Cross-Cultural Issues in Marketing Communications: An Anthropological Perspective of International Business

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Cultural factors have long been known to influence the communication and success potential of competition in conducting international business. Cultural awareness shapes how business firms behave in cross-culturally reflected international markets. It is broadly recognized that cultural factors act as invisible barriers in international marketing communications. Understanding cultural differences is one of the most significant skills for firms to develop in order to have a competitive advantage in international business. This paper probes some key elements of cross-cultural issues in international marketing communication and provides a framework for creating competitive advantage for firms engaged in international business from an anthropological perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the most important functions to master in order for any business to be successful in today's increasingly competitive markets, particularly for firms doing business internationally. A firm's profitability is in part determined by its marketing communication strategies and skills. However, top managers in companies working internationally sometimes neglect the significance that invisible barriers cultural differences create in marketing communication. Cultural factors play an important role, functioning as invisible barriers.

Even as the world is becoming globalized, many nations have increasingly voiced their claim to "a right to culture" in international businesses. It is predicted that national culture will be a critical factor affecting economic development, demographic behaviour, and general business policies around the world. Such claims at the macro level will be important for making trade policy, protecting intellectual property rights, and creating resources for national benefits. At the micro level, these claims could be invisible barriers for firms working in or wanting to enter international markets. For example, the last summit of francophone nations in the 20th century called for a "cultural exception" to GATT/WTO rules governing trade of goods.

These claims will affect public policy on international trade rules in these nations and might initiate worldwide cultural protectionism for transnational trading. As the voice of cultural rights increases, firms doing business internationally will face additional challenges in other dimensions of culture. From a management perspective, it is important for companies to realize that markets today are worldwide *and* cross-cultural. Being aware of and sensitive to cultural differences is a major factor for success in the world marketplace. Failure to place marketing strategy in the cross-cultural context of the countries where a company is doing business will work to the detriment of brands and business relationships (Emery and Tian, 2003, 2002; Tian, 2000a).

If globalization is an inevitable process, then cross-culturalization will also be inevitable. On the one hand, the world is becoming more homogeneous, and distinctions between national markets are fading and, for some products, disappearing altogether. This means that marketing communication is now a world-encompassing discipline. On the other hand, the cultural differences between nations, regions, and ethnic groups, far from being extinguished, are becoming stronger. This means that global/international marketing communication, a cross-cultural process, requires managers to be well informed about cultural differences nationally, locally, and ethnically in order to win in global markets.

International marketing communication is communication that crosses national boundaries for business purposes. Communication among people from the same culture is often difficult enough. Therefore, communication between people from different cultures from the point of view of language, values, customers, and ways of thinking, will be far more difficult, with a degree of miscommunication being almost inevitable (Ferraro, 2006). Problems in marketing communication conducted cross-culturally often arise when participants from one culture are unable to understand culturally determined differences in communication practices, traditions, and thought-processing in another cultural context. Marketing communication literature focused on advertising supports the hypothesis that advertising content differs between countries. International advertising research has confirmed differences in advertising content between countries. The premise upon which these studies are predicated indicates that advertisements, in part, reflect individual countries' social systems (Emery and Tian, 2003; McLeod and Kunita, 1994; Mueller, 1992; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Zandpour, Chang, and Catalano, 1992).

Values, norms, and characteristics embedded in advertising messages appear in various cultures to a greater or lesser degree (Emery and Tian, 2003; Mueller, 1993). Therefore understanding the importance of cultural values in advertising has great practical value in marketing communication. Determining differences in cultural values should guide the formulation of international marketing communication strategies (Munson and McIntyre, 1979). Ignoring the cultural meaning embedded in advertising could lead to a misinterpretation of the firm's intended message (McCracken, 1987). Such miscommunication is mainly responsible for businesses failing in international markets.

The importance of cross-cultural communication is evident for China marketing and marketing China, since there are many factors that influence the relationship between Chinese and non-Chinese businessmen. According to Harrison and Hedley (2008), there is an important question of how to sell and market to Chinese companies effectively, both for new market entrants and for those companies with existing operations in China. They point out several factors, such as patience, flexibility, plenty of negotiation, and remembering the basics of marketing, that underlie the preparation of adapting to the local environment.

