



Cultural Catalysts: How Cultural Trends Impact Marketing Campaigns

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Abstract— Cultural tendencies play an important role in the shaping the marketing approaches. Vinamilk, Coca-Cola, and Starbucks are brands adapting their global strategies to local cultures. Drives such as digitalization, sustainable development and personalisation compel shifts in marketing approaches. There are, though, some difficulties such as cultural and different rules that demand careful attention. The effectiveness of the marketing strategies developed for many countries should be viewed as an example with an emphasis on respect for the local culture. This approach contributes to long-term success, competitive advantage, and strong bonds with consumers in rapidly evolving international markets.

Index Terms—Cultural trends, Marketing strategies, Consumer behavior, Subcultures, Social classes, Globalization, Brand messaging, Digital culture, Sustainability, Customized experiences, Advertising adaptation, Sociocultural factors.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cultural trends have become prominent factors in defining consumer behavior, identity and marketing strategy in the contemporary environment, a very fast changing market. With the effect of globalization as well as the growing influence of technological change, companies consider it important to remain sensitive to the shifts in culture. Depending on whether the shift in culture is the result of a social cause, the advancement of technology or a change in economy, the shift is consumer driven and creates new consumption patterns. These

forces are often called trends, and when marketing strategies employ them adequately, they enable companies to connect with audiences more strongly, correlate with their brand and use them as an opportunity to increase their share in the market.

This report examines how cultural trends shape marketing communications, demonstrating the need to update the brand message as the target audience's values change. In our analysis, through this path, we develop marketing communication insights obtained by following real case studies and emerging cultural trends. This report specifies tactics of the marketing strategy that undermine marketing strategies without sufficient understanding of culture.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

First, we need to understand culture and its related things. Culture is a system of values, beliefs, traditions, norms, and behaviors that are formed, developed, and inherited through many generations. Besides the impact of culture on consumer behavior, there are two other concepts that have a strong impact on this: subculture and social class. According to Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., & Opresnik, M. O, subculture is groups of people with shared value systems based on common life experiences and situations and social classes are society's relatively permanent and ordered divisions whose members share similar values, interests, and behaviors [8]. So we can infer that the cultural trends are relatively patterns of collective behavior that emerge within societies over time. These trends reflect changes in social norms, values, and lifestyles, often driven by factors such as technological advancements, economic shifts, and political changes. Cultural trends can manifest in various forms, including fashion, music, technology, and social movements. Businesses that want to develop long-term and sustainably need to understand and grasp these trends.

A. Methodology

In conducting this study, which sought to examine the relationship between cultural trends and marketing

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campaigns whereby marketing campaigns are shaped by particular cultural trends, a qualitative research approach was used. This approach was deemed appropriate because it is useful in acquiring detailed knowledge, skills and attitudes and in examining complicated social issues including culture and marketing.

B. Data Collection

The research was based on secondary data analysis whereby published literature, case studies and marketing reports were reviewed. The main sources were scholarly articles, status reports, and official documents of multinational companies, including Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and Vinamilk. Furthermore, articles and reliable online sources were used to gather current information on culture and how it affects marketing approaches.

C. Case Study Selection

Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and Vinamilk were selected as the case corporations for the analysis. These companies were selected because they are well established organizations that are present in many countries, are flexible in terms of culture and have been able to successfully implement marketing strategies that are culturally appropriate. The case studies investigated how the companies modified their marketing communication strategies to fit the cultural attributes, customs, and preferences of the targeted countries.

Coca-Cola: Understood regarding its local product marketing and advertising activities during important local holidays and special occasions.

Starbucks: Noted for modifying Asian design elements into its identity as an international brand.

Vinamilk: Studied as one of the prominent Vietnamese brands whose business strategy combines national character with the expansion of the international market.

A. Analytical Framework

For the interpretation of the collected data, the research pursued a thematic analysis approach. Cross-cutting variables like culture change, consumer involvement, and localization were abstracted and classified. This framework facilitated the understanding of similarities and differences across companies and their marketing approaches.

