Understanding Chinese and Japanese cultural barriers for product insertion in their domestic market.

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Abstract

My objective in this effort is to give European entrepreneurs guidance that will improve their knowledge when approaching the Asian market and therefore reduce the risk of failure of their business due to factors closely related to the specific culture patterns that work differently in European societies. This analysis will provide some more knowledge to understand the decision-making process of consumers in Asian countries in order to design an accurate business model approach. This way, the European entrepreneur can enhance their businesses competitiveness, potential and ability to attract investment. Globalization and technology advancements have made it possible for us to learn about the traditions and way of life of people living anywhere in the world. Due to how big Asia is, I will keep the focus of the research in the two most influential countries. The selected countries are China and Japan.

Keywords

Culture, Domestic market, Cultural dimensions.

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1   Introduction

For a very long time, the Asian market was an enigmatic region that Western investors knew little about. However, due to drastic developments that entirely alter the typical image that has been historically presented to us, it is currently seeing the fastest and longest growth globally. (Diamond, 2002)

Since cultural norms and beliefs mould people's perceptions, dispositions, and conduct, culture plays a crucial role in society's behaviour (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The overall pattern of consumer likes and inclinations, in how they behave, and in how they understand advertising messages all reflect culture. Numerous corporate failures have been attributed to the fact that cultural variations between nations were not taken into consideration. (Forsyth et al, 2008)

Additionally, a lot of marketing tactics have been developed specifically for Western nations, especially the United States. The validity of Western theories and models must be investigated in different cultural contexts, as well as their level of adaptability, for marketing to grow as an academic discipline. (Steenkamp, 2001)

My objective in this effort is to give European entrepreneurs guidance that will improve their knowledge when approaching the Asian market and therefore reduce the risk of failure of their business due to factors closely related to the specific culture patterns that work differently in European societies. This analysis will provide some more knowledge to understand the decision-making process of consumers in Asian countries in order to design an accurate business model approach. This way, the European entrepreneur can enhance their businesses competitiveness, potential and ability to attract investment. Globalization and technology advancements have made it possible for us to learn about the traditions and way of life of people living anywhere in the world.

Due to how big Asia is, I will keep the focus of the research in the two most influential countries. The selected countries are China and Japan. These countries are very present in the relationships and information that Eastern Europe has with Asia. It is expected that many European entrepreneurs would choose one of these countries to expand. These two cultures may feel similar to each other from a European cultural point of view but, while they are in fact closely related due to demographics, they are in reality are still quite different.

In the first section, a quick overview of culture is made from a general view, and from many perspectives, including corporate, linear, and Hofstede's scheme,

The level or position of these Asian markets will then be explored in the second section. Subsequently, a search will be made in order to help the European entrepreneur understand Asian market characteristics and business practises when considering introducing a product in the Asian market concerning the influence that culture has on local markets.

This research will give a better understanding of the impact of culture in humans, of the type of functions different societies focus on, the stigmas that still rule our learned behaviours.

Once the field of study's bibliography has been reviewed, it will be supplemented with an analysis of the differences in consumer profiles and purchasing behaviour brought on by cultural influences, using Europe, Japan, and China as points of comparison.

The entire body of work is finally summed to get at the conclusions, with the goal of offering an alternative perspective to the wealth of theoretical literature already in existence and eliciting thought regarding the relationship between culture and specific marketing tactics.

2 Background research Culture and marketing

2.1 Culture understanding

Culture is a shared pattern of assumptions, that have been created in a specific group of people. These practices come to be due to dealing with external problems, the assumptions that are considered good tend to stay in that group. These assumptions are passed on to the rest of the group when they give a constant number of good results and is perceived by the rest as the correct way to react or feel to given situations.

Culture is a social phenomenon that affects every person that lives in a collective group, making this a learned behaviour and not from innate knowledge. The term of culture as referred to it in this study is always referent to the culture related with nations or in the organizational culture of businesses that construct their own identities.

The term "culture" wasn't first used to humans until a century after it was first used to describe the natural growth of crops and animals at the beginning of the fifteenth century. (Eagleton, 2016)

The word "culture" first appeared in conversations among European intellectuals in the eighteenth century. Culture was linked to the concepts of civilization and material advancement in France and Great Britain, influencing political order and emphasising civilization's supremacy. (Eagle, 2016)

Different national meanings of the notion formed as it developed. Initially, the idea was like that established in France and was connected to the land, local customs, and religious beliefs. (Eagleton, 2016)

However, various strategies have been used over time, with the notion that culture is something logical, universal, and progressive.

Beginning in the 20th century, the idea took on a more humanistic perspective, becoming linked to both the spiritual and intellectual growth of the human being, and approximately 160 different definitions appeared, many of them coming from academics in North America. (Eagleton, 2016)

Some people throughout the 1950s had a negative perception of culture because they saw it as a hindrance to development, where old beliefs and institutions needed to fall apart. (Eagleton, 2016)

As defined by Hofstede (2011) culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.

However, culture is also very characteristic on aspects like long-term stability, since only the assumptions that last for a very long time are fully adopted by a group.

It also frequently appears noticeable through patterns in society, and some of the first more stereotyped views might gain popularity faster due to variations of the assumption being ignored. (Godwyn & Gittell, 2011)

The global society's perspective on culture underwent change in the 1980s, and the UNESCO produced a paper to support this position.

According to Gulick (192) the UNESCO stated that culture is the collection of unique spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotive characteristics that constitute a society or a social group.

In other words, culture covers more than just the arts and literature; it also includes people's ways of life, fundamental human rights, belief systems, value systems, and traditions. Culture also enables man to reflect on himself.