The core of anthropology as a social science concerns culture and its relationship to human behavior. Although there are many different definitions of culture employed by scholars from various fields, such as political science, history, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and so on, the common points made by cross-disciplinary scholars are clear. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas that are historically derived, selected, and generated to support attached values. Culture systems may be considered as products of action or as conditioning elements of further action. They consist of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts (Feldhusen, 2008; Lillis and Tian, 2010).

The improvements in the Chinese economies in the last three decades are evident. Kotler (2010) states that there was more than a tenfold increase in GDP since 1978. Foreign direct investment (FDI) rose to nearly $108 billion in 2008. Facing this economic growth, the importance of China marketing is much more internationalized, not only on the export side where the growth became evident, but also in the growth of domestic marketing. The presence of Geely, which acquired Volvo in 2010, shows the presence of a Chinese company in the international market, and reinforces its strength in the domestic market, as it plans to build its second plant in the northeastern city of Daquin (Reuters, 2011). The marketing forces are moving from export to domestic and import, since the salaries are growing and the demand for new products is increasing. China could become the world's largest economy as early as 2030. Today's world economy is deeply influenced by the economy of China and tomorrow's Chinese economy may continue to play a dominant role in the world economy (Kotler, 2010).

This paper, from an anthropological perspective, examines cross-cultural marketing communication issues in "borderless" markets where national boundaries are no longer the only criterion to consider when making international marketing, economic planning, and business decisions. Consequently, understanding political and non-political borders is important for "culture bound" products and industries, as well as those requiring local adaptation. This paper probes the implications of a right to culture in international business practice by discussing the effects of cultural values on communication. It also analyzes several key cross-cultural matters in the imperatives of international marketing communication from an anthropological perspective, and examines several strategies of cross-cultural communication in today's world marketplace. Based on this approach, the authors construct a framework for firms to use to break through the invisible cultural barriers of marketing communication.

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON MARKETING COMMUNICATION

The globalization of the economic world has made it important for marketing managers to understand how to do business in different cultures. The ability of marketers and consumers to communicate cross-culturally is critical for success. Marketing communication is a two-way interactive communication. Marketers deliver information to the market they gather, collecting, interpreting, and putting this information to use. Failure to do so may lead to a loss of business. One classic case discussion about the successful marketing of color TV sets in the China market by Japanese marketers can be used to support this argument (Tian, 2000b).

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Japanese-made color TV sets dominated the imported TV set market in China. In the early 1980s, Japanese and European TV manufacturers made comprehensive studies of the Chinese market. Based on their research, European marketers decided not to market their products in China. They concluded that, given the low GDP per

capita in China, it was unlikely that the Chinese people would be willing to buy luxuries like color TV sets. The Japanese TV set marketers decided otherwise, based on their research and observations that the Chinese have a cultural tradition of savings being handed down from generation to generation.

In addition, the Chinese save money for future consumption, unlike Western culture where people spend future money for present consumption. Almost every family in China had been saving for two to three years to realize the dream of owning a color TV set. Moreover, the Japanese research revealed that, although Chinese companies manufactured color TV sets, Chinese consumers had more confidence in imported products. Accordingly, the Japanese marketers concluded that Chinese families would buy high quality Japanese color TV sets. As a result, Japanese color TV marketers profited greatly in China because they understood a facet of Chinese culture that their European competitors did not.

In an intriguing research study, Sheer and Chen (2003) examine the extent to which Chinese and Western international business negotiators note the influence of cultural and professional preferences on the process and outcomes of their interactions. The results of the investigation showed some rather significant differences between Chinese and Western negotiators' expectations and strategies. Westerners expressed more emphasis on adaptation than did Chinese negotiators. For instance, Martin (1999) reports that in order to succeed in the Persian Gulf, most American franchisers have had to allow for adaptability and flexibility so as to be culturally sensitive, making sure that their operations and policy are appropriately adapted to the culture.

