

LI Dongjin, AN Shenghui, YANG Hua

## A content analysis of the newspaper advertisements westernization in China

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**Abstract** The purpose of this study is, by means of studying the changes in Chinese advertisements' contents and forms over a decade, to evaluate the advertising westernization in China and to provide suggestions for Chinese companies in selecting proper advertising strategies. If relatively typical Western cultural characteristics are presented in Chinese advertisements, it indicates that the cultural distance between East and West is reduced, and standardization strategies may be a better choice for foreign enterprises. Otherwise, they should adopt specialization or combined strategies.

**Keywords** advertisement westernization, advertising appeal, content analysis

**摘要** 通过研究中国广告的内容及形式,发现在广告内容及形式上的变化情况,判断出中国广告西方化程度,从而对企业采取何种广告传播策略提供参考。如果中国广告中呈现较浓的西方文化特征,可以从侧面说明东西方文化差距减小,标准化广告策略可能是外商企业的一个较好的广告传播策略。否则,就应采用差异化广告策略和组合策略。

**关键词** 广告西方化,广告诉求,内容分析

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LI Dongjin (✉), YANG Hua  
Department of Marketing, Business School, Nankai University, Tianjin 300071, China  
E-mail: djli1280@163.com

AN Shenghui  
School of Business, University of International Business and Economics, Beijing100029, China  
E-mail: ruby\_an@sohu.com

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## 1 Introduction

The study on the westernization of advertisement was put forward in the academic dispute over standardization strategy versus specialization strategy. And, this issue mainly discusses from the point of culture.

In 1992, American scholar Mueller examined the level of Westernization in Japanese advertising and proposed the standards of westernization, with which she studied the westernization of Japanese magazine advertising from 1978 to 1988. A sample of Japanese print advertisements from 1978 and 1988 was content-analyzed. Mueller's results suggested that rather than being westernized, Japanese advertisements actually became more Japanese.

Since the reform and opening up to the outside world, China's economy has been growing vigorously and foreign enterprises have been trying to enter the enormous Chinese market. While advertising their products and service, they also bring along their folkways, customs, lifestyles and values into the Chinese market.

Due to the closer economic ties between China and other countries as well as the formation of the global market, more and more Chinese advertisements start to present Western cultural characteristics. Some directly use Western-based appeals and some use western models and celebrities. Non-translated English-language words are used in Chinese advertisements commonly. Advertisements adopting westernization strategies are from both foreign and domestic companies alike.

Advertisements reflect the publicity strategy a company takes. More specifically, a company has to choose among standardization advertising strategy, specialization advertising strategy, or a combination of the above two. Foreign companies, which usually took standardization strategies, copy their advertising idea and practice, used in their home country into China and always try to select the same advertising media. Companies having adopted specialization strategies, usually carry out different advertising practice in China according to Chinese national factors, such as economy, culture, society, law, etc. And those who chose the combination strategies would implement a compromised tactic of "standardization of the theme and embodiment of the local features" In contrast to their foreign peers, Chinese companies often have no specific and explicit advertising strategies, resulting in no sharp-cut advertising styles of their own. Many Chinese companies have no idea which appeal they should take, or whether western models, languages, and backgrounds should be used in their advertisements.

The purpose of this study is, by means of studying the changes in Chinese advertisements' contents and forms, to evaluate advertising westernization in China and to provide suggestions for Chinese companies in selecting proper

advertising strategies. If the relatively typical western cultural characteristics are presented in Chinese advertisements, which shows that the cultural distance between east and west is reduced, and standardization strategy may be a better choice for foreign enterprises. Otherwise, they should adopt specialization strategies or combined strategies. To domestic enterprises, this research can help them decide whether it is suitable to embody west culture characteristics in their advertisements.

This study carries out analyses of difference on the degree of newspaper advertisements westernization in 1991 and 2001 by means of studying advertising appeals; second, it carries out analyses of difference on the degree of newspaper advertisements westernization in 1991 and 2001 by means of studying advertising contents and forms. Drawing on these analyses, we hope to find out the tracks and causes of Chinese newspaper advertisements westernization process, and thus to provide domestic enterprises theoretical evidences and practical suggestions in selecting proper advertising strategies suitable to China's unique cultural background.