Thus, culture especially transforms us into human beings who are logical, critical, and ethically dedicated. It helps us choose our ideals and guide our decisions.

Through culture, a person expresses himself, learns about himself, sees himself as an incomplete project, doubts his own accomplishments, relentlessly seeks out new meanings, and produces works that go beyond him.

Furthermore, it's critical to realise that the notion is today recognised for its plurality, proving that there isn't a single, universal culture but rather a range of cultural interpretations.

However, attempts have been made throughout history to impose on other civilizations thought to be inferior the notion that there exists a better culture connected with the phrase civilization and development.

The culture that we learn due to our society, are very deeply built in our conscience compared to the learned culture from organizations to which you belong later in your life, for example school or company. This second type is also expressed clearly in our daily practices at your job, rather than in our own time.

Despite the diversity of definitions, they are all in agreement that culture, which includes traditions, practises, and philosophy, is what gives humans their identity, way of life, social cohesiveness, territorial balance, and ability to produce money and jobs.

Also, a wrong assumption would be generalizing that everyone in a society is being given the same profile and would therefore always feel and react in the predicted way.

Following these reference models, we can get an idea of what the created environment is like in the country. Culture are common beliefs that condition the environment but are not a direct determinant of behaviour nor feelings.

2.2   Hofstede's theory of culture

Transcultural research was once thought to be less rigorous because there were no national and cultural theoretical frameworks available.

Nevertheless, Geert Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist known for his work on cross-cultural groups and organisations, created and suggested a thorough and comprehensive framework over the course of the previous two decades. (Tung & Verbeke, 2010)

Hofstede created the Theory of Cultural Dimensions in the 1980s. This theory enables research into how cultural values influence societal behaviour and maintains that five factors—distance from power, individualism versus collectivism, fear of risk, masculinity versus femininity, and long-term orientation—are sufficient to account for cultural differences between countries. (Shi & Wang, 2011)

After getting access to the data from surveys that were done to the employees of the firm IBM, spread over 50 different countries, Hofstede finds hundreds of connections between

these results and dimensions studied to measure culture provided by his colleagues, being able to find correlations supports said theories.

He also finds that some developments are correlated to the country's direct development over criteria like wealth, which correlates directly with the dimensions of Individualism and Power Distance.

This framework for measuring different values along nations and organizations started with 4 dimensions and was extended later with 2 more as more correlations were found with the years with the same data used by Hofstede.

Also, more recent validations of the relation between this data and theories have not invalidated the previous ones found. As defined in this study by (G Hofstede. 2011, 10) "the association of a statement with a dimension is always statistical, never absolute." This means that even though these dimensions serve as a valuable compass for a whole nation, people are not absolute in their values, meaning that they cannot be one hundred percent something, only partly.

Here are Hofstede's dimensions that will be mostly used for measuring in the study. These are scores in a scale of opposite poles, where cultures are scored on their relatedness to one quality over its counterpart.

Having a high score in one of the qualities, means a high relatedness to the cultural effect, this means that we could say that those are the values that people from that specific country tend to relate more with.

This does not automatically cancel the other pole, since it is just a grade of relatedness and there will obviously exist people in such country that could not relate as much.

The first of these dimensions used is **Power Distance**; this dimension is defined by the expectancy from the weaker members in a hierarchy, accept and have expectancy that the power, in that hierarchy which they belong to, will be unequally distributed between its members, leaving big amount of power on few shoulders, and none on the rest.

More specifically, this dimension represents inequality but always as seen from the weak link point of view, this inequality is then created by the imposition of the leaders and the acceptance of the subjects.

The dimension of power distance scored high in places like Asia and Africa and scored low in Western European countries. This dimension of power distance allows us to read into culture and see that countries that scored high in this dimension are the countries that have learned this behaviour through their environment.

This proves that culture indeed is something at the least mildly measurable that we can express even quantitatively. These learned behaviours and expectancies are deeply rooted in our subconscious and are passed on consciously or not through generations, which explains why culture isn't very different even when hundreds of years pass and many generations have died.

The second dimension from Hofstede's theory that I will use is **Uncertainty Avoidance**.

This dimension aims to measure a societies tolerance for the possibility of unknown events, ideologies, or anything out of what is the usual. Countries with high ranking in this dimension are uncomfortable with uncertainty coming from unstructured situations and they prepare by setting a list of behavioural rules, laws and even socially the people that do not share the common beliefs.

The people in these countries move by nervous energy, they have a need for clarity and structure and have an emotional need for rules. In this kind of culture, citizens are usually seen as incompetent for intervening in politics and everyone shares the same belief for a religious truth.

At the other extreme, countries that score low on this dimension talk openly about having different beliefs, thrive on having few rules to avoid being limited. The people in these countries have an empiricist mindset with low stress and do not express as many emotions.

The third dimension for this study is **Individualism vs Collectivism**, this dimension attempts to assess to which degree individuals belong to a group or organization. In collectivist societies, we can appreciate how individuals are part of a strong, sometimes very extended, groups from birth.

These groups of people are together to have protection from other groups in exchange for unquestionable loyalty. The collectivist members have a plural consciousness that stresses the belonging feeling to the group.

Harmony is the norm and leaving your individual dreams behind to collaborate for the group is seen as an act of maturity, incompliance is punished with shame that affects you and the people around you.

On the other side, individualist societies have loose ties between individuals, people in these types of countries are expected to only look after their self and immediate family. The right for privacy suggests the use of individualistic consciousness, where "I" is the most direct and important thing.

Working seriously on your dreams is a sign of maturity and the failure is punished with a feeling of guilt. Countries that have scored high in collectivism are India, China and Korea, the countries that scored high on individualism are USA, Australia, and UK.