Lee, Yang, and Graham (2006) conducted research about tension and trust in international business negotiations with 176 American and Chinese executives who participated in simulated international business (buyer–seller) negotiations. The data collected reflect a series of cultural differences between the two groups. The Chinese and American executives mutually felt tension during the negotiation; however, for the Chinese, greater levels of tension led to an increased likelihood of agreement, but also led to lower levels of interpersonal attraction and in turn lower trust of their American counterparts. For the Americans, the felt tension marginally decreased the likelihood of an agreement and, did not affect interpersonal attraction, but did have a direct negative effect on trust. Zhang and Zhou (2010) inquire: "Are those Chinese companies simply lucky survivors in chaotic price wars, or do they know something about how to wage price wars that their Western counterparts do not?" In their study, they found that luck had nothing to do with being a victor in a price war, but good planning and execution did. It is fair to say that Chinese companies are much keener about price wars than the executives in the West.

In order to study similar impacts, we need first to examine culture itself. Marketing scholars define culture as that which gives people a sense of who they are, of belonging, of how they should behave, and of what they should be doing. Culture provides a learned, shared, and interrelated set of symbols, codes, and values that direct and justify human behavior (Harris and Moran, 1987). In marketing and consumer behavior research, the concept of culture has been minimal; commonly, marketers and consumers ignore the depth and importance of the concept and its place in analyzing human behavior (Douglas and Craig, 1995; Griffith and Ryans, 1995).

Some definitions of culture place it along a continuum, ranging from tradition-based to modernity-based. This classification incorporates and relates dimensions of economic and cultural boundedness. In this system, African, Asian, and Middle Eastern societies are categorized as tradition-based, centralized, cooperative, agrarian, pre-industrialized systems. Economically, modernity-based cultures are characterized as market-driven, competitive, post-

industrialized economic systems. The United States, Canada, and other Westernized societies are considered to be examples of modernity-based cultures.

Regarding cultural boundedness, tradition-based cultures emphasize history and established convention. By contrast, modernity-based cultures have weaker ties to history and tradition. At the same time, conventions are ever-shifting (Bandyopadhyay and Robicheaux, 1993; Harris and Moran, 1987). The cultural boundedness of tradition-based societies produces market systems that differ markedly from market systems valorized by cultures that prioritize modernity over tradition. Samiee (1993) suggests that economic and social factors influence the development and adaptation of marketing institutions that relate to business transaction.

Understanding the cultural boundedness of business (i.e., the degree of willingness of a culture to relinquish its traditional methods and adopt new ones) is imperative for successful international marketing communication and for marketing to ethnic populations domestically (Reese, 1998). Research conducted by one of the authors (Tian, 1987) in a minority region in China (which is considered as "tradition-based culture") demonstrates that culture influences consumer behavior in the area of product distribution. The author noted that the cultural orientation of the ethnic group consumers helped establish and maintain, through vendor loyalty, a plethora of small retailers supported by inefficient, multi-tiered distribution networks. This makes the Chinese state-owned retail business and foreign commercial institutions less profitable than they could be.

Similarly, Griffith and Ryans (1995) report that cultural overtones in marketing operations derive, to some extent, from consumer preferences. They suggest that "the cultural characteristics of a target market will be responsive to certain culturally bound channel structures, such as local stores, or bazaars…" (p.62). It will be difficult for marketers from the U.S., for instance, to understand the market system in developing countries, as well as states that may value traditional community ties over "modernity" for its own sake. As an instance, Griffith (1998) reports that U.S. marketers were hard-pressed to understand the French government's decision to restrict retail store size and protect local mom-and-pop retailers, especially considering the success of supermarkets there. He suggests that the government's decision to forego the economic efficiencies of distribution obtained by large-scale retail distribution systems is in part cultural in nature. Unless perceived and understood, profound differences in attitudes, expectations, and unworded messages will frustrate firms' efforts to do business with China, a huge and developing market that values aspects of tradition, as well as elsewhere in tradition-based cultures (Emery and Tian, 2003).

It can be argued that government intervention, as in the case of France, is intended to protect its society's culture within the existing market system or structure (Griffith and Ryans, 1995). However, in spite of some conflicts, there are societies, such as in some more areas of China, in which traditional market bazaars and modern, efficient supermarkets co-exist. This harmony is achieved only when the two systems become interdependent and supplementary (Tian, 1988). Accordingly, the authors argue that although cultural factors affect marketing, their effect can be minimized when marketers are aware of and sensitive to cultural differences.