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## **2 Theory background and research hypothesis**

Since the 1980's, scholars had started to make cross cultural comparison between east and west advertisements. Belk, Bryce and Pollay (1985) conducted a series of studies on Japan-American advertisements. Their results showed that although Americanization trend is clearly presented in Japanese advertisements, deep-rooted Japanese cultural values are still prominent. After compared the differences in culture and the way of expression between Japan magazine advertisements and American ones, Hong (1986) pointed out that Japanese advertisements were more emotional, if not so aggressive, than American advertisements. Zandpour et al. (1992) examined the differences and similarities among American, French, and Taiwanese advertising in terms of strategy, content, and execution form. They found that US commercials generally address specific consumers' personal needs and problems while French commercials are more likely to be dramatic with minimal copy and seldomly address the public with lectures. Commercials from Taiwan tended to present facts about the availability of the product and special offers without being conceptually integrated.

Individualism-collectivism dimension are often used to explain the cultural differences between western and eastern cultures. Zhang and Neelankavil (1997) found that appeals which emphasize individualistic benefits are more effective in the US than in China. In addition, Connectedness-Separateness theory is developed to analyze the advertising themes between western and eastern country differences. (Wang and Chan 2001; Wang 2000; Wang et al. 2000). It is proposed that cross-cultural differences in consumer responses to different advertising

appeals may be explained by consumer Connectedness-separateness self-schema, rather than cultural orientation per se (Wang 2000).

Bang et al. (2005) compared the advertising appeals difference in the service sector. They examined the service quality dimensions and advertising appeals conveyed in services advertisements in the USA and Korea. Even though a number of studies indicate that there are obvious cultural differences between western and eastern advertisements, there are also a tendency for the developing countries to adopt more and more western values and appeals faced with globalization. Therefore, that there exists an increasing advertising westernization in developing countries, is an interesting topic to explore. Some research uncovers this issue with empirical studies in the developing countries but there is not much empirical study in China (Li, 2000).

As one of the most influential scholars in the field, Muller (1987), based on her study on the difference of advertising appeals between Japan-American advertisements, asserted that there is only a difference of degrees, rather than a difference of types, between Japan-American advertisements. In 1992, Mueller studied the westernization of Japanese magazine advertisement. The results revealed that, instead of becoming more westernized, Japanese advertising has been actually becoming more Japanized over the years. Since Muller's setting of advertisements westernization standards, more and more scholars have shifted their focus to developing countries' advertising westernization trend. But so far, there have been few studies on China's advertisement westernization, and relevant advertisements westernization criteria fit for China's practical conditions are still lacking (Li, 2006). Considering that Muller's criteria are widely accepted and used in studying advertisements westernization, we also adopt her criteria in the present study. Generally speaking, Muller's criteria range from the choice of advertising appeals, employment of western models or celebrities, to the usage of western languages and backgrounds, etc. Among different advertising appeals, westernized advertising appeals include hard-sell appeal, product merit appeal and soft-shell appeal which is generally regarded as more oriental. Comparatively speaking, hard-sell appeal emphasizes the brand name, recommends the products explicitly. Companies which have adopted hard-sell appeal strategy in their advertisements, usually compare their products openly with those of their competitors or with a certain criterion. By mentioning the competitor companies' names or using commendatory words such as "No.1" or "first-runner" to describe themselves, hard-sell appeal is, in nature, a more aggressive advertising strategy. In contrast, soft-sell appeal strategy tries to transmit a certain mood, or plays up a certain atmosphere through beautiful scenes, touching stories or beautiful prose. Specifically, companies which adopt soft-sell appeal strategies emphasize not the products or the products' characteristics, but certain human emotions. These companies attempt to communicate with customers in a suggestive and indirect

way. For example, advertisements using soft-sell appeals usually accentuate facts and information and depict product features in great details, but do not mention rivals' brand names. Mueller (1992), when studying Japanese advertising westernization, thought the employment of western models and celebrities could be used as an index of westernization. Though these western models or celebrities may or may not have special knowledge of the advertised products, their presence in certain advertisements may deepen consumers' perceptual knowledge about the goods. In China, consumers sometimes regard foreign goods as a symbol of quality. For the sake of sales promotion or an attractive exoticism, Chinese companies are fond of using western models or celebrities in their advertisements. Muller argued that the increasing amount of western languages (English in particular) used in Japanese advertisements is a symbol of Japanese advertising westernization. She thus used them as a criterion of advertising westernization study.