The fourth dimension is called **Masculinity vs Femininity**, this dimension directly refers to the distribution of certain values among everyone in the culture. Masculine values are the assertive values, while feminine values are caring.

Masculine societies have a big gap between genders, having gender restricted activities. In these countries, both men and women are assertive and competitive, strong people are admired and seen as role models.

Both parents do not take part fully in their children's education, due again to gender restricted activities. Few women are not in any politically significant positions and of course, these societies are guided by the church, which provides the absolute truth that followers cannot discuss.

Feminine cultures are described to be caring and accepting, without a visible gap between genders, gender roles are not common, which means that everyone is considered the same and both parents take care of their children equally. Sympathy for the weak is the role model and feelings are acknowledged.

In these societies, women do occupy significative administrative positions in jobs and instead of religion, individuals relate to each other following individualist values that help them achieve their goals, much like modern day satanism does.

For the next dimension, **Long-term Orientation vs Short-term Orientation**, there exists a great correspondence. This dimension relates partly to the teachings of Confucius (G Hofstede. 2011 p13) who was a philosopher in the ancient Asian empire.

Discovered by Bond, a researcher that occasionally worked with Hofstede, this dimension was later added to the previous four dimensions that Hofstede provided and was originally named Confucian work dynamism.

The indicators for high Confucian dynamism or Long-term orientation are; being perseverant, ordering relationships by status, having a sense of shame, adaptability to your context, a disregard for traditions, a feeling of saving yourself for the future and trust in pure hard work.

The other spectrum of this dimension called Short-term orientation, is not the exact opposite of the previous values, they are just different values, these are; a more present based life, unmodifiable stability in your character defined by an ultimate truth (absolute or not), respect for traditions and supposed proudness to your natal country, importance of service to others and regular consumption as a reinforcer of the present-based life.

For the last dimension from Hofstede's cross-cultural theory, called **Indulgence vs Restraint**, was added in 2010, in a project called happiness research.

The indulgent pole refers to the cultures that allow members to get gratification from their human needs and having fun, while the restraint pole belongs to the cultures that have strict social norms to avoid this free self-gratification.

Cultures with Indulgence traits have a high percentage of people that declare themselves happy, people have a feeling of control over their lives, importance of free time and freedom of speech and people are more involved into sports.

On the other side, restraint led countries have a feeling of helplessness and they do not feel in control of their life, free time and freedom of speech are not a priority and people do not take part in playing sports.

Also, these are the countries with the most police officers per capita since maintaining order is the number one priority. Indulgent countries are America and Western Europe, and restraint countries are Eastern Europe, Asia, and Muslim countries.

2.3 Linear active theory

This cross-cultural theory by Richard D. Lewis is a dimensional framework that labels different aspects of culture that we can measure and compare to each other. These

theories are gaining big relevance nowadays since the communication between the world in the last decades has increased significantly and now is when we need to develop these skills more and more for the success of international economic and social relations. Specially for multinational companies.

There are many obstacles in merging corporate cultures who think, behave and work with very different methods. To overcome these differences and use them for our advantage, first we need to understand the difference between these cultures and the reasons why these cultures are like this, in short, we need to be able to respect first, then also understand.

This theory of Lewis can differentiate people not on nationality or religion but on behaviour. Lewis states that most cultures can be divided into three subgroups called:

Figure 1 Lewis model theory Linear-active, Multi-active and Reactive.

LINEAR-ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
Talks half the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Does one thing at a time	Does several things at once	Reacts to partner's action
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	Looks at general principles
Polite but direct	Emotional	Polite, indirect
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Confronts with logic	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Doesn't interrupt
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Sticks to facts	Feelings before facts	Statements are promises
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Sometimes impatient	Impatient	Patient
Limited body language	Unlimited body language	Subtle body language
Respects officialdom	Seeks out key person	Uses connections
Separates the social and professional	Mixes the social and professional	Connects the social and professional

Source: Lewis (2019)

2.4   Corporate culture

Corporate culture, as defined by Molenaar K. et al. (2002)," is a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to

be valid and to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems".

Having a clear corgporate culture is key to a company's success, it determinates the environment that the employees will rely on as a member of a joint effort. It is very proven that the chances of functioning well are much higher if the employees share the same goals with their corporate culture.

Corporate culture are shared beliefs that determine the company's main characteristics, practices and traditions that construct an attitude, consistently held by all employees.

There are six subdivisions that are commonly used, these are; Empowerment culture, Innovation culture, sales culture, customer-centric culture, leadership excellence culture and safety culture.

Culture of Empowerment

This first style of culture is interesting, it seeks improvement trough thorough preparation. Empowerment culture is based on the idea of giving resources to the employees to educate and prepare them for the job they are doing, in order to have capable employees, that also are held accountable for the outcomes of their actions.

Both qualities together make up a style of culture where employees show initiative, and confidently make decisions that will affect the business.

This style of culture is known to be great for recognition and attention to solving problems before they are an actual threat, which could be recognized as a high score in uncertainty avoidance.

Another characteristic of this style is that employees easily approach their boss on business matters, a very individualistic trait that rejects power distance.

Innovation culture

In some industries, like the fashion industry, innovation is highly valued. The type of industries that use this style of management, thrive on a competitive environment where being a step ahead of your competitors is key.

This practice not only relies on having those new ideas, but also on making a good process of the launch and implementation of the idea. For that, having diverse team members that carry out different sides of the fruition process is necessary, some focus more on coming up with ideas that will be stimulant with the customers.

Others with how and where the idea is transmitted to the customers, for example.

These are the dimensions within the Innovation Culture theory.