Cross-cultural marketing communication is marketing communication among consumers or customers whose culture differs from that of the marketer's own culture in at least one fundamental aspect of cultural such as language, religion, social norms and values, education, and life style. Cross-cultural marketing communication demands that firms be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences. To respect the right to culture by the consumers in various cultures and marketplaces, marketers should understand that their customers have a right to

maintain, practice, and identify with their own culture. If the marketers want to succeed in cross-cultural marketing, they must work in a way that respects the consumer's values and their right to cultural ties. For example, for Western marketers to communicate in a business setting, it is important for them to respect the Chinese government's claim for *guoqin,* which means that they must "consider the special situation or character of China" (Yan, 1994). In another research on refrigerators, Baoku, Lijuan, and Bingru (2011) state that peasants evaluate product attributes differently in various regions and markets. In the case of the refrigerator market, segmentation is very important. This is evidenced by the fact not only related refrigerators, but also high-tech products China has a total of 53 state-level high-tech development zones (Tu, 2011). In sum, marketing communication is not an independent behavior, but is related to all other business or market behaviors. From the anthropological perspective, then, all market behaviors are culture-bound. Buying and selling take place within the culture itself (Hamilton, 1987).

In order to match marketing with consumer preferences, purchasing behavior, and product-use patterns, marketers benefit from understanding the market's cultural environment. Business firms should not focus on cultural differences merely to adjust marketing communication programs to make them acceptable to consumers. This is to suggest that firms should also identify cultural similarities, in order to identify opportunities and modify standard marketing strategies based on marketing communication theory informed with cultural information. Working skillfully with these cultural similarities and differences in the worldwide marketplace is an important marketing task for businesses.

KEY ISSUES IN CROSS-CULTURAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Cross-cultural marketing communication requires that firms discover if markets are viable by including in its business and marketing planning, the study of the culture in which the company intends to do business. This involves identifying cultural factors that can be employed to support marketing communication in the proposed markets. To succeed, the business uses pre-existing factors and creates new ones that suit the situation. Classic anthropological theory claims that while all human behaviors, including market behaviors, take place within a cultural context, people are able to influence and even change, through their behaviors, the cultural context within which their behaviors take place (Hall, 1976; Hamilton, 1987; Harris and Moran, 1987). For instance, Geely might face some challenges in the development of the Volvo purchase and Welch (2010) questions whether this endeavor will be successful given previous failures with the automaker's acquisitions such as the Daimler-Chrysler case. The Chinese luxury market is booming and still has room for some other players to come in and build a brand. The brand is upscale and Chinese consumers might even see Geely's ownership as a preferable outcome. So in the opinion of Welch's interviewee Jim Hall, principal of 2953 Analytics in Birmingham, Michigan, the company can grow sales and get fatter margins in China. Bloomberg (2007) publishes that the advertising in China is westernized, from huge billboards to tiny screens in taxicabs. Every day, many events are sponsored by companies, many of them Western, looking to connect with local customers. On the other hand, the Google/cn withdrawal from China serves as an example that it is important to understand all the intricacies of the country that one is trying to dog business with. As Levy (2011) states, the Chinese logged onto Google.cn and typed in a vulgar term for breasts. Google Suggest offered links that displayed raw nudity, and more. The official typed in the word meaning "son," and one of the Google Suggest terms was "love affair between son and mother." The links to this term yielded explicit pornography. The woman

serving tea in the conference room almost fainted at the spectacle. The lack of cross-cultural communication is evident in this case.

Accordingly, culture influences marketing communication, just as marketing communication, in turn, influences culture. Firms can be agents of change within a culture. The interactions between marketing communication and culture can be examined from three perspectives. First, culture defines acceptable purchasing and product-use behavior for consumers and business. Based on their analysis of data collected in Denmark, Great Britain, France, and Germany, Brunso and Grunet (1998) found that cross-cultural factors impact people's food shopping. Using business gifts as an example, in cultures such as Japan where a business gift is expected, a host who is not presented with a gift will be insulted. However, an important feature of marketing communication may work to the detriment of the company seeking business in other cultures where offering a business gift could be interpreted as a bribe or inappropriate gesture, and would offend the recipient (Arunthanes, Tansuhaj and Lemak, 1994).

