

# Comparison the Advertising of Dolce & Gabbana and CCTV “Chinese Chopsticks”

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The increase of the global market has led to the emergence of international advertising, and understanding cultural differences is usually deemed as a prerequisite for successful international advertising (Forsgren & Johanson, 2014). An effective advertising campaign can be standardised in creative strategies, but applies to local culture in execution. Therefore, in order to be effective advertising should exert links to the local culture. However, the Chinese have rejected a new advertising campaign from Dolce & Gabbana because it has been perceived to contain discrimination. This is a controversial advertisement in China, it is considered as racial discrimination in Chinese modern society (Prada, 2018). In this advertising campaign, an Asian model who is dressed in the brand's clothes is attempting to eat Italian food with Chinese chopsticks.

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## Background

The communication style is also a core factor in advertising. Anthropologist Edward Twitchell Hall (1984) points out that cultures are needed to be explored how to contain hidden meaning and indirect manner, it is necessary to note the communication styles in different contexts. In the advertisement, the brand of Dolce & Gabbana strives to market in China, but somehow the brand campaign wrongly insulted their target market with a mockery on a traditional tool. In the videos, with the names of #DG Loves China and #DG the Great Show, Chinese audience interpreted the advertising message as sarcastic, disrespectful and racist toward Chinese people and their culture. The advertising campaign was perceived to lean heavily on Chinese stereotypes and contained racist elements. Critics strongly complained that the Dolce & Gabbana advertising campaign that appeared on the Chinese News Channel “Jing Daily” is partially problematic because it carelessly uses outdated and stereotypical Chinese cultural symbols.

## Take “Dolce & Gabbana” as an Example

In the subtitles of Dolce & Gabbana's advertisement video gave a nickname of “small-stick tool” to the chopsticks, which provoked serious negative feelings to Chinese audience as they felt being mocked on their culture. Recently, based on the contents in Dolce & Gabbana's controversial video clip, it showed a Chinese

woman struggled awkwardly to eat Italian food with chopsticks. As the consequence of Chinese audience’s reaction after viewing, according Jing Daily news, there were more than 18,000 Chinese social media, namely “Weibo”, posting about the action of boycotting the Dolce & Gabbana brand and products in China market and many other Weibo users have demanded sincere apology from the brand.

It seems that Dolce & Gabbana tried to use humorous elements in their advertisements, which did not consider the emotional responses and perspectives of the Chinese audience. As one of the historically richest countries in civilization, the Chinese are proud of their traditional cultures and country. It can be seen from the perspectives of script and actor, the brand in the advertising has crossed the line of acceptance and was seriously disrespectful. Most Chinese people have expressed their disappointment and concerns regarding the Dolce & Gabbana brand. In the case of cross-cultural advertising, it is so critical that advertising strategy must be planned sensibly by careful considering the target market and their local target audiences who have very different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Meanwhile, the advertisement should also be designed to interpret messages and meanings from Chinese perspectives. In this advertising campaign, it was unfortunate to choose chopsticks, as they are a significant symbol of Chinese national cultural identity. Dolce & Gabbana lacked cultural sensitivity and had not explored the relevant cultural codes tissues to a sufficient degree.

### **Take CCTV “Chinese Chopsticks” as an Example**

According to China official TV channel CCTV, all the chopsticks themed advertisement should represent Chinese traditional inheritance, demonstrating filial piety, expressing family love, pointing out hope for the future and creating good relations with neighbours. In China, chopsticks represent joy and happiness; it is not surprising that the campaign of Dolce & Gabbana illustrating Chinese people as unsophisticated users of “little sticks” resulted in widespread rage. For various brands, it is difficult to create impactful advertising in a market, which is based on different cultural traits. It is very important to consider how to work with global brands to explore an effective creative strategy in China. The case studies analysed and discussed above are typical of advertising in modern society in China. The analysis provides essential contexts for comprehending Chinese advertising. As a significant means for inheriting cultural identity and development of brands, advertising has a responsibility to contribute to a brands’ development and global business market. However, one of the pressing issues is a lack of creativity and traditional inheritance in the field of Chinese advertising. Chinese clients and their government usually have a strong dominance in deciding what are the creative strategies should be applied in advertisement rather than based on their appointed advertisers’ professional opinions; it is necessary to shift clients and designer relations. In the last decade, China has been seen more as part of the global market. It prompts Chinese people to become more assertive, so altering the dynamics locally, regionally and globally. The business model is still the leading driver more than the creative idea, which might be the difference in understanding creativity in China. Creativity in business has more value than creativity in art. Consequently, in China, they are aiming to stimulate the science wheel of creativity (Bilby & Sinha, 2017). This phenomenon has led to many negative issues and has distanced from Western creative advertising directly. Academics Leung and Hui (2014) and Sasser and Koslow (2008) point out that because of this conservatism and despotism, the genuinely creative advertising communication seems to have been stifled. “Chinese politics remains authoritarian and conservative” (Cheng & Chan, 2009, p. 144). In this context, Chinese advertising regulation has gradually

been shaped into a complicated system, and the aim is to control its functions. If creativity truly is a valid method in the advertising area, it is necessary to comprehend how to create effective advertising in the Chinese context and understand what main problems need to be resolved.

### Conclusion

According to many case studies, transnational culture is a foundation area can be explored for difference in transnational or cross-national culture should be an important aspect to be explored in international advertising. international advertising. It is a direct outcome of internationalisation of accumulation and production promoted by standardised development stereotypes and cultural forms (Janus & Noreen, 2018). The main aspect of transnational culture is the differences in ideology, thus advertising transmit the ideology; thus, advertising should convey the ideology precisely through direct visual communication and any other synthetic form. “Ideological analysis need merely be repeated and consistent in order to become, itself, an ideological object” (Barthes, 1975, p. 104). In some cases, advertising relies on many topics which are status, youth, happiness, fashion, luxury and beauty; however, it is necessary to explore social contradictions and cultural backgrounds. On one hand transnational advertising is challenging to traditional cultures, on the other hand it combines Western ideas with contemporaneity. To some extent, traditional cultures are implicit; on the contrary, the modern ideas represent fresh opinions in target marketing. It is necessary to eliminate local cultural variations by using transnational culture. It is important to shape a unique cultural and emotional resonance in the advertising campaign. Based on foreign advertising firms, it is necessary to consider how to organise logical relationships between Chinese characteristics and Western perspectives.

Global culture is the direct outcome of transnational business rather than the strategy, which consciously subverts local cultures. Effective logical marketing can create the global advertising campaign that trigger resonance among different consumers. It is significant to realise the role of advertising in the developing countries especially for transnational companies and global advertising agencies. In the case of a multinational brand, the biggest challenge is how to blend a product sensitively into their target environment.

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