Figure 2 Dimensions of innovation culture
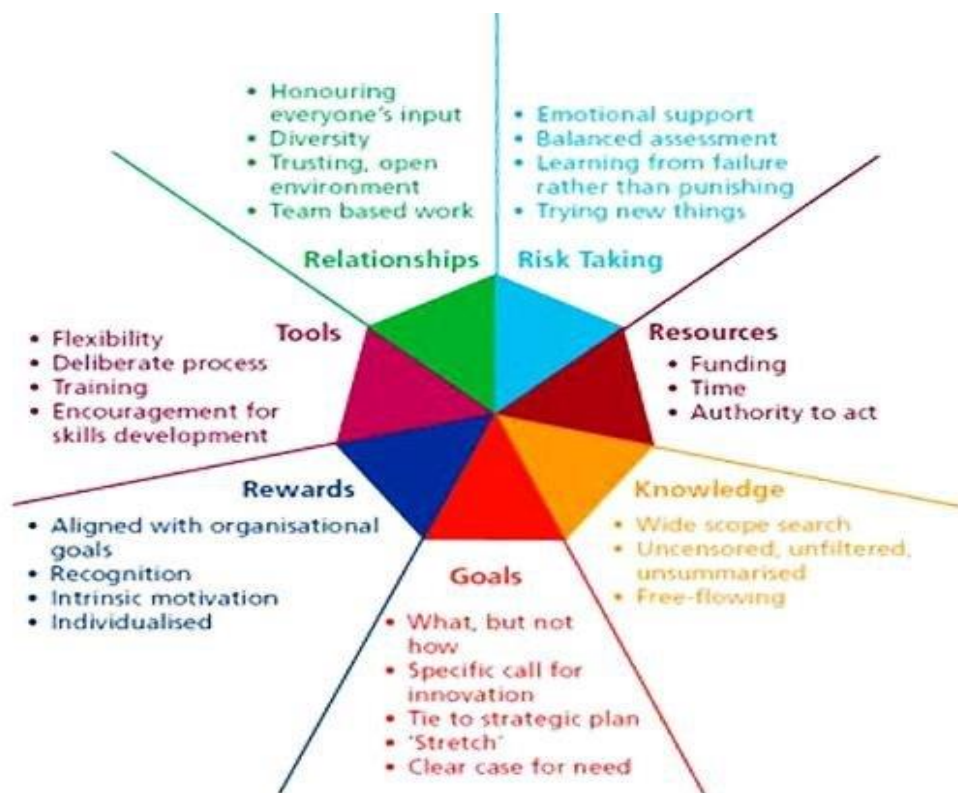
Source: Szczepańska-Woszczyna (2014)

Sales Culture

This style of corporate culture is normally given in businesses where the success of the business greatly depends on income of revenue. The key component in this style is to have a great sales team.

Good sales teams are characterized for having a shared number of behaviours that uplift the spirit of the team, since creating a successful feeling in the team keeps the team morale high and energetic to be able to push on their sales.

Selling is very dependent on the perseverance and tools used by the team, in these businesses, having a correct blend of people from certain cultures may be a key factor to building the proper successful sales environment.

In these styles, goals and objectives must be shared to create a collective sense of purpose, this atmosphere is passionate and active about the task.

Learning and resource gathering is very welcome. Recognition in the team is necessary to give back at the employees.

Customer-Centric culture

Customer centric cultures are chosen by businesses that believe that the experience of the customer is the most important key factor to the success of their business.

Characteristics of a good sales culture are great understanding of the customer's culture, aligning the companies' values with the customers or promoting active listening to customers.

Having prioritized customer satisfaction, this type of business culture promotes having a good communication with the customer since it is ideal for knowing where to take the business in the future.

Customers in this culture are seen as individuals with totally different needs, businesses work to meet those needs at the individual level that the customer expects. In this style, it is common that profiles are stored about each customer revealing what kind of person they are towards the business perception, building an empathetic relationship is the business's main goal, since that relation collaborates in all aspects of the key factors for the success of the business.

Culture of Leadership Excellence

The main goal of this little culture is to stimulate employees through inspiration. These types of businesses have a hierarchy of "inspirational leaders" whose goals are divided

into; getting inspired from the people you look up to in the business to do your job successfully and pass on the inspiration that you contribute onto the people that are under your command in that same hierarchy.

It is common in these businesses to attend leadership trainings and coaching sessions that empower this idea of inspiration and hard work. Also, these sessions are done to revitalize ideas, since the culture does not state anything else about the business and ideas are "free for interpretation" it is normal that a joint effort is used as a way of social empowerment in the business.

In these corporate cultures, the people with the most successful leadership techniques are the ones that rise to the top. This style has strong leaders all over the business who promote initiative and usually stay many years in the business because of the created feeling of having a shared mission.

Culture of Safety

Lastly, this corporate culture style is most important for jobs that have a big health risk factors like construction sites and mines. It is the culture of safety, a cultural style that pays special attention to the wellbeing of the employees due to high-risk activities performed at the job.

Hazardous materials and heavy machinery have been taking the lives of employees since humans have used them, for this, a business culture that promotes safety procedures and provides training to the employees is a culture that employees feel very welcomed in.

In these workplaces, looking out for each other gives active attention to safe practice, also, corporate thrives to be the main promoter of the importance of the well-being of the employees and often create engagement sessions to update and check with the workers.

3   Discussion

In this discussion, I want to showcase what the essence of the concept culture really means to humans and talk only about conclusions that are suspected to be a direct outcome of the influence of culture.

National culture is the most rooted learned behaviour of humans and thus influences the behaviours and manners of how we do things.

As noted earlier in the background research, it would be wrong to assume that the definition of a culture is a way of meaning that there is only one citizen profile in a country.