Based on the above rationals, we propose hypotheses as follows:

Hypothesis 1: product advertisements in 2001 used more hard-sell appeal than those in 1991.

Hypothesis 2: product advertisements in 2001 used more product merit appeal than those in 1991.

Hypothesis 3: product advertisements in 2001 used more soft-sell appeal than those in 1991.

Hypothesis 4: product advertisements in 2001 used more Western models or celebrities than those in 1991.

Hypothesis 5: product advertisements in 2001 used more Western language than those in 1991.

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### **3 Research method**

#### **3.1 Sampling**

Since there are so many kinds of advertising media in China, it is impossible to survey all of them. In this article, we study only newspaper advertisements owing to the following reasons. First, it is difficult to investigate television advertisements. Second, newspapers are one of the irreplaceable media in our daily lives. Though the utilization of advanced technological means in advertisements is important, we believe technology is not the soul of the media, but a tool. Besides, every technology has its comparative advantages and disadvantages. The soul of a medium is to satisfy people's needs and provide suitable information service. In this sense, the long-history newspaper advertisements have no substitute, even in an era of internet booming. Third, in

recent years, the annual sales of newspaper advertisements has been increasing. Liang Qinjian, general secretary of the Newspaper Advertising Committee of China Advertising Association, once pointed out that the newspaper advertising market will still have a good prospect in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The annual sales of newspaper advertisements in China are very likely to double in the next six or seven years.

When choosing specific newspapers to study, we took into consideration comprehensively the following aspects: newspaper circulation, scopes of distribution, contents, readers' levels and ages, newspaper prices, etc. We intentionally select those comprehensive newspapers containing information, ranging from society, culture, economy, sports, and politics to family.

Regional differences exist in the advertising development in China. Comparatively speaking, newspaper advertising in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangdong are the most developed. Besides, most of China's newspapers are local papers. There are few influential and comprehensive national papers. Judging from the key aspects such as circulation, advertising market share and influence, local newspapers are the main force in China's newspaper industry.

Finally, we decided to choose two comprehensive local papers (one evening paper and one daily paper) from Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou respectively. Our final choices are *Beijing Daily*, *Beijing Evening*, *Shanghai Jiefang Daily*, *Xinmin Evening News*, *Guangzhou Daily*, and *Yangcheng Evening News*.

The reason why we chose to study newspaper advertisements in 1991 and 2001 is that advertisement expenses in 1991 represents the average level of newspaper advertising development in the 1980s. We then surveyed newspaper advertisements in 2001 to trace the changes in advertisement contents and forms over the ten years.

### 3.2 Coding

Before coding, we handed out a guide handbook to each of the two evaluators, containing the operational definitions of the terms we used in the research such as hard-sell appeal, product merit appeal, soft-sell appeal, Western model or celebrity, Western language and Western background, etc. During the course of coding, each evaluator shall assess advertisements independently. In case of disagreement, they should work out a settlement together through discussion. If an advertisement appears many times, it is counted as one in order to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

### 3.3 Confidence testing

The number of agreements between the two evaluators about the advertisements evaluated is counted and divided by the total number of sample advertisements to

get a confidence value. If the confidence value is above 0.85, the study results are regarded as valid.

Out of the 712 advertisements (218 in 1991 and 494 in 2001) we have sampled, the number of consensuses is 656 (92.1% confidence value); 712 advertisements have identical sources (100% confidence value); 656 used identical advertising appeals (92.1% confidence value); the number of advertisements used Western models or celebrities is 712 (100% confidence value); and 712 advertisements used Western languages (100% confidence value).

### 3.4 Analysis method

We used the methods of the Chi-square test and frequency analysis in SPSS10.0 to analyze respectively advertising appeals, Western models or celebrities, Western languages and Western backgrounds in newspaper advertisements in 1991 and 2001. In doing so, we want to find out the degree of westernization in Chinese newspaper advertising.