The results of this approach are very informative about the nature of culture in relation to formulating an appropriate marketing strategy, such as understanding culture as a dynamic element to market a brand more effectively.

III. CASE STUDIES

Global brands like Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and Vinamilk are prime examples of adapting to different environments and customer engagement strategies through various local cultures, thereby achieving widespread recognition and building brand image among new customers.

A. Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola is one of the world's leading beverage brands in terms of annual consumption. To achieve this position, the company has applied numerous marketing strategies since 1892. For instance, in China, Coca-Cola frequently launches special product promotion strategies during Lunar New Year, one of the country's biggest festivals, to emphasize family sentiments and traditions [7]. Moreover, Coca-Cola introduces flavors with a local touch, such as lychee and green tea, to cater to the Asian palate. In the Middle East, Coca-Cola often focuses on and highlights compassion and community during Ramadan [11]. It must be acknowledged that Coca-Cola has done an excellent job in product promotion, not only attracting consumer attention but also building a brand image associated with different cultural values in each region [1]. The sensitivity and flexibility in adjusting marketing strategies are key factors that have led Coca-Cola to its current global success in the beverage sector.

B. Starbucks

Next, we move to the marketing strategy of Starbucks, another globally renowned beverage founded in 1971 with its headquarters in Washington, USA. Initially, Starbucks was just a small coffee shop specializing in high-quality coffee drinks and coffee grinders. However, thanks to a smart approach and the right direction, Starbucks has now established its position in the global coffee industry and is also a pioneering brand in promoting Arabica coffee culture. Similar to Coca-Cola, Starbucks adapts to diverse markets by combining local aesthetics with indigenous preferences in its products. In Japan, for instance, Starbucks organizes seasonal events and introduces its products with sakura (cherry blossom) flavors, a distinctive symbol of Japanese culture, to attract the consumer market [12]. They also artfully design and decorate their stores with a refined, minimalist, and elegant style that aligns well with the artistic tastes of most Japanese people. In India, to cater to local tastes, Starbucks introduces bottled masala chai and other vegetarian options [13]. This helps the brand easily integrate into the daily life and community of Indian consumers. In China, Starbucks targets urban professional market by stressing

sophistication and modernization in its marketing strategies.

Starbucks positions itself as a symbol of elegance and modernity to attract urban professionals and offer them high-end tea brewing and "Reserve Roastery" experiences that few brands can match [14].

Apart from adapting to local and global cultures, Starbucks continuously researches new beverages, pastries, and consumer products to meet diverse customer needs and create new industry trends. Notable among these are the successful and highly profitable collections of seasonal thermos cups and glass cups. Beyond beverages, Starbucks is also famous for its cup collections. Each season, Starbucks launches cup lines with distinctive designs to tap into customers' collecting desires, creating trends that drive customers to be willing to pay a premium to own them [6]. These strategic factors have helped Starbucks not only become one of the most famous coffee brands in the world but also maintain sustainable growth and build customer loyalty.

C. Vinamilk

Finally, we discuss Vinamilk, Vietnam's largest dairy brand, which has successfully combined Vietnamese national identity with an international outlook. Vinamilk emphasizes the use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients in its advertising campaigns, with phrases like "fresh ingredients" and "locally sourced" frequently highlighted. This not only clarifies the origin of its dairy products but also ensures high quality for consumers, thereby fostering strong trust and loyalty with the target customer base. Additionally, Vinamilk keeps up with current global health trends and adjusts its products to suit the majority of consumers. For instance, they introduce calcium-fortified products for bone health aimed at the elderly and children, as well as low-sugar or sugar-free milk options for those who are overweight or have cardiovascular-related conditions [16].

Thanks to these robust marketing strategies, Vinamilk not only maintains its leading position as Vietnam's top dairy brand but also expands its market presence and makes a distinctive mark on the international stage.