The generalization that accounts for defining a country's culture does not in any way mean that everyone in said country is the same, culture are common beliefs, habits and practices that are adopted by a group, but these are learned early in life and are a big determinant of the general common environment in the country.

If we consider Hofstede's model, we may understand the dimensions in various countries from the standpoint of location in Europe and Asia as shown in the following table:

Table 1 Hofstede model applied to European and Asian Countries

Cultural Dimensions	France	Spain	United Kingdom	China	Japan
Power Distance	Low Power Distance	Medium Power Distance	Medium Power Distance	Great Power Distance	Medium Power Distance
Individualism vs Collectivism	Individualist predominance	Individualist predominance	Individualist predominance	Collectivist predominance	Individualist and collectivist predominance
Masculinity vs Femininity	Masculinity predominance	Masculinity predominance	Masculinity predominance	Masculinity predominance	Masculinity predominance
Uncertainty	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low score	High score

avoidance	score	score	score		
Long term vs short term orientation	Short term predominance	Short term predominance	Short term predominance	Long term predominance	Long term predominance

Understanding how cultural variations affect marketing choices abroad is essential for an organization's foreign operations, so culture influences marketing choices is also important for how multinational firms act in their home nations

It is possible to use it to forecast the strategic actions and reactions of rivals and, as a result, create winning competitive strategies.

Western business culture previously dominated multinational firms, but as new patterns in global trade have arisen, Asian multinational corporations are increasingly more prevalent globally. Understanding how culture influences an organization's operations has become more popular because of this trend. (Froese, 2016)

International marketing is now crucial because local, regional, and global environments all exist because of globalisation. Many things contributed to the development of international marketing, including the lowering of trade barriers, the appearance of important technology improvements, the simplicity of financial operations, the increase in foreign investment, and the encouragement of exports. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013)

As a result, to effectively analyse international marketing, it is required to contact experts from different disciplines such as geography, demographics, history, sociology, and economics.

This is due to the fact that, among other things, economic integration brought about by globalisation has encouraged an increase in the number of enterprises to forge ties and conduct business across multiple geographies. (Wu & Chen, 2004)

Companies typically employ the same tactics and methods for both local and foreign marketing. The fact that clients originate from different nations, where they have different ways of thinking and varied buying habits, is a distinct differentiating feature, nevertheless.

Therefore, it is important to consider the country's many cultural, religious, political, and ideological viewpoints. Language limitations can make it more challenging to gather and understand data for the study of international marketing. (Steenkamp, 2001)

Advertising communications must therefore cater for these regional cultural peculiarities.

When a business decides to expand internationally and explore for prospects abroad, it must conduct a thorough analysis of the new market it plans to join in order to understand, among other things, the tastes and preferences of consumers, their buying habits, and the rivals they will face. (Luo, 2000)

The choice of whether to standardise or adapt your product is a crucial one. You can, sell the same product in other countries using the same marketing strategy as on the domestic market, modify the original product to account for the cultural and social differences of the population in the other country, or simply create a different product or marketing strategy. (Berthon et al, 2012)

The campaigns must be modified for a proper internationalisation to take into account the various geographical, cultural, and social realities. Campaigns should always be checked with a focus group with people in your target group of the country in which you plan to expand, there will be knowledge common to all locals that will help us understand what feeling we are creating in the target group with our campaign message.

Due to the numerous offerings and advertising messages that consumers are exposed to nowadays, differentiation is one of the primary goals that brands attempt.

Studying geographic variety in relation to the diversity of races, religions, and social attitudes is one of the key jobs of businesses since it is crucial for this differentiation that the message be adapted. (Van Raaj, 1997)

This is crucial because running a campaign that is tailored to the target audience makes the message more relevant, fosters a stronger bond with the audience, and increases emotional involvement with the company (Fill & Turnbull, 2019)

Regarding advertising as a marketing tool, there are key points to keep in mind in order to pass along the correct message in your campaign. Differences in social language must also be considered to ensure that the message is being properly communicated.

Advertising is dynamic and it changes as civilization advances, becoming a mirror of the actions and ideas of each culture. As a result, marketing is a very useful instrument for examining societal developments.

How people understand the information hidden in advertising messages depends on their culture, so is important to embrace that, there are significant cultural differences in how customers value various products, how acceptable it is to use feminine pronouns in commercials, how much physical touch is shown between persons in the image or how humour is used in marketing.

Through the unique symbols of a certain social group, marketing methods mould existing cultures in an effort to create a brand identity with which the customer feels as associated as possible.

Globally, there is currently a movement toward cultural homogeneity, with advertisements and goods being uniformed regardless of where they are intended to be used.

But when making selections about what to buy, it is crucial to consider the degree of cultural variety that exists in the globe and how it affects behaviour. Creating an identity that the consumer can identify with is one of marketing's primary goals.

Another aspect to keep in mind while trying to conduct negotiations is that communication is very subtle since they always aim to be extremely courteous when doing business, and this quality is even more emphasized when treating with foreigners. As a result of their strict business code of conduct, they frequently refrain from refusing to do something that could upset the peace of the discussions, which might result in misconceptions and inaccurate descriptions of the circumstances.

There may be moments when your customer doesn't express themselves at all, therefore you must retain a professional demeanour while being laid back and personable.

You should adjust to the social customs in order to be as respectful as you can because of the highly formality. The necessity for group communication is another aspect common in Asian cultures that is quite prevalent, thus it is crucial for us to learn the best communication methods that work best in each country..

Comprehension of the terminology employed in the business sector necessitates a very thorough grasp of Asian culture. To comprehend the numerous ways that Asian cultures differ from one another in this regard, a particular set of cultural awareness is required.