Second, in anthropological theory where culture is at the center of all social interaction, it is expected that the impact of culture on marketing communication per se would be easier to identify than any other business variable. Advertising, for instance, is strongly influenced by language, one of the key elements of culture. Moreover, advertising budget and structure are based on buying habits and consumption style. Values and norms, media, and the state of the material culture, in turn, influence these variables. Theorists, including Albers-Miller (1996), Hofstede (1991), Pollay and Gallagher (1990), claim that culture affects the kind of roles and the choice of themes depicted in advertising. These roles and themes are related to underlying cultural values and norms; thus, every element of culture influences each facet of marketing communication.

Third, marketing communication also influences culture, contributing to cultural borrowing and change. According to Hooker (2008), "there is no better arena for observing a culture in action than business. Cultures tend to reveal themselves in situations where much is as stake, because it is here that their resources are most needed." (p.1). As more markets become global and the marketing mix standardized, the rate of cultural change will increase. Cultural changes in contemporary China illustrate this point. For instance, it was widely believed that gender identity might affect consumption behavior. However, a recent study of masculinity appeal by Emery and Tian (2003) demonstrated that American respondents and Chinese respondents acted the same. A possible explanation for this could be that the gender status in Chinese traditional culture has changed. Marketing communications by Western firms could in part account, for such a cultural change. Therefore, American marketers may succeed using the same masculine appeals to the Chinese youth market that they do in the U.S.

Nonetheless, cultures tend to change slowly, and specific products may meet with protracted resistance. Therefore, the primary task for firms is to locate similarities in various markets and strategically make them available for entering into new cross-cultural markets. In cross-cultural communication, marketers need continually to adjust their behaviors and marketing programs to suit target markets. However, when entering foreign markets, firms frequently fall into the trap of the "self-reference" criterion, which means their business representatives might be unconsciously applying their own cultural experiences and values to marketing communication in another culture. Even more dangerous than self-reference criterion is ethnocentrism, the belief that one's own culture is superior to any other, which will ruin efforts at marketing communication.

Based on his wide experience, Gesteland (1996) identified four paired cultural models that require special attention when doing business in diverse cultural settings, namely: 1) deal-focused vs. relationship-focused cultures; 2) formal vs. informal business cultures; 3) rigid-time vs. fluid-time cultures; 4) expressive vs. reserved cultures. In relationship-focused cultures, firms do not do business with strangers. In such cultures, it is important to develop good contacts with the right people. It takes time to develop personal relationships. This is important before entering into business discussions. This feature of relationship is predominant in most of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. In deal-focused cultures, the emphasis is on getting down to business right away, even with strangers. Rapport between the parties develops during discussions. In contrast to relationship-based cultures, such as Germany, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and North America, the written agreement is considered most important and constitutes a bond.

Regarding formal versus informal business cultures, in formal cultures, mainly in Europe and, most of Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, societies are hierarchical, status-conscious, and follow strict protocols. On the other hand, in informal cultures such as the USA, Australia, and to some extent Canada, Denmark, Norway, and New Zealand, societies are egalitarian and open, and value individual competence more than connections and status.

Gesteland (1996) also classified cultures according to their views of time. In a monochromic culture, time is important. Discussions follow agreed-upon agendas and move rapidly in linear fashion. Countries having this orientation to time are mainly in North America, Western Europe, and North East Asia. In polychromic cultures, business discussions tend to follow their own logic rather than a fixed outline. In these cultures, relationship is more valued than deadlines. For business firms planning to negotiate in a polychromic culture, it is wise to build a substantial margin of time into agendas. Polychromic cultures are mostly in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

Although what Gesteland suggests is useful and practical, it is good to be aware of the danger of stereotyping people from other cultures. Anthropological theory suggests that it is unwise and short-sighted to project our own behavior onto substantially different cultures (Giovannini and Rosansky, 1990; Hall, 1976; Hamilton, 1987). People in different cultures have different market values and behaviors that defy typecasting by national origin alone. For example, through long observation it has been found that consuming and buying patterns and other social/economic behaviors of Chinese immigrants living in Canada are completely different from the patterns of people living in China. Therefore, business firms need to have different market communication strategies for each group (Tian, 1999). In some cases, the firms know that cultures are different, but are unable to articulate how they differ. Research is the way to find out and to know what levers to use in moving buyers/consumers. We assert that the anthropological approach is an especially effective way to carry out cross-cultural marketing research (Tian, 2000a; Weise, 1999).

