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The Role of Culture Plays in Chinese and American Advertisement Campaigns

With the development of computer science, computers become smaller and smaller, which turns laptops into reality. To fit in with the situation where consumers tend to choose laptops as their personal computers, many famous companies, such as Apple and HUAWEI, release different kinds of laptops to meet the demand of computer market. Apart from the product itself, advertisement campaigns also play an important role in the success of a new laptop. As Lin (2001) indicates in her article “Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and American Television Advertising”, “though consumers in China and America share similar needs, they vary in the way they characterize the products that can satisfy those needs”, which implies that cultures do affect people’s way of thinking and have some impact on the strategies of advertisement campaigns for consumers from different culture backgrounds. The Chinese and American advertising website pages organized by HUAWEI for its product HUAWEI Matebook X are quite interesting, because HUAWEI uses appeals in different degrees, such as more hard-sell appeals to Americans and more soft-sell appeals to Chinese, for the same product to attract consumers from Chinese and American culture backgrounds, respectively, which aims at adjusting to the cultural difference to help HUAWEI sell its products better. argument？

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When it comes to perceptions of time, an essential aspect of culture, Lin indicates that “time perception is found to be strongly influenced by the degree of industrialization in a culture”. It is known to all that the degree of industrialization in China is lower than that in America, which means that Americans have a stronger sense of time perception. On the page for Chinese advertisement campaign, HUAWEI stresses convenience and safety in terms of its two-in-one power button and fingerprint recognition sensor. However, HUAWEI asserts that “HUAWEI MateBook X's two-in-one power button and fingerprint recognition sensor helps you boot up quickly-and safely-to operate at the speed of your life” on its American advertising website page. The words, “quickly” and “speed”, are used to give American consumers more sense of speediness, trying to appeal to them from the time perspective. It is obvious that more time-oriented appeals related to time perception are used in the American advertisement, which is consistent to Lin’s statement that “U.S. commercials will use more time-oriented advertisements than their Chinese counterparts”. In this case, time perception in cultures does have effect on advertising appeals.

As is suggested by Lin, individualism and modernity are core values in Western culture, which is reflected in the comparation between Chinese and American advertising website pages. On the Chinese advertising website page, white and silver colors are used as simple backgrounds without relevance to individualism and modernity Why？？？现代简洁风？. Instead, HUAWEI uses much more complicated backgrounds when it introduces the lightness and power of its product. When it suggests its lightness, the background is a beauty in white taking out a HUAWEI Matebook X by right hand from a package held by left hand easily , which

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gives consumers a vivid sense that the Matebook X is very light and easy to be carried. Besides, when HUAWEI mentions its product is powerful, it uses a handsome man using its product dedicatedly as the background, which implies that this powerful product is designed for individuals to use, a reflection of individualism. Apart from using figures, HUAWEI also uses a picture of the Earth with the Sun shining on the skyline which is taken from the outer space as background. This background attracts consumers with the sense of modernity, because the picture of the Earth taken from the space can only be achieved with the help of high technology, a symbol of modernity. Therefore, by comparing the backgrounds from Chinese and American advertising website pages, it is obvious that more individual and modernity appeals are used by U.S. commercials than by their Chinese counterparts, which is slightly different from Lin’s conclusion that both Chinese and American advertisement campaigns use modernity appeals in the similar degree. As Lin suggests, the core values in cultures remain stable and obvious. In this case, the core values in Western culture, individualism and modernity, still stand out even on the American advertising website page created by a Chinese company.

According to Lin, “the value of social status is often reflected by a person’s material possessions, which is reflective of economic achievements, and economic upward mobility is an important goal for which people are expected to strive in a Confucian society.” Affected deeply by Confucian culture, Chinese advertisers do use some appeals related to status to attract Chinese consumers. On the Chinese advertising website page, HUAWEI mentions that no matter where you are, both HUAWEI Matebook X and you will become the focus, which

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implies that consumers’ inherent quality in the eyes of others can be improved if they

buy Matebook X. On the contrary, no relationship among people is mentioned on the American advertising website page. Therefore, it is obvious that more status appeals are used by Chinese commercials than by their U.S. counterparts in this case, which is, again, different from Lin’s conclusion that “the use of status appeals are not significantly different between the Chinese and U.S. commercials”. Since Lin got her conclusion in 2001, some changes have taken place within these years. Given the fact that core values in cultures remain stable, advertising appeals used by Chinese and American advertisers, respectively, seem to get closer and closer to their original cultures.

As Lin indicates, “the native culture often will localize the imported Western culture and make it adaptable to the local customs and traditions”. As is known to all, Americans think highly of patent and charge for usage of software created by others, for example, Microsoft Office software, while Chinese think it normal and reasonable to use software for free. In terms of this culture difference, HUAWEI creates a unique part on its Chinese advertising website page, which indicates that HUAWEI has already bought and installed official Window 10 operation system and Microsoft Office software for Chinese consumers. This part not only shows respect to patent, a core value in Western culture, by buying official operation system and software, but also makes Chinese consumers comfortable about being able to use official operation system and software for free, which fits in with the traditional Chinese thoughts. In terms of the localization of imported culture values, Lin indicates that a more contemporary interpretation of core values may emerge during the changes of cultures.

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In this case, HUAWEI considers patent in Western culture and thoughts in Chinese culture at the same time and combines them to come up with a contemporary idea which makes a balance between them.

The Chinese and American advertisement campaigns for HUAWEI Matebook X are impressive, because HUAWEI uses appeals in different degrees for the same product in terms of culture difference. It is obvious that cultures affect the strategies in advertisement campaigns. In advertisement campaigns, culture difference is considered deeply, which indicates that issues including different cultures should be interpreted from a multi-cultural perspective. With a multi-cultural perspective, different cultures can be respected and understood to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding. Based on comprehension, it is easy for different cultures to cooperate with each other, which becomes more and more essential in the world.