Japanese consumer profile and purchasing behaviour

In Japan, the population is ageing quickly, nowadays the average age is 48 years old and women are rapidly obtaining more power, and there are more people living alone than ever before. (Kose, 2019)

Society is also dealing with an increase in diseases linked to lifestyle, which opens up many chances for the aged services industry, which caters to older individuals who are still active and have steadily improving health. (Kose, 2019)

Japanese consumers now exhibit behaviours that are extremely similar to those of consumers in Europe after years of exhibiting dissimilar ones. (Mehta et al, 2020)

The most crucial factors that Japanese consumers usually take into consideration are the brand name, quality, and product qualities. (Yang & Lee, 2019)

The importance of price has grown as the economy has gotten worse. Customer service facets like providing technical explanations and adhering to delivery deadlines are also significant factors in the sale.

Although Japanese customers have historically been hesitant to purchase foreign goods, they have become more open to doing so and are increasingly shopping online or at outlet malls. Japanese customers have historically been thought of as being particularly unique from the rest. (Chun et al, 2022)

Japanese customers, in contrast to those in Europe, avoid budget goods in favour of high-end department stores and expensive supermarkets.

With their affinity for brands and willingness to pay premium rates for high-quality goods, the Japanese created a luxury market where owning expensive and rare goods was seen as necessary (Huysveld, 2020)

Additionally, Japanese consumers are staying at home more and more. Historically, Japanese people didn't spend much time at home because of issues including lengthy workdays and small living quarters. (Marshall, 2018)

The Japanese, however, now place a greater emphasis on the shopping experience, have a propensity to spend more money on services than on goods, and are more likely to purchase high-tech goods (Marshall, 2018).

In a similar manner, Japanese customers are altering both the products they purchase and the manner in which they do so. The population used to shop at stores near their homes, but they are now more willing to go. (Marshall, 2018).

Additionally, Japanese consumers now spend more time shopping in malls and independent speciality stores than they ever did at department stores. Despite the typical Japanese apprehensions about this method of payment, online shopping is becoming more and more popular, and thanks to technology advancements, the consumer is better educated. (Marshall, 2018)

The trend of spending more time at home and saving money both depend on this method of payment. The population of Japan has fallen behind established countries like the UK, Spain and France in terms of its propensity to conduct online shopping, despite having one of the highest internet penetration rates in the world. (Marshall, 2018)

This is mostly because shopping experiences in physical stores are valued more highly in Japan than they are in other nations.

Despite this predilection for offline purchasing, online shopping is expanding quickly. The online market hit 50,000 million dollars in 2020. It is striking how much customer behaviour has changed as a result of online buying. (Loxton, 2020)

The capacity of the internet to compare prices and shop so readily is fostering new purchasing habits in a consensus-based culture where individual choice and expression have long been suppressed.

However, due to a mix of lifestyle, diet, and genetics as well as a greater knowledge of health and hygiene issues, Japan has traditionally been regarded as one of the healthiest societies in the world. As a result, pharmacies are one of the retail chains with the quickest growth rates. (Schaede, 2020)

The Japanese are also particularly concerned about the environment, and the majority of them favour purchasing eco-friendly goods. However, when it comes to paying for eco-friendly products and services, Japanese consumers are very rigid.

According to Hofstede's cultural aspects theory, the masculinity index in Japanese culture is high. Japan has a gender difference of 66.2%, according to the Global Gender Gap Index (2018). Japan is ranked 110th with this percentage out of 149 nations in the Gender Gap ranking. (Machiguchi, 2022)

Men and women differ greatly, however it's also true that these differences have been declining recently. Japan is currently one of the world's most developed, rich, and democratic nations. However, it has remained largely regressive in terms of gender equality. (Machiguchi et al, 2022)

Japanese women have generally avoided careers in politics and business, and misconceptions about them are prevalent in advertising. For example, women are more likely to appear in commercials than males and have a propensity to seem younger. (Machiguchi et al, 2022)

Japan is well known for exporting cartoons and comic books with content that appears to be intended for a young audience, which is heavily affected by gender stereotypes. (Kaoru, 2020)

The obvious gender disparity in literary and creative works is simply a reflection of a culture with strong macho origins. For this reason, illustrations in the eastern style known as anime and manga which sometimes feature gender stereotypes are used. (Noviana, 2020)

Cartoons, comic books, and video games are popular in Japan and play a significant role in the country's culture.

They are so significant that Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe personified the video game and animated series character Mario at the Rio 2016 Olympics closing ceremony in order to receive the Olympic flag that would signal the beginning of the Tokyo 2020 cycle. This was done as part of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics campaign. (Grant, 2017)

Chinese consumer profile and purchasing behaviour

It is crucial to comprehend China's economic structure and cultural history because of the country's 1,400,000,000 population, its position as the world's most populous nation, and the transformation of its economy into a socialist market economy. (Kroeber, 2020)

China's political system is still communist, with the state effectively in charge of all affairs, but its economic system still adheres to the free market's principles with some degree of government intervention. (Kroeber, 2020)

China, which considers itself to be a socialist state with a state capitalism economic model, is therefore one of the most powerful and influential economies in the world. (Kroeber, 2020)

Urban, working-class consumers comprise a sizable portion of the Chinese consumer market. The proportion of middle-class Chinese people, at 11%, is increasing. (Kroeber, 2020)

Despite the fact that the Chinese economy's growth has slowed, 55% of Chinese consumers are sure that their income will rise significantly over the next five years, therefore they do not anticipate a change in their purchase habits. (Kroeber, 2020)

High-quality advertising is starting to play a significant impact in Chinese customers' purchasing decisions as brand knowledge becomes more pertinent. (Kroeber, 2020)