Anthropologist Hendrick Serrie has provided an excellent example of how an anthropological understanding of local cultural patterns in southern Mexico prevented the costly mistake of mass-producing a solar cooker developed for this area. Designed to reduce the use of firewood for cooking by encouraging the use of solar energy, these solar stoves, with the assistance of a four-foot parabolic reflector, produced levels of heat comparable to a wood fire. Although initial demonstrations of the cooker caught the interest of the local people, a number of cultural features militated against the widespread acceptance of this technological device. To illustrate: 1) the major part of the cooking in this part of Mexico is done early in the morning and

in the early evening, times when solar radiation is at its lowest level; and 2) although the solar stove was very effective for boiling beans and soup, it was inadequate for cooking tortillas, a basic staple in the local diet. Thus, for these and other reasons, it was decided not to mass-produce and market the solar cookers because, even though the cooker worked well technically, it made little sense culturally (Serrie, 1986).

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Adler, Doktor, and Redding (1986) review the areas of comparative and cross-cultural management and discuss the impact of cultural diversity on international organizational behavior. Their findings suggest that with the growing shift of business from the Atlantic to the Pacific Basin, East-West cultural differences are becoming increasingly significant for firms seeking to be successful in conducting international business. According to them, research in developmental psychology, sociology, and anthropology demonstrates that there are major differences that affect the cognitive processes of people from different cultures. As such, in the era of the global corporation, cultural diversity has to be recognized, understood, and appropriately used in organizations. Along with their findings, we will argue that that cross-cultural management would greatly benefit from anthropologically comparative studies that consider the impact of cognitive aspects of culture on managerial practice.

In the 1950s, anthropologist Edward T. Hall was beginning a career that would be highly influential in business in terms of cross-cultural communication. From 1950 to 1955, Hall served as director of the U.S. State Department's "Point Four" training program, a training program designed to teach technicians who would be working outside North America. Hall clearly understood the significance of cultural influence on communication effectiveness. Hall built a career in the cross-cultural communication field and eventually wrote several seminal works in business, anthropology, communication, and many other fields (Jordan, 2003).

Hall's practice and influence in the fields of cross-cultural communication and intercultural training have been monumental. He clearly understood that errors in cross-cultural communication could destroy a business deal or a peace agreement. In his first book, *The Silent Language,* he explained culture as communication, and communication as involving much more than just language. Communication included nonverbal characteristics and had to be understood in its cultural context (Hall, 1981). In later books, he explored the culturally different ways of conceiving space and time, as well as the implications in business practice. Hall's practice in and theoretical contributions to marketing communication generated great impact and international value in terms of cross-cultural factors. Many other anthropologists, such as Gay Ferraro (2006) among others, have continued Hall's work on communication in international settings.

Anthropologists' interest in cultural studies grew out of academic purposes but has been extended to business applications as well. The results of anthropological study on culture have been widely applied in various fields of the business world. In the business world, a profound understanding of cultural values in general and specific individual cultural characteristics in particular can lead to greater success in the global market and economy. On the other hand, cultural misunderstandings can be counterproductive for individual development, organizational effectiveness, and profits, because cultural factors influence people's motives, brand comprehension, attitude, and intention to purchase. Therefore, it is important that we clearly understand the fact that in the global marketplace the effectiveness of communication depends on many factors, however, the primary one among them is the capacity to understand our cultural

preferences and how they influence and are influenced by those from other parts of the world (Emery and Tian, 2003; Lillis and Tian, 2009).

We argue that the anthropological approach is a very effective way to assess the impact of culture on international marketing communications. We agree with Mariampolski (2006) that culture is important as a heuristic principle for describing and classifying human behaviors, and it is also an analytic concept to be used for explaining how individual choices result from the interpersonal influences and the symbolic universe that delineates everyday life. According to Mariampolski, culture operates on both the material and nonmaterial levels of human experience, serving as the foundation for the behaviors, meanings, and tools of all human collectives. To Mariampolski, cultural tools refer to all of the physical components of a group's life experiences, which include technology and materials, as well as the fundamental rules, codes, and techniques for accomplishing daily affairs. Cultural meanings refer to the sense-making process how people intellectually or emotionally understand the purposes, implications, and associations that underline all of human behaviors and the tools individuals use in everyday life.