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## 4 Results

### 4.1 Advertising appeals

#### 4.1.1 Products advertising appeals in general

To find out the degree of westernization of all newspaper advertisements, we need to analyze all advertisements as a whole first, and then make concrete and separate analyses according to product categories. Twenty-six advertisements (12.9%) adopted hard-sell appeals in 1991, while only 21 advertisements (4.6%) chose hard-sell appeals in 2001. At the confidence level of 95%, the reduction is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 12.674 > 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ ); advertisements which adopted product merit appeals accounted for 80.7% in the year of 1991. This percentage increased to 83.9% in 2001.  $\chi^2$  result shows that the increase is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.419 < 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.517 > 0.05$ ); The percentage of advertisements which adopted soft-sell appeals increased from 5.4% in 1991 to 10.6% in 2001, with an increase of 5.2%.  $\chi^2$  result shows that the increase is significant at the confidence level of 95% ( $\chi^2 = 4.364 > 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.037 < 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

As shown in Table 1, advertisements in 2001 used more soft-sell appeals than those in 1991, while advertisements in 2001 used fewer hard-sell appeals than those in 1991. As for product merit appeals, there are no significant differences. Thus Hypothesis 1 is supported, but Hypotheses 2 and 3 are not. This proves that in recent years, Chinese advertisements are inclined to adopt more oriental appeals, whereas the use of Western style appeals is reduced.

**Table 1** Different advertising appeals all advertisements adopted in 1991 and 2001

Types of appeals	1991 ( <i>N</i> = 202)		2001 ( <i>N</i> = 454)		$\chi^2$	<i>P</i>
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%		
Hard-sell appeals	26	12.9	21	4.6	12.674	0.000*
Product merit appeals	163	80.7	381	83.9	0.419	0.517
Soft-sell appeals	11	5.4	48	10.6	4.364	0.037*

\*  $P < 0.05$ .

#### 4.1.2 Product advertisements from foreign enterprises

Table 2 presents the changes in product advertising appeals adopted by foreign enterprises in 1991 and 2001.

**Table 2** Advertisements from foreign enterprises using appeals in 1991 and 2001

Types of appeals	1991 ( <i>N</i> = 86)		2001 ( <i>N</i> = 137)		$\chi^2$	<i>P</i>
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%		
Hard-sell appeals	14	16.3	4	2.9	11.756	0.001*
Product merit appeals	68	79.1	112	81.8	0.036	0.850
Soft-sell appeals	3	3.5	19	13.9	5.728	0.017*

\*  $P < 0.05$ .

In 1991, there were 86 advertisements from foreign enterprises, of which 16.3% adopted hard-sell appeals. In 2001, the percentage dropped to 2.9%. At the confidence level of 95%, the difference between the two is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 11.756 > 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.001 < 0.05$ ).

Advertisements which adopted product merit appeals from foreign enterprises increased from 79.1% in 1991 to 81.8% in 2001. But the difference is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.036 < 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.850 > 0.05$ ).

In 1991, 3.5% of advertisements from foreign enterprises used soft-sell appeals. This percentage tripled in 2001 (13.9%). And the increase is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 5.728 > 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.017 < 0.05$ ).

Table 2 indicates that in 2001, foreign enterprises used more soft-sell appeals and less hard-sell appeals in their advertisements than those in 1991. But there are no remarkable changes in the use of product merit appeals.

Therefore, advertisements from foreign enterprises have gone through some changes in advertising appeals during the past decade. At present, foreign enterprises adopt fewer hard-sell appeals but no longer emphasize their own leading status in product technology, function, sales volume, etc. At the same



time, they adopt more soft-sell appeals and try to build a kind of emotional atmosphere focusing on emotional themes, such as family, kindness, friendship, love, etc., so as to shorten the distance with Chinese consumers. Table 2 implies that compared with the situation ten years ago, product advertisements from foreign enterprises tend to be more oriental in advertising appeals.

Due to the development of domestic enterprises and the increase of foreign enterprises in number during the last ten years, products have become more homogenized. In addition, domestic consumers have become more mature. As a result, foreign enterprises are facing the ever-fierce competition. To win over Chinese consumers, foreign enterprises come to avoid using direct, even aggressive Western advertising appeals. Instead, they adopt appeals with more oriental cultural characteristics.