As people's living conditions get better, they have a tendency to buy expensive, high-quality things, and more of their money is spent on services. (Kroeber, 2020)

Chinese society is thought to be communal. As a result, it is assumed that consumers' purchasing habits follow the standards and guidelines of the group to which they belong. (Kroeber, 2020)

Because of this, advertising frequently focuses on demographics rather than specific individuals. Chinese consumers typically buy expensive goods from well-known companies, as seen, for instance, by the growth in the sale of luxury cars. (Kroeber, 2020)

The customer typically adapts to general tastes since they need to fit in with the reference group. However, some consumers are looking more and more to make decisions on their own. (Kroeber, 2020)

Additionally, China has 300 million online shoppers and more than 700 million monthly active social network members. (Donnellan et al, 2020)

Large Chinese cities with high per capita incomes and purchasing power, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and other Chinese cities, are the main sources of consumption. (Wang et al, 2022)

In general, the Chinese place a high value on doing research before making a purchase. With 47% of all sales of luxury consumer products worldwide, China is the country where most international luxury brands do the most business. (Wang et al, 2022)

The cultural dimensions of Hosftede state that high masculinity is a characteristic of China. Chinese advertisements' depictions of gender roles show the influence of socialism, traditional culture, and the westernised economy.

While its past cultural base hindered this effort, China's socialist system made significant contributions to the cause of gender equality. Compared to American commercials, Chinese ones exhibit fewer egalitarian values.

Chinese women's achievement is strongly influenced by cultural, social, and political issues. In Chinese society historically, boys' education has received more focus than girls' education. (He et al, 2020)

As a result, Chinese women's talent started to emerge. Additionally, he thinks that Western culture's impact in China has enhanced the status of women by providing them with greater career and social options.

Despite progress made against gender inequity, many gender stereotypes are still present in marketing and advertising. Additionally, a stereotype of women that emphasises youth, attractiveness, and delicateness is promoted, yet this does not really reflect the modern woman.

China has progressed much over the years and has a reasonably contemporary culture, but it continues to place a high importance on tradition, which also applies to business. As a result, the rational idea is generally acknowledged and understood.

Though it does not always depend on your abilities or experiences, in the west it is typically viewed as a technique for getting realistic and useful answers to issues.

It might be thought of as a guiding concept that can assist you in achieving a better degree of professional awareness so that your business can confidently enter the Japanese and Chinese market.

Because China and Japan dominate the Asian markets, the firms' cultural specialists are better positioned to bargain.

The corporate culture, particularly in Japan, is extremely respectful of Japanese traditions and customs. This is not always the case in China, and in order to avoid any possible conflicts, business meetings should be regarded as a sort of public affair.

The most important aspects that we need to bear in mind in order to conduct fruitful negotiations are specific variances in the ways that each culture approaches thought and how it sees business.

Business is primarily a person-to-person activity in Japan. Both the individual and his company are involved. To put it another way, Japanese managers and workers are widely seen to be capable and creative, and this belief has greatly contributed to their success in the global corporate sector.

The dedication of the Chinese managers to pragmatism is even more crucial. It is typical to use complex strategies like group efforts and mass consensus in a corporate setting.

Both Japan and China place a strong emphasis on education and knowledge, hence members of these cultures are frequently acquiring new information and looking for new ideas. Therefore, members from these cultures may embrace the local business culture and should have no trouble adjusting to it.

4 Use of the study

I am making a guide on how to understand Chinese and Japanese culture for product insertion, comparing it to western culture for scale and better understanding of each other's differences.

The profuse understanding of not only Asian markets but their nation's values that are influenced by culture, will give the reader a great understanding of the likeliness of success of their product and the process of insertion if it were to be sold in these countries.

Therefore, the significance of this study lies in the fact that it is vital to consider the cultural differences of the nations in the region in comparison to the Western cultures in order to do business in those markets with a minimal possibility of success.

The destiny of our enterprises might be determined by simple actions or attitudes. It is vital to realise that when we talk about doing business, we are talking about a trade in which the parties involved are attempting to receive some sort of profit, and that in order for this to occur, it will be crucial for them to be in agreement.

Thus, to be able to adjust our behaviour and business practises to the new cultural contexts, it will be crucial to have a thorough understanding of their cultures. As a result, our conduct and behaviour in China or Japan cannot be the same as they are in Spain or another nation that is physically and culturally near to Europe.

The only outcome if we don't alter our behaviour is that our business idea will fail or that we won't get the chance to enter these markets because, despite the cultural similarities, their ideas about how to behave, their values, and their perceptions of what is right or wrong will be heavily influenced by their cultural environment.

The first thing to consider in order to put this information into practise is how we employ both verbal and non-verbal communication.

It is important to understand that, we'll employ language as a medium of communication, and it goes without saying that the first difficulty we'll run into, is that the local tongue is considerably dissimilar to our own.

Therefore, since nonverbal communication is composed of gestures, symbols, body postures, and many other physical features that offer us a lot of information that we often do not understand and what it is, it will also be a really crucial factor. Even worse, there are occasions when we fail to recognise what they are trying to tell us.

When interacting with a new culture, we can discover that many of these elements have meanings or associations that are quite different from those in the West. Without recognising it, we can be insulting them or displaying attitudes that are completely at odds with what we intended to convey, resulting in a loss of trust that, in turn, might have a negative impact on the future of our enterprises.

5   Conclusion

The objective of this thesis has been to give the European entrepreneur a bigger and more considerate understanding about the differences that make Chinese and Japanese cultures as particular as they are. With this new cultural knowledge, the reader can more accurately depict the market and social situation that you would be exposing your product to, and therefore make a better judgement on whether the risk of failure or success for their product.

