively influenced by advertising, the values of the society are influenced accordingly.

Advertising has a wide impact on consumer behavior which influences the nature of culture and the values of society. Literature, dance, drama, language, religion, costumes, birth and marriage celebrations, dress, home, school and movements in society are greatly influenced by advertising. Advertising encourages increased consumption and production of good products. Like the advertisement of lifebuoy boost us up to wash our hands before meal. Toothpaste ads educated us to brush our teeth twice in a day to keep them healthy. On the reverse side, its philosophical acceptance has induced self satisfaction. Children are becoming more consumption conscious and materialistic. They discard the all traditions and adopt modern style of living. The economically background want to increase their consumption needs. Not getting the required quantity, they resort to some immoral activities and discard the values of life. The advantages of advertising have been converted into dissatisfaction into society. However, the positive attitude of the advertising may confirm the social values and encourage or sustain the existing values of society²⁸. It is also true, however, that advertising is used to promote "back to nature" items such as natural foods, wood stoves, camping equipments and denim-all representing a rejection of the materialism of the establishment²⁹.

4.4. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest over the issue of how advertising reflects, reinforces and affects cultural values of its target audience.

4.5. As the integration of the world economy has increased significantly in recent years and as nations of the world have become increasingly economically interdependent through international trade, diverse people and cultures are coming into contact through interpersonal interaction as well as advertising and other media images and messages. In an increasingly global economic environment, international trade has achieved phenomenal growth resulting in increased international mass media advertising across diverse cultures.

4.6. The "cultural imperialism" issue has attracted a great deal of attention over the impact of western advertising and other media products on the cultures of developing nations. Cross-cultural analysis of advertising can identify specific differences and similarities in advertising strategies, expressions, and manifest cultural values, norms and stereotypes of the target audience and the larger culture. Such findings may be used to address the question of whether the same strategies and expressions can be used in international advertising, and whether the values, attitudes, desires and tastes of consumers around the world are converging.

V. LIMITATIONS

The unique features of Indian market which call for special attention and thus, subsequent changes in the application of international marketing concepts are as follows:

5.1 Cultural Outlook: The Indian consumer values old customs and tradition. Basic cultural values have not faded in India. Buying decisions are highly influenced by social customs, traditions and beliefs in the rural markets.

5.2. Literacy Rate: The literacy rate is low in India. This comes in way of the marketer in promoting the product. Advertising is very expensive making it difficult to communicate with the target audience.

5.3.Lack of Proper Communication and infrastructure facilities: Nearly fifty percent of the villages in the country do not have all weather roads. The Infrastructure Facilities like roads, warehouses, communication system, financial facilities are inadequate in rural areas making physical distribution becomes costly.

5.4.Many Languages and Dialects: The number of languages and dialects vary widely from state to state region to region and probably from district to district. Even though the numbers of recognized languages are only 16, the dialects are estimated to be around 850.

5.5.Low Per Capita Income: Even though about 33-35% of gross domestic product is generated in the rural areas it is shared by 74% of the population.³⁰

VI. CONCLUSION

Advertising is part of the glue that holds our culture together. It allows us to share a common experience in a landscape populated (for better or worse) by brands, images, logos, and even silly jingles. . Advertising shapes are cultural values and The other side is also true; the cultural values shape up our advertising. In fact ,both inter-act with each other. I assess the case for the advertising as a positive force in our society by looking its cultural aspects.

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