#### 4.1.3 Product advertisements from domestic enterprises

Table 3 shows the changes of advertising appeals adopted by domestic enterprises in 1991 and 2001.

**Table 3** Advertisements from domestic enterprises using appeals in 1991 and 2001

Types of appeals	1991 ( <i>N</i> = 116)		2001 ( <i>N</i> = 317)		$\chi^2$	<i>P</i>
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%		
Hard-sell appeals	12	10.3	17	5.4	3.029	0.082*
Product merit appeals	95	81.9	269	84.9	0.159	0.690
Soft-sell appeals	8	6.9	29	9.1	0.548	0.459

\*  $P < 0.1$ .

In 1991, 10.3% of the advertisements of domestic enterprises used hard-sell appeals. In 2001, this percentage dropped to 5.4%. The decrease is statistically significant at the confidence level of 90% ( $\chi^2 = 3.029 > 2.71$ ,  $P = 0.082 < 0.1$ ).

The percentage of the advertisements which used product merit appeal increased from 81.9% in 1991 to 84.9% in 2001, but the increase is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.159 < 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.690 > 0.1$ ).

Advertisements which adopted soft-sell appeals increased from 6.9% in 1999 to 9.1% in 2001. But the change is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.548 < 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.459 > 0.1$ ).

Thus, the product advertisements of domestic enterprises used more hard-sell appeals in 2001 than those in 1991. There are no obvious changes in the use of soft-sell appeals and product merit appeals, indicating that there are no remarkable changes in the advertising appeals of domestic enterprises.

## 4.2 Western models or celebrities

### 4.2.1 Advertisements in general

In 1991, just 11 advertisements (5.5%) used West models or celebrities, while in 2001, 43 advertisements (9.5%) used Western models or celebrities. The increase is statistically significant at the confidence level of 90% ( $\chi^2 = 2.975 > 2.71$ ,  $P = 0.085 < 0.1$ ) (Table 4).

**Table 4** Advertisements used western models or celebrities in 1991 and 2001

	1991 ( $N = 202$ )		2001 ( $N = 454$ )		$\chi^2$	$P$
	$N$	%	$N$	%		
Western models or celebrities	11	5.5	43	9.5	2.975	0.085*

\*  $P < 0.1$ .

Table 4 shows that the product advertisements in 2001 used more Western models or celebrities than those in 1991. Hypothesis 4 is supported. Generally speaking, the advertisements of electrical home appliances use fewer Western models or celebrities, while advertisements of housing, computers, cell-phones, medicines, foods and beverages tend to use a lot of Western models or celebrities.

### 4.2.2 Product advertisements from foreign enterprise

Table 5 compares product advertisements from foreign enterprises in 1991 and 2001 in terms of the use of Western models or celebrities.

**Table 5** Advertisements from foreign enterprises using Western models or celebrities in 1991 and 2001

	1991 ( $N = 86$ )		2001 ( $N = 137$ )		$\chi^2$	$P$
	$N$	%	$N$	%		
Western models or celebrities	10	11.6	18	13.1	0.089	0.765

In 1991, 11.6% of product advertisements from foreign enterprises used Western models or celebrities. This percentage was more or less the same in 2001(13.1%).  $\chi^2$  test result shows the change is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.089 < 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.765 > 0.05$ ). That is to say, product advertisements of foreign enterprises have never had significant changes in terms of using Western models or celebrities over the past decade.

### 4.2.3 Product advertisements from domestic enterprises

In 1991, only 0.9% of domestic enterprises used Western models or celebrities in their product advertisements. In 2001, the percentage increased to 7.9%. Such increase is statistically significant at the confidence level of 95% ( $\chi^2 = 7.084 > 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.008 < 0.05$ ) (see Table 6).

**Table 6** Advertisements from domestic enterprises using Western models or celebrities in 1991 and 2001

	1991 ( $N = 116$ )		2001 ( $N = 317$ )		$\chi^2$	$P$
	$N$	%	$N$	%		
Western models or celebrities	1	0.9	25	7.9	7.084	0.008*

\*  $P < 0.05$ .

In addition, according to product categories, most Chinese enterprises that used Western models or celebrities in their advertisements are from the industries of housing, medicines, electrical home appliances, computers and automobiles.