In order to help this discussion be more tangible, I want to include a list of recommendations that came out of this discussion for the European entrepreneur. This list includes the most important results from this study.

- The overall pattern of consumer likes and inclinations of customers, in how they behave, and in how they understand advertising messages ALL reflect culture.

- Culture only refers to the common values passed down in a society but generalizing that everyone in a society has the same profile and would therefore always feel and react in the predicted way is an incorrect assumption.

- National culture is the most rooted learned behaviour of humans and thus influences the behaviours and manners of how we do things.

- Understanding how cultural variations affect marketing choices abroad is essential for an organization's foreign operations,

- To effectively analyse international marketing, it is required to contact experts from different disciplines such as geography, demographics, history, sociology, and economics.

- Economic integration brought about by globalisation has encouraged an increase in the number of enterprises to forge ties

- Language limitations can make it more challenging to gather and understand data for the study of international marketing. Advertising communications must therefore cater for these regional cultural peculiarities.

- When a business decides to expand internationally and explore for prospects abroad, it must conduct a thorough analysis of the new market it plans to join in order to understand, among other things, the tastes and preferences of consumers, their buying habits, and the rivals they will face. Studying geographic variety in relation to the diversity of races, religions, and social attitudes is one of the key jobs of businesses since it is crucial for this differentiation that the message be adapted.

- Campaigns should always be checked with a focus group with people in your target group of the country in which you plan to expand, there will be knowledge common to all locals that will help us understand what feeling we are creating in the target group with our campaign message.

- How people understand the information hidden in advertising messages depends on their culture, so is important to embrace that, there are significant cultural differences in how customers value products. Physical touch or how humour is used in marketing are things to watch out for.

- Marketing methods mould existing cultures to create a brand identity with which the customer feels as associated as possible.

- As a result of the strict business code of conduct common to Asians, they frequently refrain from refusing to do something that could upset the peace of the discussions, which might result in misconceptions and inaccurate descriptions of the circumstances.

- The necessity for group communication is another aspect common in Asian cultures that is quite prevalent, thus it is crucial to learn the best communication methods that work best in each country.

- Japanese consumers now exhibit behaviours that are extremely similar to those of consumers in Europe after years of exhibiting dissimilar ones. The most crucial factors that Japanese consumers usually take into consideration are the brand name, quality, and product qualities.

- Although Japanese customers have historically been hesitant to purchase foreign goods, they have become more open to doing so and are increasingly shopping online or at outlet malls.

- Japanese customers, in contrast to those in Europe, avoid budget goods in favour of high-end department stores and expensive supermarkets.

- With their affinity for brands and willingness to pay premium rates for high-quality goods, the Japanese created a luxury market where owning expensive and rare goods was seen as necessary

- The Japanese place a great emphasis on the shopping experience, and have a propensity to spend more money on services than on goods

- The trend of spending more time at home and saving money both depend on this method of payment. The population of Japan has fallen behind established countries like the UK, Spain, and France in terms of its propensity to conduct online shopping. Shopping experiences in physical stores are valued more highly in Japan than they are in other nations.

- The Japanese are also particularly concerned about the environment, and the majority of them favour purchasing eco-friendly goods. However, when it comes to paying for eco-friendly products and services, Japanese consumers are very rigid.

- China's political system is still communist, with the state effectively in charge of all affairs, but its economic system still adheres to the free market's principles with some degree of government intervention.

- Urban, working-class consumers comprise a sizable portion of the Chinese consumer market. The proportion of middle-class Chinese people, at 11%, is increasing.

- High-quality advertising is starting to play a significant impact in Chinese customers' purchasing decisions as brand knowledge becomes more pertinent

- Chinese advertisements' depictions of gender roles show the influence of socialism, traditional culture, and the westernised economy.

- The corporate culture, particularly in Japan, is extremely respectful of Japanese traditions and customs. This is not always the case in China, and in order to avoid any possible conflicts, business meetings should be regarded as a sort of public affair.

- The dedication of the Chinese managers to pragmatism is crucial. It is typical to use complex strategies like group efforts and mass consensus in a corporate setting.

I have shown multiple tangible ways that measure specific areas in the characterization of the culture. These can also be looked into separately in the case that the relevance of the wanted information lies only in more specific characteristics.

In essence, marketing has a significant impact on society, and both marketing and culture contribute to society in their own unique ways. We may learn about the social perceptions of a nation and the interaction between culture and advertising.

It is not enough to have a great company, excellent results, or a great project to persuade our prospective partners. If we do not understand how they respond in these circumstances, we will not be able to build rapport with them and earn their trust, and they will not want to continue the negotiation process with us or our company.

We will need to have a thorough understanding of the challenges or barriers that members of that culture may face, while at the same time never overlooking the assistance or goods we can provide, so the proposal we are making will ultimately be the decisive factor in whether the discussions succeed.

Therefore, it might be stated that the challenge will double since we need to keep providing something of high quality while also taking into account the need to adjust our delivery and transmission methods to the unique traits of the culture we are working with.

Western norms might be seen as the complete antithesis of how things are done in traditional Asia. However, there are several successful ways that this particular culture may be addressed using western approaches. It's crucial to be aware of the many ways in which a certain culture is seen, but you also need to be able to adjust to those expectations as a representative of your firm.

The ability to establish a strong relationship with the individuals you are negotiating with is essential while doing business because of the need to build a trustworthy relationship, which holds a high value in Asia.

Common sense is a valuable notion, but because it tends to emphasise efficiency and pragmatism rather than stirring up strong feelings, many Western businesses there choose to ignore it.

The main distinction between Asian and Western cultures is that in Asia, pragmatism, efficiency, and productivity are strongly emphasised and sit at the core of both culture and management philosophy.

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