IV. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT CULTURAL TRENDS

In a rapidly changing world, cultural trends play a central role in shaping people's lifestyles, attitudes and interactions. Here are some of the most prominent cultural trends that are influencing many aspects of society, especially in the field of marketing:

A. The Rise of Digital Culture

In the past few years, digital technology has been developing strongly all over the world. It has become popular in the daily lives of most people in almost every country. Digital culture is not only the integration of advanced technology into life but also marks a change in the way people interact and express themselves. In Vietnam, digital culture is booming strongly with the increasing rate of smartphone and internet usage in Vietnam.

According to VECOM (2024), Vietnam had 78.44 million internet users at the start of 2024, when the internet penetration rate reached 79.1%. Vietnam had 72.70 million social media users in January 2024, equivalent to 73.3% of the total population. There are a total of 168.5 million mobile connections in Vietnam at the beginning of 2024, equivalent to 169.8% of the total population [3].

Today's consumers are constantly updating themselves and are influenced by online trends and social media influencers such as KOLs, gamers, streamers, tiktokers, youtubers, etc. These trends are opportunities for businesses to attract and engage with consumers through creative campaigns. For example, campaigns using short videos, memes or hashtags have become mainstream strategies to attract the younger generation. But they also pose challenges, such as maintaining authenticity and addressing the risk of misinformation. For example, while short videos and hashtags are effective marketing tools, relying too much on viral trends can lead to superficial campaigns that lack lasting impact.

The digital trend also brings many benefits to businesses and customers. Businesses can leverage digital to optimize management processes (From importing goods, and controlling inventory to tracking sales through integrated systems such as POS Point of Sale), improve customer experience (Digital technologies such as QR codes, self-service POS machines, and integrated mobile applications help customers have a more convenient shopping experience), analyze data and predict trends (one of the biggest advantages of digitalization is the ability to collect and analyze data. Through management systems, store owners can track customer shopping behavior, thereby predicting future consumption trends. For example, if a product type has high sales in winter, the store can proactively stock up on goods and deploy appropriate advertising campaigns). However, it also raises concerns about data privacy and cybersecurity. Companies need to balance leveraging technology and protecting consumer trust by implementing transparent data practices.

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B. The culture of healthy and sustainable living

Consumers are not only concerned about the quality of products but also their impact on the environment. Sustainability is no longer an option but has become an essential requirement for modern consumers. Consumers themselves are also responsible for using food in a way that protects the environment. From choosing friendly materials to applying "zero waste" strategies. According to a survey by PwC, more than 90% of respondents are willing to pay more for products with clear origins and using sustainable materials. Many consumers prefer to buy organic, bio-based and non-GMO products. The sustainable fashion industry is expected to attract over 1 million consumers by 2023, with 60% of consumers surveyed trusting products with a "green" label and 55% willing to change their consumption habits to help protect the environment. They also prioritize healthy products that provide good energy and limit the consumption of unhealthy foods such as tobacco, alcohol, soft drinks, sugary and fatty foods [9]. However, affordability remains a significant barrier, as many sustainable products are priced higher.

The green consumption trend is strongly influencing businesses to change their thinking, so that products and services meet higher ethical standards. Marketing campaigns that emphasize sustainability receive positive feedback from users, addressing their need to contribute to a greener future. In Vietnam, Nestle is the first company in Vietnam to convert 100% of its disposable plastic straws for ready-to-drink products to paper straws from sustainable forests. This example demonstrates how businesses can adapt to meet consumers' needs for sustainability [4].

C. The Culture of Personalization and Respect for Uniqueness

Personalization is the practice of personalizing experiences or communications by using basic, detailed customer information that businesses collect to create advertising campaigns for specific goals, targeting potential customers. Furthermore, personalization will drive both customer loyalty and revenue.

Businesses are personalizing the customer experience by collecting data and segmenting customers, using omnichannel, personalizing customer experiences via email, and increasing loyalty offers.

Personalization is becoming a major driver in consumer culture as consumers want to express themselves through the products and services they choose. In fact, 75% of businesses have experienced some form of personalization, and 90% of them are aware of the importance of this [15].

V. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Developing a multicultural marketing strategy necessitates a thoughtful approach, taking into account the cultural nuances, legal guidelines, and brand image. A single misstep in cultural sensitivity can result in a public controversy, as demonstrated by H&M's 2018 marketing gaffe, which serves as a reminder of the importance of cultural awareness in marketing initiatives [10].

Businesses must acknowledge the unique advertising regulations, intellectual property laws, and data privacy standards in each region, which can create challenges in achieving global consistency. The European Union, for instance, has strict data handling regulations under GDPR, China's state censorship laws require adherence to specific guidelines. The cultural context influences consumer perceptions, and a message that resonates well in one market may fall flat in another, underscoring the significance of localized marketing approaches.

To effectively engage with diverse audiences, businesses need to create tailored marketing campaigns that reflect the preferences and values of each specific market. This involves a deep understanding of regional differences in communication styles, consumer behaviors, and cultural norms. By taking a culturally sensitive and region-specific approach, businesses can minimize the risk of cultural missteps and maximize the effectiveness of their marketing initiatives.

Successful multicultural marketing requires a proactive and adaptive strategy that can navigate the complexities of different cultural contexts. This involves staying informed about the latest cultural trends, adapting marketing messages to suit local tastes, and ensuring compliance with regional regulations. By taking the time to understand and appreciate the unique characteristics of each market, businesses can build stronger relationships with customers and establish a more positive brand image.

Ultimately, a multicultural marketing strategy is an ongoing process that demands continuous learning, flexibility, and creativity. It requires a willingness to listen, adapt, and respond to the evolving needs and preferences of diverse audiences. By embracing this approach, businesses can unlock new opportunities for growth, innovation, and success in the global marketplace.

To successfully navigate multicultural marketing, companies must conduct thorough market research to deeply understand their target demographics. This involves gathering information about their preferences, values, and behaviors to create effective marketing strategies. By collaborating with local experts, including linguists and cultural consultants, businesses can develop culturally appropriate messaging that resonates with their target audience.



For instance, Coca-Cola's marketing campaigns often incorporate local languages, traditions, and festivals, while maintaining its global theme of happiness and unity. This approach is essential for brands that want to establish a strong presence in diverse markets. Companies must also adapt their offerings to align with cultural preferences, such as creating Halal-certified products in predominantly Muslim countries or eco-friendly initiatives in environmentally conscious markets. [5]

An inclusive marketing strategy requires an iterative review process where local feedback is prioritized, and potential insensitivities are identified early. This involves actively listening to customers, gathering feedback, and making adjustments as needed to prevent cultural missteps. Furthermore, building a diverse team with representation from various cultures can help preempt cultural missteps and create campaigns that resonate globally.

Additionally, technology like AI-driven sentiment analysis can allow brands to gauge public response to their messaging in real-time, enabling swift corrective action if needed. This helps businesses stay agile and responsive to changing market conditions. Ultimately, companies must strike a balance between flexibility and consistency by maintaining their core brand values while tailoring their approach to local markets.

For example, McDonald's integrates local flavors like the McAloo Tikki in India and the Teriyaki Burger in Japan, ensuring relevance without compromising its identity as a fast-food giant [2]. This approach demonstrates the importance of adaptability and cultural sensitivity in multicultural marketing. By embracing these principles, brands can build trust and loyalty among diverse audiences worldwide and establish a strong reputation in global markets.

It's worth noting that brands should aim to be authentic and genuine in their approach to multicultural marketing. This involves being respectful of local cultures and avoiding cultural appropriation or stereotypes. By doing so, businesses can create marketing campaigns that are both effective and culturally sensitive, and ultimately, drive long-term growth and success.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural trends are not simply a passing fad, they are one of the most influential aspects that guide the path of marketing. Thus, the brands that follow and adapt these trends can create strong attachments with the consumers, able to stand out from the competition, leading to a positive growth trend. Connecting the strategies of marketing with cultural movements allows businesses to become the leaders in the markets they operate in and

guarantees great prospects for the future in the ever-changing environment.

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