In sum, advertisements in 2001 used Western models or celebrities more frequently than those in 1991. Thus Hypothesis 4 is supported, indicating that Chinese advertisements have become more westernized to a certain extent. Compared with the advertisements of Chinese enterprises, however, the use of Western models or celebrities in the advertisement of foreign enterprises has hardly increased over the same period.

## 4.3 Western languages

### 4.3.1 Advertisements in general

Table 7 summarizes advertisements using Western languages in 1991 and 2001 and analyzes the changes with  $\chi^2$  test.

**Table 7** Advertisements using Western languages in 1991 and 2001

	1991 ( $N = 202$ )		2001 ( $N = 454$ )		$\chi^2$	$P$
	$N$	%	$N$	%		
Western languages	118	58.4	318	70.0	3.556	0.059*

\*  $P < 0.1$ .

In 1991, 58.4% of all advertisements used English while this percentage increased to 70.0% in 2001. The increase is statistically significant at the

confidence level of 90% ( $\chi^2 = 3.556 > 2.71$ ,  $P = 0.059 < 0.1$ ). Specifically, product advertisements in 2001 used more English than those in 1991. Thus Hypothesis 5 is supported.

#### 4.3.2 Product advertisements from foreign enterprises

Our data show that most foreign enterprises used English in their advertisements. The percentage increased from 91.9% in 1991 to 94.9% in 2001. But the difference is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.039 < 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.844 > 0.05$ ) (See Table 8).

**Table 8** Advertisements from foreign enterprises using Western language in 1991 and 2001

	1991 ( $N = 86$ )		2001 ( $N = 137$ )		$\chi^2$	$P$
	$N$	%	$N$	%		
Western languages	79	91.9	130	94.9	0.039	0.844

Therefore, advertisements from foreign enterprises have not changed remarkably in the use of Western languages over the past decade.

#### 4.3.3 Product advertisements from domestic enterprise

Advertisements using Western languages from domestic enterprises increased from 33.6% in 1991 to 59.3% in 2001. The difference is statistically significant at the confidence level of 95% ( $\chi^2 = 11.192 > 3.84$ ,  $P = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) (see Table 9), indicating that Chinese enterprises used more Western languages in their advertisements in 2001 than those in 1991. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is supported.

**Table 9** Advertisements from domestic enterprises using Western language in 1991 and 2001

	1991 ( $N = 116$ )		2001 ( $N = 317$ )		$\chi^2$	$P$
	$N$	%	$N$	%		
Western languages	39	33.6	188	59.3	11.192	0.001

\*  $P < 0.5$ .

## 5 Discussions

In this paper, we reviewed the development of Chinese advertising over the past decade. We found that product advertisements in 2001 used more soft-sell appeals

and fewer hard-sell appeals than those in 1991. There is no significant change in the use of product merit appeals. This proves that in choosing advertising appeals, Chinese advertisements have become more oriental, rather than more westernized. In addition, high involvement advertisements are also characterized by oriental features in advertising appeals: more soft-sell appeals have been used in these advertisements, whereas there is no significant change in product merit appeals.

Product advertisements in 2001 used more Western models or celebrities than those in 1991. In this sense, Chinese advertisements have become more westernized. However, the use of Western models or celebrities has not changed over the same period in the advertisements of foreign enterprises. By replacing Western models and celebrities with Eastern models with which Chinese consumers are familiar, foreign enterprises attempt to build good relationships with Chinese consumers in the fierce market competition. On the other side, domestic enterprises are fond of using Western models and celebrities to make their enterprises look more internationalized.

As a whole, product advertisements in 2001 used more Western languages (English) than those in 1991. One of the reasons is that with global economic cultural interchanges, English as an international language is being used widely in China. Therefore, we can not simply say that Chinese advertisements have become more westernized because of the increase in the use of English in Chinese advertisements.

Since there is no advertisement using Western backgrounds in the sample, we are unable to define the westernization of Chinese advertisements by this standard.

Taken together, we can find out that Chinese newspaper advertisements are far from being westernized. In terms of advertising appeals, Chinese advertisements have actually become more oriental, rather than more westernized. In terms of advertising expressions, however, Chinese advertisements have shown a strong tendency of westernization.

Based on these results, we propose the following suggestions.