The most famous researcher of cross-cultural marketing communication, Geert Hofstede (1991), has created a global model for helping business professionals to distinguish the culture differences pertaining to individual countries. This often-cited model of cross-cultural communication is commonly called the "four-dimension of culture model," which addresses power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity. Moreover, some researchers, such as Redpath and Nielsen (1997), Rhodes, at al. (2004) among others, have added one more dimension called "Confucian dynamism" into Hofstede's model, with the special intent of differentiating Chinese cultural values from Western cultural values.

In a previous study, Emery and Tian (2003) demonstrated that the significance of cross-cultural differences in advertising, one of most important formats of marketing communication, has become even clearer as we continue to move toward a globalized marketplace. It is important that marketing personnel should not let old stereotypes drive advertising strategies; this is particularly important in the Asian market, as China and Taiwan become formal members of the WTO. The findings indicate that heuristics such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions are too broad to capture the detailed differences required in launching an effective advertising campaign. While Emery and Tian's findings do not provide unequivocal recommendations for developing advertising, they do provide some general information for marketing practitioners seeking to do business in China. For example, one should consider the "seven appeals" (i.e., effectiveness, safety, approachability, durability, naturalness, nurturance and assurance, in descending order of importance). Conversely, the "ten appeals" (i.e., casualness, distinctiveness, community, status, adventurousness, affection, family, danger, fantasy, and popularity, in descending order of least importance) should be avoided. Thus, there is a strong need to consider market segmentation and to consult with experts in Chinese consumer behavior before developing ads for the China market.

Chaoyin, Jian and Ille (2011) state in a study on the telecommunications company "Qingqin 1+" advertising campaign that there is an emotional factor in advertising that can have a better outcome than rational advertising in promoting the telecommunication service brand. This confirms previous studies done on service advertising strategy. We argue that culture is deeply rooted in the life of each organization and its members, and exerts tremendous influence on a variety of day-to-day activities, such as how decisions are made, how resources are allocated, who gets promoted, and what behaviors are considered appropriate. As such, culture can have a profound impact on outcomes that are vitally important to an organization, including job satisfaction,

turnover, productivity and profitability. Clearly, if cultures are such powerful influencers of behavior, managers must work hard to understand and manage them. From a practical standpoint, building an awareness of both visible and invisible manifestations of culture is an important first step in determining how to manage this key institutional resource (Lillis and Tian, 2010). According to Perner (2011), culture is a problematic issue for many marketers since it is inherently nebulous and often difficult to understand. Whenever one violates the cultural norms of another country, it might become a deadlock for the continuation of business, because people from different cultures may feel uncomfortable with this violation.

Business negotiation, another kind of important format for marketing communication, also necessitates awareness of cultural difference. A recent study by Chang (2003) has concluded that in Chinese society, people emphasize the "zero-sum game" in most of their business competition activities. It is suggested that a successful negotiation should create a "win-win" situation. As Thompson (2001) noted, a true win-win negotiation is one where any agreement reached by negotiators covers most interests of both sides. However, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to improve one party's outcome, while simultaneously not hurting the other party's result. As such, honesty could be the first step toward a better agreement with the Chinese business community. To be honest about one's intentions, goals, and interests can help to build trust and create a positive bargaining zone. Respecting culture difference and being patient in waiting for a response will be the second step toward a successful negotiation. Lastly, but not finally, extra services or practical favors cement friendship and sincerity in business transactions.

These two recent studies suggest that in the real business world, firms can profit by studying the Hofstede culture model, which entails accepting cultural differences and practicing those skills in marketing communication practices, enabling them to gain the expected or better outcomes. There are innumerable factors that affect the international business environment but a fundamental precondition of any successful international business enterprise is effective communication, which more or less involves the businessperson's awareness of other cultures. As such, cross-cultural problems definitely provide greater challenges and opportunities for business firms in the 21st century, even though these challenges might not be new to the marketing communication field itself. The effectiveness of international marketing communication can be strengthened when businesspeople become aware of cultural differences and their impact on communications.

There are many unresolved problems or issues that need to be solved and discussed by scholars and marketing professionals in theory as well as practice. In the theoretical area, the following themes and issues need to be probed and discussed:

- Cultural impact of markets: international versus domestic marketing communication;
- Standardization versus adaptation in cross-cultural communication;
- Cross-cultural dimensions of marketing communication research;
- Cross-cultural aspects of marketing communication mix (advertising, promotion, sales, public relations, trade shows, and commercials);
- Cross-cultural aspects of marketing communication in the service sector;
- Cross-cultural communication implications of the aftermarket;
- Cross-cultural marketing communication education and professional training.

The seven topics or themes listed above can be viewed as guidelines for further theoretical studies, although they will not be treated as exclusive for marketing scholars. More themes and topics will be discovered as the theoretical discussions proceed. As marketing professionals, we

need to know clearly that although marketing principles will remain the same, there will continuously be new challenges to marketing in the new century. The impact of cross-cultural factors on marketing is one of such issues that demands serious study. In terms of marketing practice, we suggest the following points as guidelines for marketers to minimize possible cross-cultural marketing mistakes:

- Be sensitive to do's and don'ts, taboos, and regulations. Develop cultural empathy in terms of marketing communication.
- Recognize, understand, and respect another's cultural difference.
- Be culturally neutral and realize that different is not necessarily better or worse.
- Never assume transferability of a concept from one culture to another. For instance, if local businesspeople in developing countries indicate that they do not like Americans, they may not mean that they do not want to buy American goods. It simply means they are expected to say certain things in public, but that they may operate differently in private.
- Get cultural informants involved in decision-making. Cultural informants could be local businesspeople or well trained anthropologists.

As indicated above, an anthropological approach is very effective in facilitating international business. In fact, the implications of anthropological theories and methods in business practice have become popular and increasingly accepted by the business world. Although the anthropological approaches to cross-cultural communication are by no means entirely new to the business world, they are becoming more familiar and are perceived as more reliable by business leaders and marketers. How to apply anthropological approaches into cross-cultural marketing communication practice is a topic that should be looked at not only by anthropology itself, but also by the completely theoretical arena of marketing communication. The potential of anthropological approaches applied to cross-cultural marketing communication is unlimited, but yet still needs to be investigated by anthropologists and marketing communication professionals conducting joint investigations (Jordan, 2003; Tian, Lillis, and van Marrewijk, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS TO CHINA MARKETERS

The importance of the success of marketing communication is obvious in progressively more competitive international markets. Marketing communication strategies and skills determine the profitability of business organizations. Culture is one of the key factors that lies deeply rooted in the life of each individual and exerts tremendous influence on a variety of human behaviors. Cultural difference can have a profound impact on outcomes that are vitally important to the success of a business deal. From a practical standpoint, building an awareness of both visible and invisible manifestations of culture is a critically important first step in determining how to effectively conduct marketing communications internationally and cross-culturally.

Cross-cultural communication is becoming even more important for the Chinese marketers in this new century since China planned to more widely open its market to the world and export more of its service and products to the world market. It is suggested that Chinese business leaders are better prepared for cross-cultural communication and put it at their corporate strategic level for marketing China and China marketing. It is true that in today's business world, whoever masters cross-cultural communication strategies and skills will win the competition.

While international business is often conducted through various means from culture to culture, marketing communications can be enhanced when managers are cross-culturally trained

to be aware of areas likely to create communication roadblocks and conflict. International business in general is enhanced when people from different cultures find new approaches to solve problems by creating solutions that combine cultural perspectives and examine the problem at hand from each other's differing perspectives.

Moreover, it is key for cross-cultural business leaders to understand one's business partners well enough to make cultural adjustments to solve the conflicts (Hooker, 2008). Anthropologists are professionally trained to be highly sensitive to cultural differences; the result of anthropological study on culture has been widely applied in various fields in the real business world. It is suggested that anthropological approaches offer highly effective applications and solutions toward the understanding of cross-cultural issues in international marketing communication.

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