### 5.1 To foreign enterprises

Some foreign enterprises originally adopted standardization advertising strategies in the Chinese market. But because Chinese consumers are different from Western consumers in aesthetic ways and in values, most of these advertisements have not received expected results. Therefore, more and more foreign enterprises have shifted to specialization advertising strategies. As a result, product advertisements from foreign enterprises exhibit an obvious trend of orientalism both in advertising appeals and advertisement contents.

However, we argue that foreign enterprises do not necessarily need to adopt specialization advertising strategies. Sometimes, to implement fastidiously

specialization strategies in accordance with the people's national habits, social customs, or religious faith of the target country may reach a result just opposite to what is expected. Therefore, the safest suggestion would be to make advertisements appeals to customers by means of utilizing basic human emotions. John W. Joges, president of Coca-Cola's Europe and Pacific Ocean Division, once said, 'You can not find a single global brand that does not express or include a basic human emotion.' Longing for love, beauty, life, respect, and happiness, etc., all of these basic emotions surmount cultural borders. Therefore, when making advertisements, we need to take into consideration the degree of product involvement and the characteristics of target consumers, and combine these factors with universal human emotions. However, we need to admit that there is a huge difference between East and West. No matter we choose standardization strategies, specialization strategies or combined strategies, the point is to make our advertisements understood and accepted by Chinese consumers. Drawing on our study results, we suggest that, except products with universal appeals, foreign enterprises had better choose specialization or combined strategies in the Chinese market.

## 5.2 To Chinese enterprises

When selling products within our country, Chinese enterprises need to think internationally and act locally. While fully absorbing and learning advanced management knowledge, marketing strategies, and tactics from foreign enterprises, Chinese enterprises need to have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese consumers' preference, so as to adopt suitable advertising appeals and advertising expressions. During the course of brand building and brand maintenance, Chinese enterprises need to form advertising styles of their own and know clearly whether, when and how to use westernized appeals, Western models and languages in their advertisements.

Though both Eastern and Western cultural characteristics are not obviously presented in their advertisements, domestic enterprises can adopt suitable advertising appeals in line with the characteristics of their products, industries, and consumers. In the early 1990s, China's consumer goods market changed from a seller's market into a buyer's market. Nowadays, Chinese consumers pay more attention to brand names and product functions. Under such circumstances, Chinese enterprises can take advantage of their deep understanding of Chinese culture and consumers' psychological needs and use more Eastern-culture-specific soft-sell appeals in their advertisements. We believe that this emotional and indirect way of advertising will be more acceptable to Chinese consumers.

As for advertising expressions, though our data show that the advertisements of domestic enterprises have exhibited a trend of westernization, we suggest that we

need to choose appropriate advertising expressions in accordance with related factors, such as products' characteristics and consumers' psychological needs. Though the usage of Western models or celebrities is able to arouse consumers' attention, abuse of Westerners in their advertisements may give a bad impression to consumers. In addition, if Western models or celebrities are too "eyeball-catching", it may not be beneficial for consumers to remember the products advertised. So the choice of using Western models or celebrities in advertisements should be made based on the analyses of the characteristics of products, target customers, employed models or celebrities, etc. When using Western celebrities in their advertisements, domestic enterprises need to make sure that the celebrity is in harmony with the product. He/she acts as the product ambassador: the prestige of the celebrity should be at the same level as the product; the celebrity should make customers believe that he/she has used the product (this is especially important to the credibility of the advertisement and customers' purchase intentions in China), etc. Moreover, when choosing a certain celebrity as their product ambassador, an enterprise needs to pay special attention to the celebrity's morality because in China one's morality is the determinant of his/her credibility. A product ambassador of bad reputation may undermine the effects of an advertisement.

Even when selling products within the country, domestic enterprises also have to choose between standardized advertising strategies and specific advertising strategies. Though we have a shared cultural background, there are different subcultures in different areas. When advertising products in different regions, domestic enterprises need to take these subcultures into consideration and adopt suitable advertising strategies. With the development of communication technology, such as the popularization of the satellite TV, network technology, etc., it is possible to adopt standardized advertising strategies nationwide. Although specific advertising strategies are more applicable to some regions, enterprises will have to face higher costs and more pressure from consumers of other regions who do not understand or accept these localized advertising strategies.

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